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LADIES IN THE HOUSE:

Gender, Space and the Parlours of Parliament in Late-Nineteenth-Century Canada

OCTOBER 1997

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Degree of Master of Architecture

by
VANESSA REID

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
McGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTRÉAL

to my parents - Julyan and Tim - and to my brother, Dylan
and also to past generations
grandmothers, grandfathers - great and great-great
who continue to inspire me in direct and intangible ways

LADIES IN THE HOUSE:

Gender, Space and the Parlours of Parliament in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada

LADIES IN THE HOUSE:

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By
Vanessa Reid

ABSTRACT

Canada's first Parliament Buildings, built in 1859-65 and destroyed by fire in 1916, were the nation's most prominent symbol of national identity and its most celebrated public space. Built into its fabric was an exclusively masculine definition of public persons, one which, at the end of the nineteenth century, women challenged in both subtle and overt ways.

This research examines the design of the Parliament Buildings as a multi-faceted building type, a complex mix of domestic, office and legislative design where both public and "private" spaces intersected. It overlays official documentation of the buildings with a rich variety of sources - archival photographs, newspaper articles and women's columns, letters, journals - to show how women transgressed the architectural prescription which placed them on the political periphery in the Ladies' Gallery, as observers and objects of observation. These sources show that, in fact, women altered and created spaces and initiated influential networks of their own both in and outside of the Parliament Buildings. By illuminating the primacy of the "political hostess," this research argues that women were not relegated to the sidelines, but appropriated - and practiced politics from within - the most privileged of spaces.

This methodology, by examining the interior organization and actual use of the Parliament Buildings, opens new possibilities for the study of legislative buildings and public buildings in general as dynamic systems of relationships rather than uni-dimensional building types. By showing how women challenged the spatial demarcations of gender and power and transformed the meanings associated with parliamentary and public spaces not initially intended for their use, we can draw a picture of the larger role women in Canada played as "public architects."

DAMES DANS LA CHAMBRE:

Sexes, espace et les salons du Parlement dans le Canada du 19e siècle

par
Vanessa Reid

ABSTRAIT

Bâtis entre 1859-65 et incendiés en 1916, les premiers édifices du Parlement canadien furent la symbole la plus importante de l'identité nationale et l'espace public le plus célébre. Incorporé dans leur structure était une définition excessivement masculine des personnes publiques qui, à la fin du 19e siecle, fut remise en question par les femmes de la manière à la fois subtile et manifeste.

Cette recherche examine la conception des édifeces du Parlement en tant que modèle de bâtiment qui présente de nombreux aspects; c'est-à-dire un mélange complexe de conceptions domestiques, legislatifs et de bureau où les expaces publics et privés se rejoignent. Elle comprend de la documentation officielle des édifices et se ser d'une riche varietés de sources dont des photos archivistiques, des articles de journaux, des chroniques rédigées par des femmes, des lettres et des carnets intimes afin de démontret comment les femmes purent transgresser la prescription qui les exilait à la périphérie politique dans les rôles d'observatrices et d'objets d'observation dans l'Antichambre des dames. De fait, un groupe spécifique de femmes de l'époque modifia et créa des espaces tout en inaugurant leurs propres résaux à l'interieur, aussi bien qu'à l'exterieur, des édifices du parlement. En mettant la lumière sur la primauté de l' "hôtesse politique," cette recherche prétend que les femmes n'étaient pas mises à l'écart, mais plutôt qu'elles approprièrent, et firent de la politique à l'interieur, des espaces les plus privilégiés.

Cette méthodologie ouvre la porte à de nouvelles possibilités dans l'étude des bâtiments législatifs, et des bâtiments publiques en général, en se servant d'un système dynamique de relations plutôt que de modèles de bâtiments à une seule dimension. En insistant sur la facon dont les femmes remirent en question les démarcations spatiales des sexes et du pouvoir et comment elles transformèrent la signification associés aux espaces parlementaires et publics qui n'étaient pas, au départ, désignés à leur usage, nous pouvons mettre au clair le rôle important joué par les femmes en tant qu' "architectes publics" au Canada.

PREFACE

This thesis is framed by what will likely be the last two federal elections of this century. The seeds of this research were planted sometime after the 1993 federal election while I worked on Parliament Hill for a newly elected member of parliament, and the thesis was completed just after the 1997 election.[1] What began as a contemporary analysis of women, politics and space soon developed, as the richness of sources revealed themselves to me, into a historical inquiry. It is interesting to note that the general time period of the thesis, and specifically of my third chapter, is exactly one century ago (1894-1898), and many of the same issues still dominate the political agenda.

At the end of last century, Lady Aberdeen, wife of Governor General Lord Aberdeen,[2] described in her journal the acute tensions between the French and English populations and expressed her desire for a strong voice for women and the disenfranchised in the public arena.[3] Similarly, she commented on issues such as the Manitoba school crises (1895), which although regional in title, bespoke a wider disgruntlement that western issues weren't taken seriously by a centrally-based government.[4] Newspaper articles found in her scrapbook indicate that the integrity of members of parliament was also in question: "I wish that all men would learn to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth!" bewailed a woman in the Commons Ladies' Gallery.[5]

In our last two federal elections, we have seen these passions and concerns manifested once again in the political arena. Her Majesty's Official Opposition in 1993 was the Bloc Québecois whose mandate is to separate from Canada and form a sovereign state. In 1997, the Bloc was replaced as official opposition by the Reform Party whose roots and base of support come primarily from Western Canada. Regionally fractured, the newly

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[1]The 1997 election coverage made Canadian history as it was the first time election coverage was stationed in the Parliament Buildings. The Hall of Honour was taken over by Peter Mansbridge and the CBC crew and viewers were taken on a tour of the buildings through the eyes of the television camera. June 2, 1997.

[2]Lady Aberdeen, Ishbel Maria Marjoribanks (1857-1939) was the daughter of Lord Tweedmouth, a member of British Parliament and a close friend of Gladstone. She and her husband (John Campbell Gordon, 7th Earl of Aberdeen 1847-1934), arrived in an official capacity in Canada in 1893 and stayed until 1898. See also Ishbel Gordon, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, *The Canadian Journals of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1960); *Through Canada with a Kodak* (Edinburgh: W.H. White & Co., 1893); and John Campbell Gordon, Marquis of Aberdeen and Temair, *"We Twa": Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co., 1925).

[3]See John Saywell's introduction in Aberdeen, *The Canadian Journals of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898* .

[4]The Manitoba School Crisis was a debate over separate school boards according to religion. Newfoundland is having a similar referendum, in the fall of 1997, to decide whether or not schools will be fully integrated or if they will remain separate.

[5]Jean Blewett, "In a Woman's Way: Echoes of a Mild Constitutional Question; Political Prevaricators," *Toronto Mail* 31 August 1896: n.p. See also Lady Aberdeen's scrapbook MG IB5 Vol. 22, 63.

elected government was only able to sustain a slim majority due the clout of the highly populated, central province of Ontario in which they won 101 of 103 seats. Conversely, Atlantic Canada virtually wiped out Liberal representation in their region. Their protest vote elected a record number of NDP members from that region. Tensions, resentment, frustrations are high as the members head back to the Hill, yet with all regions represented by Official Parties, the diversity of voices and concerns may well be heard.[6]

How has the political climate changed since Lady Aberdeen's astute observations a century ago? In many ways, it seems that it has not. The same issues arise and there are no obvious solutions. History most certainly repeats itself. The Tory party which, in Lady Aberdeen's time, was frantically re-grouping after the sudden death of its leader, Prime Minister Sir John Thompson, are today re-building the party after its symbolic death in the 1993 election.[7] Yet, a significant change in the political landscape since Lady Aberdeen's tenure is that Canadian women are now the electorate and the elected. Most women were enfranchised federally in 1918, they won status as persons in 1929, and gained equal rights before and under the law in the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms.[8] Given these achievements, it might seem surprising that as we approach the next millennium, women still only make up 20% of members of parliament (up from 18% in the 1993 election).[9] If

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[6]These comments are my own observations based on the elections results which were broadcast on CBC Radio and Television, in the *Globe and Mail* and in local Montreal weeklies *The Mirror, Hour, Voir.* It would, of course, be interesting and telling to read the local papers from the different regions to see how the same results are interpreted.

[7]In the 1993 election, the Conservative caucus was comprised of only two members: party leader, Jean Charest of Sherbrooke, Quebec and former mayor of St. John, N.B. Elsie Wayne.

[8]It is important to note that not all women were enfranchised at the same time. Native women, for example, could not vote federally until 1960 and Quebec women could not vote provincially until 1940. The struggle for equal rights before and under the law in the 1980 Constitution was a formidable one and is recounted by Doris Anderson, former head of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, in her memoir *Rebel Daughter. An Autobiography* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1996).

[9]Women in Canadian politics is a fascinating topic of study and analysis. A must-read is Sydney Sharpe's *The Gilded Ghetto: Women and Political Power* which gives an excellent "personal and political" account of women's influence on and experience of the Canadian political system. The title is a play on the title of Judy LaMarsh's revealing memoir of her years as the only woman in prime minister Lester B. Pearson's cabinet. Sydney Sharpe, *The Gilded Ghetto: Women and Political Power* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994); Judy LaMarsh (both her memoirs and her fiction) *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1968); *A Very Political Lady* and *A Right Honourable Lady* both published by Toronto: McClelland & Stewart 1979, 1980 respectively. Other auto/biographies of influential "political ladies" are Sheila Copps, *Nobody's Baby: A Woman's Survival Guide to Politics* (Toronto: Denaeau Publishers & Company Limited, 1986); Terry Crowley, *Agnes MacPhail and the Politics of Equality* (Toronto: James Lorrimer & Company Publishers, 1990); Doris Pennington, *Agnes MacPhail: Reformer* (Toronto: Simon & Pierre Publishing Company Limited, 1989); Audrey McLaughlin with Rick Archbold, *A Woman's Place: My Life and Politics* (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross, 1992). More general commentaries on the issue include Linda Kealy and Joan Sangster ed., *Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Carol McLeod, *Wives of Canadian Prime Ministers* (Hansport, N.S.: Lancelot Press Limited, 1985); Josephine Payne-O'Connor, *Sharing Power: Women in Politics. A Political Skills Handbook* (Victoria: Kachina Press, 1986); Heather Robertson, *More than a Rose: Prime Ministers, Wives, and Other Women* (Toronto:

the Parliament Buildings in which the politics and policies of the nation are negotiated are any index of women's presence and impact on public affairs, women still have a long way to go.[10]

The buildings in which I was employed were not the same ones from which Lady Aberdeen made her observations one century before. Those buildings were destroyed by fire on February 3, 1916 - two years before Canadian women were enfranchised, five years before the first woman was to sit as a member of parliament. No longer extant, the buildings exist through archival sources in the form of visual and written documentation: architectural plans, photographs, drawings, personal memoirs, newspaper articles, advertisements in building journals, tourist and travel books, popular writing. As a historical study, this thesis touches the period before women officially had status as public persons, a time when it was legally impossible for a woman to be Prime Minister, and when women's assumed use of the Parliament Buildings was architecturally constructed into the role of observer. Yet, women's lack of legal status and their prescribed containment in the small space of the Ladies' Gallery did not completely impede their use of the building or their influence on public affairs.

I had begun this research with the contemporary buildings and its internal spatial structure in mind, but the research led me back to our first Parliament Buildings and its exciting array of characters. Along the way, I have encountered and learned from some inspiring role models.....

McClelland-Bantam Inc., 1991); Sherrill MacLaren, *Invisible Power: The Women Who Run Canada* (Toronto: McClelland-Bantam Inc., 1991).

[10]For example, the first woman's washroom was installed in the Government Lobby, the room adjacent to the House of Commons Chamber where government members congregate while the Commons is in session, in 1994.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my advisor Dr. Annmarie Adams for her incredible generosity of spirit and thought and her amazing ability to see the possibilities of this research. The quality of her own work has served as a landmark and inspiration for my own and it has broadened my understanding of what architectural inquiry entails. I could not have embarked on this project without her guidance and it certainly wouldn't have reached its potential without her clear, concise comments and the high standard she set for me.

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And a big thank you to Team Torsney, for planting the first seeds of political inquiry and for the opportunity to experience first hand the space of politics and the Parliament Buildings.

This thesis could not have been possible without the archival sources upon which it is based. I am grateful to the incredibly helpful staff at the National Archives and at the many other public resource centres: the archives at the City of Ottawa, Province of Ontario, City of Toronto, the Blackader-Lauterman Library at McGill, Metro Toronto Reference Library and the Library of Parliament. In particular, I wish to thank Audrey Dubé, curator

of the Parliament Buildings, for her generosity and time in showing me the secrets and details of the edifices.

And finally, thank you to the School of Architecture for honouring me with the Departmental Fellowship (1995) and to McGill University for the David Stewart Memorial McGill Majors Fellowship (1996-7). These allowed me the freedom and security to pursue my thesis with zeal and imagination!

A last thank you goes to my family whose influence and support goes unsurpassed; thank you for your enthusiasm, for believing in me so wholeheartedly, for taking such an interest in these ideas - and for editing!

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Abbreviations

NA = National Archives of Canada
CA= City of Ottawa Archives

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Introduction

Burning Down the House:
Trailblazers and Firebrands

> *The country is yours ladies; politics is simply public affairs. Yours and mine and everybody's. The government has enfranchised you but it cannot emancipate you, that is done by your own process of thought.*
>
> Nellie McClung, 1917.

A week after the first woman was given membership privileges to the Rideau Club, it burned to the ground. Until that time, Ottawa's most prestigious and exclusive men's club, had "occupied a most enviable and unique site facing Parliament Hill, [a factor] which cannot [have] fail[ed] to influence [its] prestige."[1] (fig.1.1. 1.2) Fire had also been the fate, one half century before, of Canada's premiere men's club, the Parliament Buildings. Two years prior to women's 1918 suffrage victory, the Parliament Buildings had been destroyed by fire. With the incarnation of the new buildings in 1921 came the contentious presence of the first woman member of parliament, Agnes MacPhail. (fig.1.3)

The parallels between the events which led to the re-construction of these two buildings are significant. In both cases, women fought for membership to an exclusive space and status and in both cases the fight was won, framed and punctuated by fire. Symbolic? Perhaps. A poignant analogy? Definitely. The women who dared fight the status quo, its laws and stereotypes, were firebrands and trailblazers. They challenged dominant definitions of "women's place" in society; they organized women and men and lobbied for social and legislative change. Largely ignored in the discussion of Canadian women and politics is women's relationship with the buildings to which they sought access. The Parliament Buildings and the Rideau Club exemplified exclusive spaces of power; the former represented democracy, the latter had no such pretentions, yet it was an

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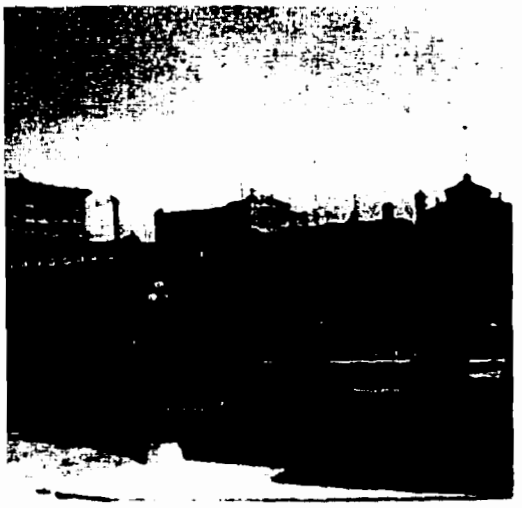
[1]Rideau Club, "Report of the Committee of Management," 31 March 1960, National Archives, MG 32 B 16 Vol. 5, File 20. See also Charles Lynch, *Up From the Ashes: The Rideau Club Story* (Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 1990).



va

:w from the Parliamentary lawn, between
n Parliament Building.

fig. 1.2
View of Peace Tower, pictoral Map of Ottawa
CA 2628

The Parliament Buildings and the Rideau Club, both located on Wellington Street faced one another.

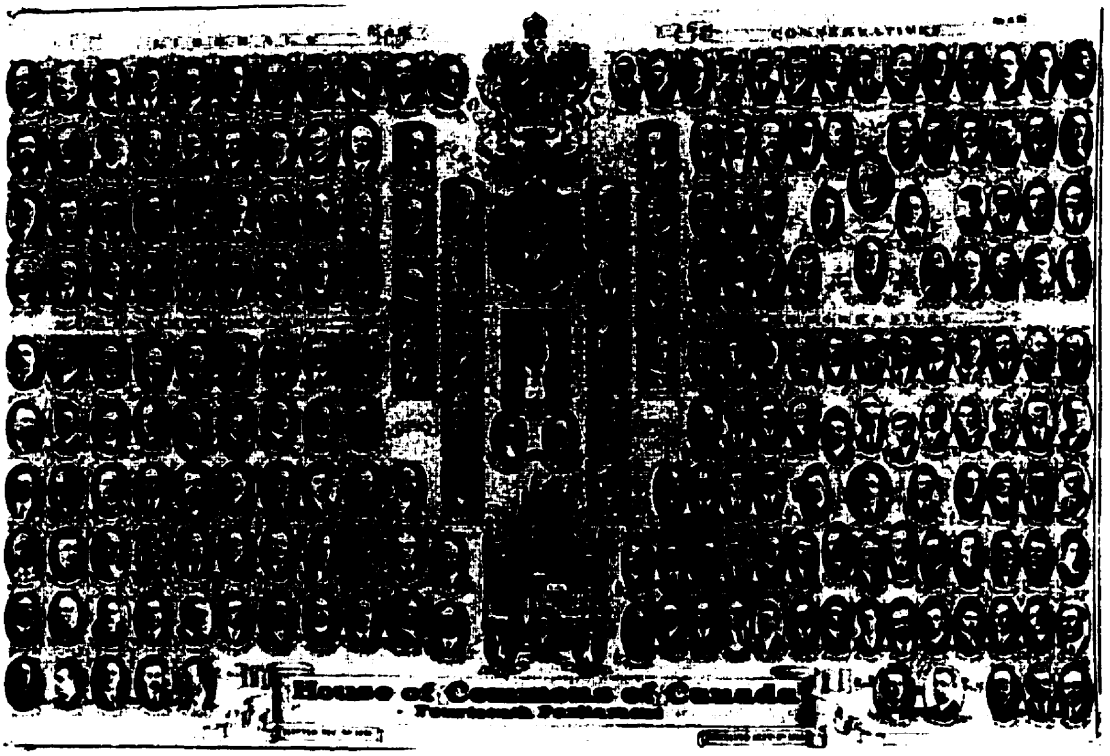


fig. 1.3
Poster of the members of the Fourteenth Parliament including Agnes MacPhail. 1921
C22741

Agnes MacPhail is the third from the bottom on the right and side.

essential part of the network of power.[2] In ideology and architecture, the buildings constructed a gendered definition of public and political persons. (fig.1.4)

As early - or as late - as 1960, the Rideau Club took a first step towards the possibility of women as users, though not members, of the club. They considered the addition of a Ladies' Section which "would be made available to the wives and unmarried daughters of members, who could also entertain there at lunch or dinner - at the expense of the husband or father."[3] A throwback to nineteenth-century ideals, its proposed renovation created a small separate ladies' space within a larger men's domain. The Ladies' Section was to be located on the ground floor, beside the kitchen. It would have a separate entrance on Wellington Street, separate lounge facilities, entrance hallway, powder room and cloakroom. In 1978, Senator Florence Bird received a letter from the Rideau Club's administration. In the letter, Senator Bird, who had chaired the ground-breaking *Royal Commission on the Status of Women* in 1967 was asked if, "as the widow of a former Member [she] had ever considered being a Member of the Club?" The letter continued by noting that "[m]any widows of deceased Members do belong and I believe that they find it to be a pleasant place to have luncheon or dinner in our Ladies' Dining Room and to entertain on occasion."[4] The Honourable Florence Bird's status was defined as the "wife of" a former member of the club. She was thereby limited to the ladies' section of the club and excluded from those spaces and conversations available to her male colleagues. As former Cabinet Minister, Judy LaMarsh, astutely observed, "[t]he premises are not equal; they are separate."[5]

Although women never experienced the exclusive Wellington Street Rideau Club as equal members, women in Canada have a long and colourful history of influencing and infiltrating the spaces of the Parliament Buildings and its vestigial landscape of "official

---

[2]Members of the Rideau Club included Prime Ministers and Leaders of the Opposition such as Lester B. Pearson, Louis St. Laurent, and C.D. Howe, Senators, Cabinet Ministers and members of the Privy Council and Members of Parliament.

[3]This is taken from a letter found in Lionel Chevrier's file at the National Archives. Chevrier was one of many distinguished members of several of Canada's most prestigious clubs including the St. James Club in Montreal, the Cercle Universitaire in Ottawa and the Country Club in Ottawa. He was a Member of Parliament and a Cabinet Minister. D.C. Abbott, "Letter to members of the Rideau Club from the Office of the Secretary General," 1 December 1962, Lionel Chevrier Papers, National Archives, MG 32 B 16 Vol. 5, File 21.

[4]R.J. Meldrum, "Letter to Mrs. John (Florence) Bird, 23 October 1978," Florence Bird Papers, National Archives, MG 31 D 63 Vol. 12, File 18. Meldrum, the Secretary/Manager of the Rideau Club, wrote this letter to Bird after her appointment to the Senate.

[5]LaMarsh writes, in regards to the elitism of the Rideau Club: "the advantages of its membership are that it has proximity to Parliament and that it is 'in' to belong to it. It has had this aura since its founding. Women are permitted on the premises, but only as guests and only at the dinner hour or later. Within the past few years, profound change has taken place, for the Rideau Club has established a ladies' dining room, so that wives and or women guests may come onto the premises during the daylight hours." Judy LaMarsh, *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969) 289.

fig. 1.4
Photograph of Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King and Privy Council in the East Block, c.1920s
NA PA 189568

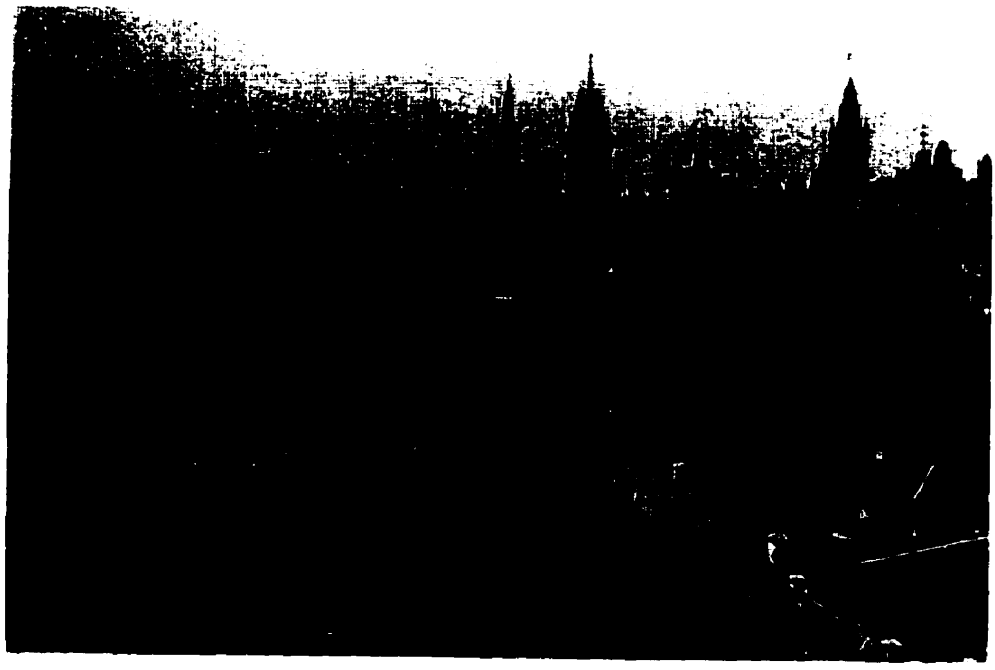


fig 1.5
A View of the First Parliament Buildings from the Cory Building, 1911
CA 0226

In late nineteenth-century Ottawa, the Parliament Buildings were the centre of both political and social events, as well as the architectural precedent that would set the tone for Ottawa's civic landscape.

Ottawa." (fig.1.5) In the nineteenth century, women in Canada lacked the right to vote, let alone the right to sit as members in the House of Commons, yet they exercised their influence from within its most private and public spaces.[6] Excluded from the official networks of party politics, nineteenth-century women formed their own networks while simultaneously enjoying a high status as "insiders" through their role as political hostesses. Architecturally limited to specific "ladies'" spaces in public buildings and private homes, they challenged these constraints by using a decidedly "feminine" and "maternal" rhetoric. Not unlike their twentieth-century compatriots, they lobbied for change by challenging the spatial demarcations of power. They may not have branded fire, but they set a precedent to the effect that women's place in the political arena was in the inner sanctum.

This research examines the convergence of women and the public sphere in the context of late nineteenth-century Ottawa using the Parliament Buildings as its primary focus of investigation. The main question it addresses is *how did women renegotiate the constructions of gender and power in Canada's first Parliament Buildings*? This question makes two implicit assertions. The first is that buildings are cultural artifacts, shaped by historical and political processes, and complicit in constructing cultural concepts of gender and power:

> Since they can express ingrained cultural attitudes that are unarticulated in written texts, buildings serve as important tools for examining the links between gender ideology and daily practice. Indeed, the built environment offers crucial evidence for the investigation of the relationship between individual actions and the cultural contexts in which those lives were lived.[7]

As the example of the Rideau Club illustrates, the design and physical structure of buildings are texts which tell us a story of a particular time and from a specific point of view: "[t]he built environment .... is shaped by human intention and intervention, a living archeology through which we can extract the priorities and beliefs of the decision-makers

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[6]The Woman's *Franchise Act* was given Royal Assent on May 24, 1918. The Act stipulated that a female had the right to vote if she was a British subject 21 years of age or over and possessed the same qualifications which would entitle a male person to vote in her province of residence. The *Dominion By-Elections Act* of 1919 gave women the right to be elected to Federal Parliament. The *Dominion Elections Act* of 1920 established uniform rules for voting in a federal election: British citizenship, 21 years of age, residence in Canada for 12 months and residence in the riding for two months. Wartime legislation had given women who participated in the armed services the right to vote in a general election during wartime. Catherine Cleverdon, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978) and Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1988).

[7]Abigail Van Slyck, "Gender and Space in American Public Libraries, 1880-1920," Southwest Institute for Research on Women, University of Arizona, working paper no. 27 (1992): 1.

of our society."[8] Architects Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones' 1859 design of the Parliament Buildings tells us about the intended use of space; it shows us who is addressed as users of the building and thus who the "builders" of society were. Such drawings, plans and official documents created by the makers and decision-makers relay a static history of the building. To find the living history, these documents must be interlaced, overlaid and challenged by accounts of the actual experience of the building. This research looks at the the building and its plan through a gendered lens, a mode of analysis which opens new possibilities for the study of these legislative buildings as systems of dynamic relationships, rather than as uni-dimensional structures.

The second assumption implied in my question is that women are active agents in, not passive recipients of, their built environment As Nellie McClung stated, women's emancipation and full participation in public affairs was to come from their own agency. Women have had to and continue to challenge spatial constructions of power and gender. Yet, their experience of and impact on their built environment is virtually invisible in official documents, as the paucity of architectural sources in this regard indicates.[9] To find women in the building, one must unearth a variety of sources and piece together the story they weave: archival photographs, newspaper articles written by female journalists, letters, diaries, memoirs, tourist pamphlets, advertisements. In this way, this study differs from traditional histories of the Parliament Buildings, and legislative buildings in general. By piecing these sources together, a rich and untold history unfolds, a historiography both of the buildings and of women in Canada. We find that the Parliament Buildings are a dynamic space, a site of struggle and transformation, a space formed and reformed by its diversity of users - a large constituency of whom were women.

Addressing the spatial construction and renegotiation of gender and power places this thesis in a larger discussion of women and the public sphere. To argue that nineteenth-century women were active agents in the public, that they influenced the space of politics and reconfigured original meanings and uses of spaces challenges both the popular ideology of the time and the first wave of feminist scholarship on nineteenth-century women. Referred to by feminist scholars as the doctrine of separate spheres, this ideology promulgated a strict dichotomy between feminine and masculine, a separation which was manifested through the allocation of physical space and which created the notion of a male

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[8]Leslie Kanes Weisman, "Women's Environmental Rights: A Manifesto," *Heresies* 11 3.3, 6.

[9]Research on the Parliament Buildings has drawn primarily from official documents: Carolyn A. Young's *The Glory of Ottawa: Canada's First Parliament Buildings* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) is an excellent investigation of the "paper architecture" of the buildings' design competition. Other books devoted to the Parliament Buildings include photographic essays such as the NFB's *The Stones of Parliament* and accounts of significant events such as Jane Vakaris, *Fire on the Hill* (Erin, Ontario: The Boston Mill Press, 1988).

public and a female private sphere. The familiar adage "a woman's place is in the home" typifies the pervasive ideology which segregated these spheres on the basis of gender:

> It designated roles and invited their acceptance; it helped to legitimate the economic dependence of women upon men and the exclusion of women from the expanding worlds of politics, business, the professions and organized labour; it proposed a model of womanhood that paradoxically permitted a greater license in the exploitation of women who did not enjoy freedom from labour force participation; it cast a veil over the contradictions that divided women by race and class, and it afforded even privileged women no access to the experience of authoritative self-hood that for men was embodied in the notions of property, work and political responsibility.[10]

Feminist scholarship has shown that this ideal was indeed promulgated in popular and professional discourses, advice books, magazines, newspapers, medical, philosophical, legal, architectural and religious writings, but it has also shown that it was an impossible ideal to achieve.[11] Scholars such as Mary Ryan, Elizabeth Wilson and Carolyn Strange have illustrated in their work on women in the public sphere that the city offered women the possibility of economic independence and increased mobility.[12] Architectural historians Mark Girouard, Dolores Hayden, Sally McMurry, Abigail Van Slyck and Annmarie Adams have shown how public and private design intersected both in the domestic house and in public buildings.[13] Men and women, masculine and feminine, public and private comprise essential elements of both spheres.

That these spheres overlapped on many levels is an important factor in examining the cultural construction of masculinity and femininity in the built environment. It incites us to look at public buildings as interstitial spaces where masculine and feminine meet on

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[10]Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Placing Women's History in History," *New Left Review* 133 (May-June 1982): 23-24.

[11]Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75.1 (June 1988): 9-39.

[12]Mary R. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Trouble: The Pleasure and Perils of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

[13]Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (London: Yale University Press, 1978); and *The Victorian Country House* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981); Sally McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth-Century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, Women, 1870-1900* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

many levels. As Angel Kwolek-Folland elucidates in her study on gender and business in the late nineteenth-century, public met private in the design and conceptualization of commercial structures and interiors. Early offices had grown out of the idea of the gentleman's study:

> From the late eighteenth century, offices often were part of domestic space, the second or third floor of a residence and a direct part of a family business. The townhouse style of three to four floors, narrow and deep, was simultaneously home, office, and often manufacturing plant,... Many early nineteenth-century banks included living areas for the head cashier of other officers, with separate domestic entrances in the bank building.[14]

Commercial buildings eventually attempted to attract a consuming public through illustrious first impressions, but also by offering comfortable "private" places such as parlours, sitting and rest rooms. These spaces were separated according to the sex of its user, as were certain entrances; some banks even advertised "ladies' and gentlemen's" safe deposit and vault facilities.[15] Domestic architecture and imagery were essential parts of public buildings which attempted to communicate important messages to their public by suggesting familial, civic values. (fig.1.6) Although incorporated into public and commercial buildings, these spaces were gendered in their decor and subscribed to rules of propriety in which women needed to be protected from the potential leers or comments of undistinguished men.

The Parliament Buildings were a complex combination of many of these elements but they remain poorly understood beyond being symbols of national identity, or historic monuments of architectural note. They were, in fact, multi-faceted buildings, which combined domestic, office and legislative design. As such, Canada's first Parliament Buildings did not fit into the monolithic categories promulgated by the ideology of separate spheres or traditional architectural history. A paradigm of overlapping spheres provides a useful perspective from which to examine both their design and women's complicated relationship with the Parliament Buildings.

Women's increasingly visible use of the first Parliament Buildings in the last two decades of the nineteenth century came at a point when civic planning addressed women as users of the public sphere. By the late nineteenth-century, women permeated the civic landscape; buildings such as department stores were constructed specifically with women in mind, previously exclusively male spaces such as libraries, art galleries and office

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[14]Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) 99.
[15]Kwollek-Folland 123.

buildings were creating spaces for women and, significantly, it was a time when women created their own spaces outside the home.

Women were builders of their own homes and public architects in both a figurative and literal sense.[16] Not content with the unrealistic, unattainable and impractical *cult of domesticity* which placed a high status on women who stayed idle in their homes, women in the late nineteenth century initiated networks which began in their homes, but which soon branched out into public spaces.[17] Remaining within the codes of "acceptable behaviour," and working from within established institutions such as the church, charitable organizations and, of course, the home, women began shaping public opinion and initiating social reform. They turned to their own advantage the moral and virtuous identity created by dominant discourses and exerted influence over their private living spaces, created separate woman's spaces in the public sphere, and found their way into the most powerful spaces in the Canadian political landscape.

Chapter One of this thesis draws a spatial map of women's networks in the public and private landscape of "Official Ottawa." This chapter takes examples of three different buildings types, the hotel, official residence and teacher's college, to illustrate how public and private design and ideologies intersected. The Russell Hotel, Government House and the Ottawa Normal School each offered women different, and increasingly public, roles in the exercise of their public influence. In their design, their location and/or their uses, these buildings existed in relation to the apex of political activity, the Parliament Buildings. The women who used these spaces were well-connected socially and politically. They used the private parlours and public meeting rooms to affirm their roles as insiders and to create a large and influential network - always under the auspicious role of hostess, wife, or municipal "housekeeper." This chapter introduces Lady Aberdeen as a prominent player in this stage and suggests that many women connected to male spheres of influence yielded

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[16]There is a large literature on women as active agents in the construction of their own homes. Annmarie Adams' *Architecture in the Family Way* investigates women as decision-makers in the acquisition of their houses, designers of the birthing room and inspectors of all aspects of domestic sanitation from plumbing, overall cleanliness to family health. Architecture marketing in nineteenth-century women's magazines is investigated in Jan Jennings, "Drawing on the Vernacular Interior," *Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture* 27.4 (Winter 1992): 255-280. Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe's advice in*The American Woman's Home* (New York: Library of Victorian Culture, 1979) is based on the belief that "the wise woman buildeth her house." They advise that woman's space (kitchen) should be highly compartmentalized and organized; that the woman have complete control over her domain and "[w]hen... the wise woman seeks a home in which to exercise this ministry, she will aim to secure a house so planned that it will provide in the best manner for health, industry, and economy, those cardinal requisites of domestic enjoyment and success." Beecher and Beecher-Stowe 23-24.

[17]Clifford Clark, "Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: The Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840-1890," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Summer 1976): 33-56. The "luxury" of not having to work outside or inside the home was divided along racial and class lines; working class women did not have access to the "material security that would have permitted the full cultivation of true womanhood and full-time motherhood that the literature advised." Fox-Genovese 23.

significant power, carrying out their business in the public eye as well as the most privileged, private spaces.

Chapter Two examines how the design of the Parliament Buildings prescribed "place" according to gender and class. It examines the buildings from both the exterior and the interior to reveal the cultural assumptions inherent in their design, specifically who "architects" of the nation were assumed to be. Seen through the character of Kit Coleman, journalist and public commentator, this chapter looks beyond the buildings' architectural style and historical references to investigate their interior organization. Using the highly gendered model of the Victorian gentleman's country house, this chapter argues that the Parliament Buildings' design incorporated the domestic spaces associated with masculinity to construct an exclusively masculine enclave, one which reinscribed a specific definition of "public persons," a definition ready to be challenged by a new constituency of users of the buildings: women.

Chapter Three illustrates how women's actual use of the Parliament Buildings transgressed architectural prescription and transformed the meanings of spaces not initially intended for their use. It shows how the Parliament Buildings were transformed, during official occasions, from a masculine work place into a feminized drawing-room and that women's use of this space exemplified their essential, gendered role in the political landscape. A variety of sources - archival photographs, newspaper articles, letters and memoirs - reveal that women experienced the buildings in bold and adventurous ways, while in the process being historiographers of the Parliament Buildings. By showing how women challenged the spatial demarcations of gender and power and transformed the meanings associated with parliamentary spaces, we can draw a picture of the larger role women played as "public architects."

Together, these three chapters bring together the complicated relationship embodied in the aphorism "a lady in the (H)house." In the nineteenth-century, women in Canada moved out of the restrictive space of the home into a variety of urban parlours including that of Canada's most prestigious "House," the Parliament Buildings. This thesis illuminates the primacy of the "political hostess" in the nineteenth century and highlights an important time in women's history, where women were not relegated to the sidelines, but appropriated - and practiced politics from within - the most privileged of spaces.

Chapter 1

Women on the Move:

The Intersection of Private and Public Landscapes in Women's Acquisition of Social Power

Turn-of-the-century Ottawa was a city bustling with activity. Transformed from a bare lumber town into a glittering world of official society by the construction of the impressive federal Houses of Parliament, the nation's capital attracted a colourful diversity of people to its ranks. A political and social elite quickly emerged: poets of the likes of Archibald Lampman, royalty such as Princess Louise and distinguished statesmen such as Sir Wilfrid Laurier found temporary or permanent residence in the growing city.[1] By the late 1890s, Ottawa's official society was a world that had achieved "a social hierarchy gilded and plumed... such as no city in North America could display."[2]

The world of politics and of Official Society intersected; the reporting of society went hand in hand with the reporting of politics. The Opening of Parliament, a parliamentarians' dinner at Government House, even the dates of the Ottawa ladies' "at homes" made the newspapers.[3] Society reporters like Amaryllis, whose *Saturday Night* column depended on both her astute comments and her potential to be invited to all the important events, highlighted the politics of Ottawa Society. Kit Coleman distinguished herself as a "prosy press woman" rather than a society reporter, but she captured the political gossip as heard from the House of Commons Ladies' Gallery in her *Kit in Parliament* column.[4] This style of reporting combined the affairs of state with the affairs of

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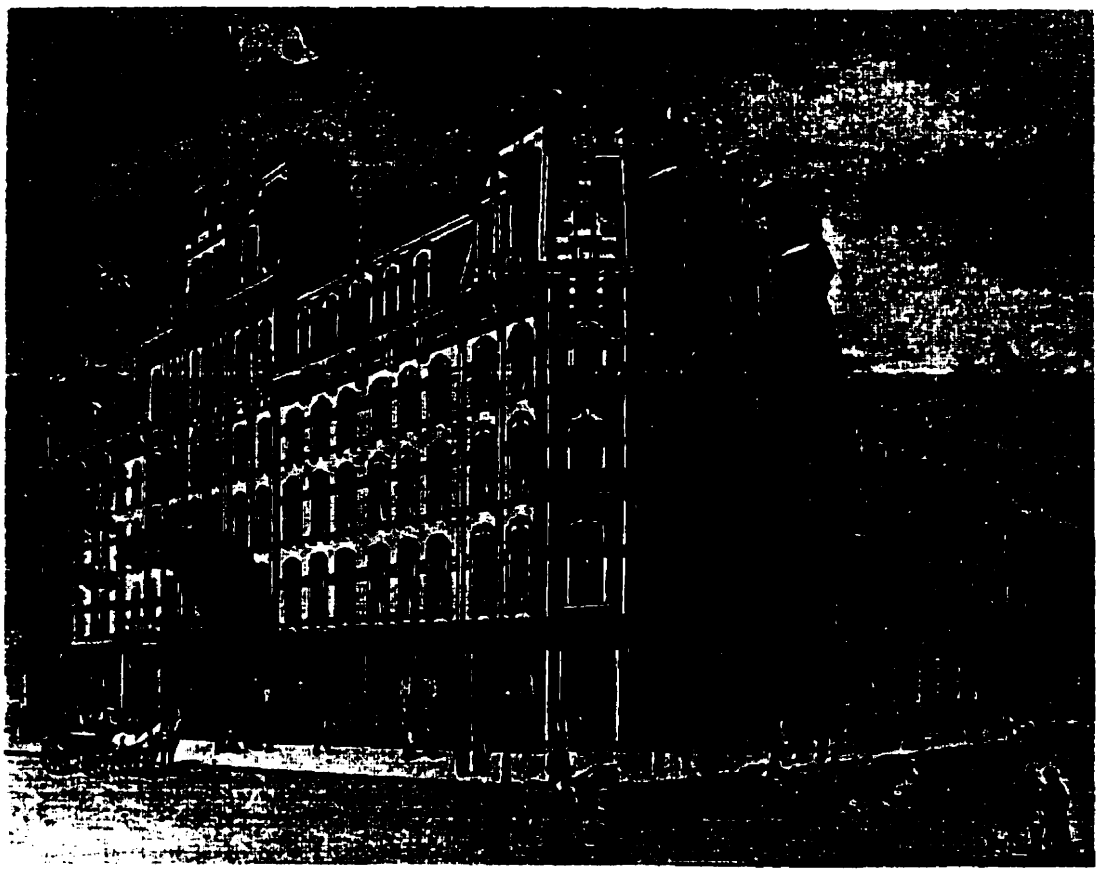
[1]Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria and wife of Governor General Lorne, lived in Ottawa from 1878-9.

[2]Sandra Gwyn, *The Private Capital: Ambition and Love in the Age of Macdonald and Laurier* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1984) 230.

[3]The ladies in Sandy Hill, such as Fanny Meredith, wife of a senior civil servant, received on Tuesdays, while the ladies on Metcalfe Street did so on Wednesdays. Gwyn, 231. A full discussion of prominent Ottawa ladies' views on "at homes" was published in the *Ottawa Journal* in July, 1898. Entitled "The Burdens of Social Life", the symposium was a response to recommendations made by the National Council of Women in regards to the formalities and etiquette of "calling." Participants in the discussion included Lady Laurier and Madame Lavergne. The article was found in Lady Aberdeen's scrapbooks, MG 27 IB5 Vol. 28, 93.

[4]Kit Coleman, "Kit in Parliament. What She Saw and Heard in the Senate Chamber. Waiting for the Ceremony - When the Ladies Began to Arrive - the Grand Dresses - General Gossip of the Houses on Ottawa Hill," *Toronto Mail and Empire* 21 August 1896: n.p. MG 27 IB5 Vol. 22, 7.

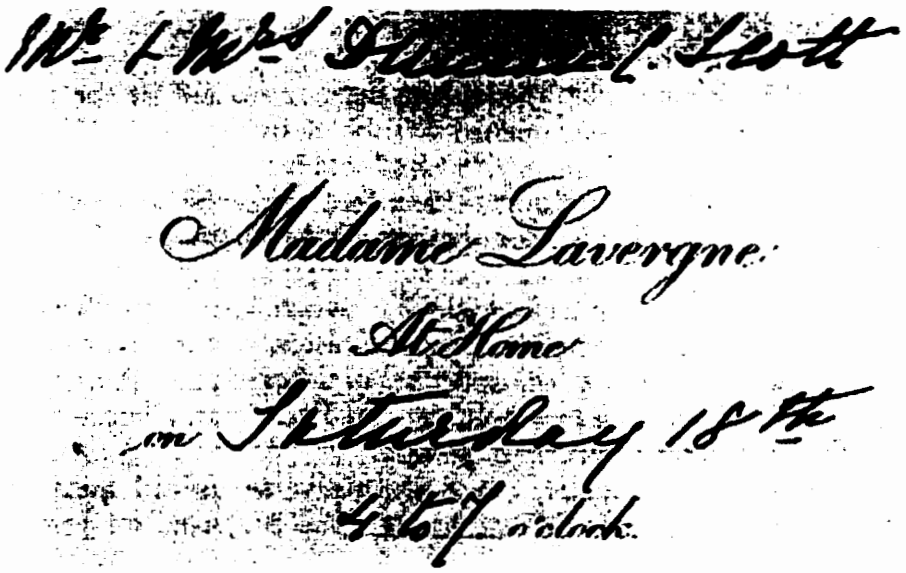


2.1
Drawing of the Russell Hotel
View from Canal At Sparks Street
Canadian Illustrated News, February 4, 1882.

The Russell House went through many phases. It was built in 1842 and became Campbell's Hotel, a tavern-type hotel in 1852. In 1863, it was christened the Russell House. After this, a series of new additions and upgrades took place making it Ottawa's premiere hotel. A new Elgin Street wing was built for Confederation in 1867 and in 1875, the architects Stent and Laver, who designed the East and West Blocks of the Parliament Buildings, designed the Russell's new Canal Street wing.

The hotel could hold up to 400 guests. It had all the modern conveniences: elevators, bathrooms in all the rooms, electric bells to communicate with reception, and it was lighted by electricity and gas. In 1891, there was a fire in the commercial wing which was quickly re-built and re-furnished. In 1897, the construction of the Russell Theatre gave the hotel an even higher status, but a final fire on April 14, 1928 destroyed the entire building.

2.2
Invitation to Emilie Lavergne's "At Home" held at the Russell Hotel
December 18, 1897
The Private Capital. 262.



2.3
Photograph of Emilie Lavergne

statesmen and women. Indeed, the private side of public affairs was common knowledge; here public and private were intricately entwined.

A significant event took place on December 18, 1897, as Madame Emilie Lavergne held an "At Home" at the Russell House Hotel in downtown Ottawa.[5] (fig.2.1) Invitations were sent to 600 people, including judges, senators, cabinet ministers and reporters. (fig.2.2) Between the hours of four and seven o'clock, the expansive drawing room of the ever-popular Russell Hotel was crowded with people. The event was the lead item for the *Free Press*; the newspaper gave Amaryllis six inches of space for the story. But why all the attention? Why was Mme. Lavergne's "at home" such a popular and reported event? How is it that a woman of good standing, the wife of a judge, entertained in a hotel? And finally, what is the connection between this event and the subject of this thesis, which asks how women have renegotiated constructions of gender and power in Canada's Parliament Buildings?

The answers are at once straightforward and complex. Women of a particular standing - the wives, mistresses, sisters and mothers of wealthy or influential men - had two important traits: a widening sphere of social and moral activities[6] and access to powerful men. This combination resulted in the creation of a network of women who began to shape the public landscape and who worked the inside rooms of Canadian politics. This chapter draws a spatial map of women's "private" relationship with public affairs in late nineteenth-century Ottawa by examining specific spaces used by socially and politically active women. The first section investigates the Russell House Hotel and Government House as liminal spaces between private and public; they were residential with explicit public functions. The Russell Hotel exemplified the lifestyle of hotel living. At the turn-of-the-century, it was Ottawa's most popular hotel and it offered women a dynamic space in which to participate in the public sphere. Government House epitomized aristocratic values and offered a public role for the lady of the house in an official capacity. As mistresses of these houses, and in their role as political hostess, women like Emilie Lavergne and Lady Aberdeen were essential parts of political life. Their influence filtered from the space of their "home" into the public sphere.

This filtering is investigated in the second section by looking at the spatial implications of women's increasing access to the public sphere, specifically in regards to a women's club, the National Council of Women of Canada. As a political pressure group,

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[5]Both the first and second Russell Hotels were destroyed by fire. They are referred to interchangeably as the Russell Hotel and Russell House. After a fire in 1927, the hotel was not reconstructed as the land was bought by the federal government.

[6]Martha Vicinus ed., *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1977) ix.

the Council worked from a separate female sphere but used public buildings for its meetings. Although couched in a rhetoric of domestic responsibilities and Canadian nationalism, the Council's impact was felt on the public landscape. The various spaces occupied by the National Council of Women, in particular, the Ottawa Normal School, show that they depended on but also challenged the omnipotence of existing structures, both physical and ideological. By examining the spaces in which Ottawa's women displayed and exercised their powers, the second part of this chapter looks at how the intersection of public and private took place both spatially and ideologically.

More specifically, by looking at the different building types and the new relationships women formed with them, it is possible to draw conclusions about the state of women's presence in public. Each of the spaces examined in this chapter are cogent and typical examples of a particular building type. Hotel life offered women a lifestyle which was an alternative to the conventional domestic dwelling, one which centred around public sphere activities. While the Russell House Hotel adhered to dominant ideals in hotel design, it was also by far the most popular and talked about Ottawa hotel in its time. Government House enjoyed "serene, unchallenged omnipotence" as the pinnacle of Canadian high society and offered the lady of the house a rich variety of roles and opportunities from which to exercise her influence. And finally, the design and use of a specific NCW meeting place, the Ottawa Normal School, embodies the tensions between traditional and changing notions of femininity within society.

Political Hostesses: The Russell House Hotel and Rideau Hall

Why, then, was Mme. Lavergne's "at home" so widely discussed and attended? Emilie Lavergne was an intimate friend of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's; some say she was his mistress, others that she was simply his confidante.[7] (fig.2.3) Her close links to the prime minister gave her an elevated status among social and political circles. To invite her to or to have her organize an event brought it to the attention of the Prime Minister. As a result, her actions commanded the attention of reporters, socialites and politicians alike. Her first "at home", then, was of mutual interest and necessity to many parties: Mme. Lavergne wanted to meet the who's who of Ottawa politics and they in turn wanted to be in favourable standing with her. Clearly, she was seen as an *insider*, yet she was not married to a

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[7]Charles Fisher states unequivocally that they were lovers in his collection *Dearest Emilie: The Love Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to Madame Emilie Lavergne* (Toronto: NC Press, 1989). Sandra Gwyn only suggests that they may have been more than friends. For more on Emilie Lavergne see Heather Robertson, *More than A Rose: Prime Ministers, Wives, and Other Women* (Toronto: McClelland-Bantam Inc., 1991); Henry James Morgan, LL.D, F.R.S.N.A. ed., *Types of Canadian Women and Women Who Are or Have Been Connected With Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1903). In the fall of 1997, Laurier's letters to Mme. Lavergne were acquired by the National Archives.

politician and she herself did not hold any public position of power. She was, however, connected to the most powerful politician in Canada.

How is it that Emilie Lavergne came to entertain at the Russell Hotel? By the late nineteenth century a married woman living in a hotel, especially one as prestigious as the Russell, was common.[8] That Mme. Lavergne's address was not a private dwelling but a public hotel is indicative of several changes in society and shifts in dominant ideology. The feminine ideal no longer required women to stay solely within the confines of their homes. In fact, women began to use a number of socially sanctioned public spaces in which they could legitimately pursue "feminine" interests: the art gallery, the church, the ladies' reading room of the public library, the department store, the hotel ladies' parlour, and the photographers' studio.[9] These spaces, such as the Fifth Avenue Hotel's Ladies' Drawing Room depicted in figure 2.4 were designed specifically for respectable ladies and they recalled the atmosphere of the domestic parlour. Hotels often had private ladies entrances and were furnished in the latest styles.[10] In other words, women could legitimately use various public spaces but these were separate women's spaces and were domestic in decor.

Similarly, changes in living patterns, such as increased urbanization and the separation of work and home, meant that downtown hotel living, as well as a rise in apartment living, was convenient and thus became more common.[11] With the construction of luxury hotels for the wealthy and "mid-priced mansions" for the middle class, hotel living became an attractive choice for the upper and middle classes:

> Hotel life did not require the slow building and furnishing of an expensive house in the correct neighborhood, the gradual building up a reputation, or the laborious wheeling of one's way into the proper social clubs and dinner circuits.[12]

The Alexandra Hotel in Ottawa, was "less famous than the Russell, but many families lived there permanently, anywhere from ten to thirty years."[13] The fact was that "downtown

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[8]Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[9]These spaces were often used as an index for what was in style. Women would visit in order to see what was the latest in parlour decoration. See Katherine Grier, *Culture and Comfort: People, Parlors and Upholstery, 1850-1930* (Rochester, New York: The Strong Museum, 1988).

[10]Grier 19-58.

[11]Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1990).

[12]Groth 30.

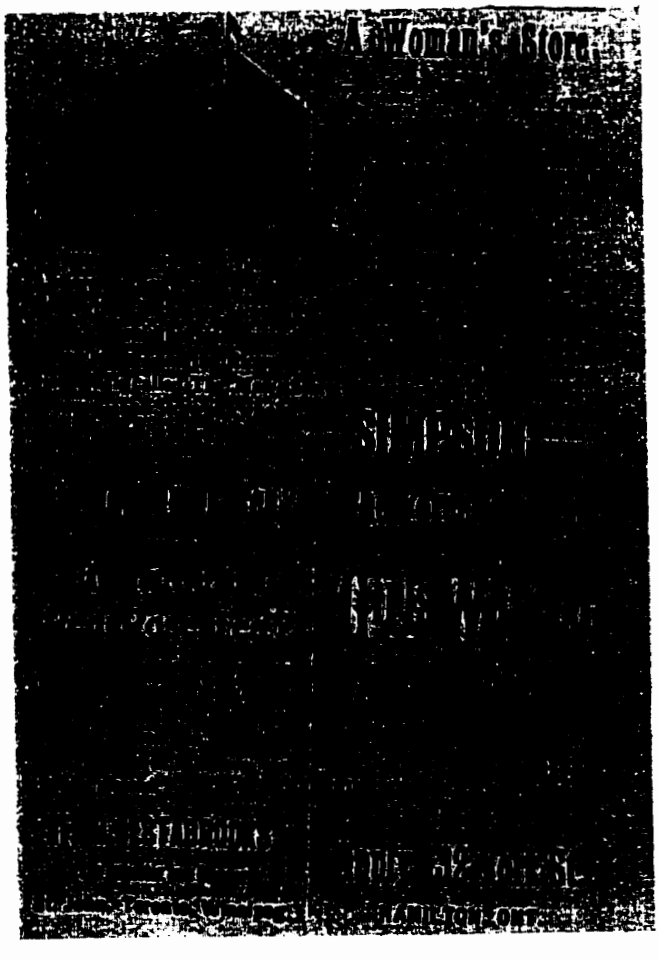
[13]Madge MacBeth, in her memoirs, notes the flourishing hotel life in Ottawa and explains the rules of etiquette surrounding this lifestyle. See MacBeth, *Over My Shoulder* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1953) 22.

2.4
Drawing of the Fifth Avenue Hotel's Ladies Drawing Room
Harper's Weekly 3 October 1, 1859, 663.

2.5
Advertisement for the Robert Simpson Company Limited, 1901.
Report of the National Council of Women of Canada, 1901-3. Appendix, xxxv.

Simpson's advertised itself as "emphatically a woman's Store" and attempted to appeal to a new, urban and mobile woman consumer. For those unable to travel to the city, there was the Simpson's catalogue available since 1894. The six story building pictured here is in the downtown area (probably Toronto); it has pedestrians, trams and horse-drawn carriages bustling in front of its doors.

Note the "Girls Wanted" advertisement on the bottom left. Women were working in jobs other than the traditional domestic service such as shopgirls and clerks. The proliferation of department stores like Simpson's is significant not only because it specifically addressed women as consumers, but also because its employees were women.



hotel life ha[d] the promise to be not just urban but urbane."[14] For upper- and middle-class women especially, hotel living meant the elimination of the "servant problem" and the responsibilities of entertaining and interior decorating, as well as proximity to urban amenities including department stores such as Simpsons'.[15] (fig.2.5, 2.6)

The Russell Hotel was thus a semi-public, semi-private space; it had a public dining room, a semi-public drawing room, and private bedrooms. The Russell successfully combined both public and domestic tastes to attract and cater to a socially self-conscious, urban clientele: "the majority of the smart set, of course, tak[e] up their quarters at the Russell."[16] A photograph from the 1890s shows its spacious rotunda with marble columns, high ceilings, chandeliers and a "broad imposing central stairway."[17] (fig.2.7) The drawing room was a "huge chamber" with chaste ornamentation, four immense lace-draped windows, two fireplaces and a grand piano. The view was excellent, both for the women looking out and passers-by looking in. From the drawing room, one could see Sparks Street, the East Block of the Parliament Buildings, the Canal, the Laurentian Hills and Sandy Hill. (fig.2.8) Ladies received every Friday in the Russell drawing room; they also held musical evenings and lively receptions catered by "the genial and most popular of hosts," proprietor Monsieur St. Jacques.[18] The private rooms were equally impressive. Guests stayed in "large and awesome" apartments, "crowded with scowling furniture; a huge double bed, an enormous bureau, a gigantic wardrobe the size of a modern bathroom, and a collection of forbidden-looking chairs."[19]

Although no architectural drawings seem to have survived and the building was destroyed by fire in 1928, lively descriptions and a few photographs indicate that the Russell conformed to popular conceptions of hotel living: luxurious lobby, drawing rooms which accommodated 300 hundred guests, popular dining room and large "apartments."

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[14]Groth 7.

[15]The new C. Ross Company building, a large, five storey Italianate department store was built close to the Russell. The rise of the department store and the association between femininity and consumption is explored in Sally Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); M. Christine Boyer, *Manhattan Manners: Architecture and Style, 1850-1900* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985). Hotel life also saved women from the drudgery of unpaid housework. Dolores Hayden explores housing and housekeeping alternatives in *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981).

[16]*The Russell: The Tourist and Sportsman*, (Ottawa: Mortimer Press, 1899) 21.

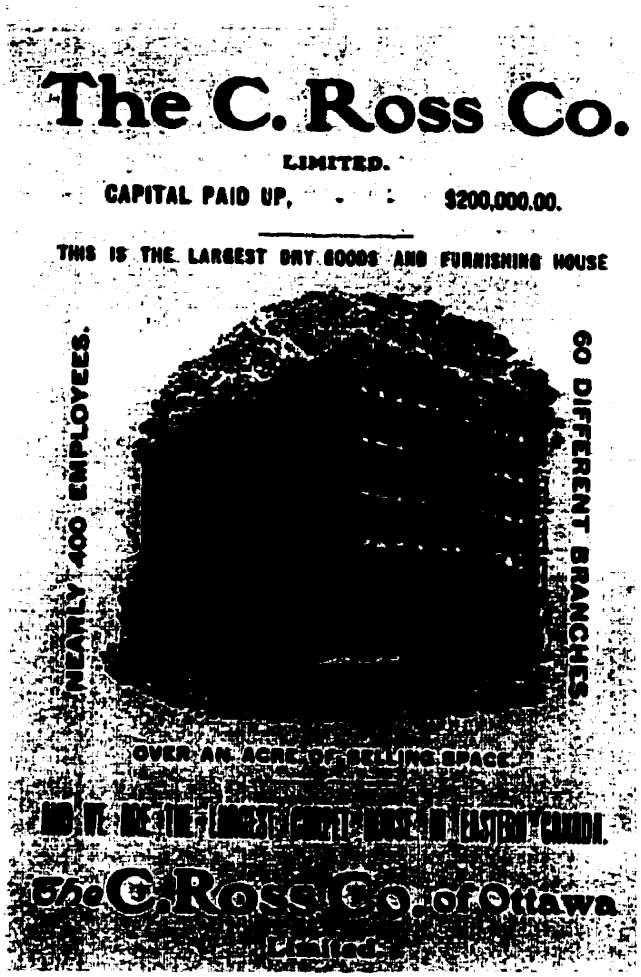
[17]*The Russell* 13. This photograph is also in Robert Haig, *Ottawa: City of the Big Ears: The Intimate, Living Story of a City and a Capital* (Ottawa: Haig and Haig Ltd., 1969) 150.

[18]M. St. Jacques, according to the *Tourist and Sportsman*, was an extremely popular and "dear big-hearted man" to whom everyone sang "for he's a jolly good fellow" when he entered the room, 24.

[19]Madge MacBeth describes Miss MacMurchy's room whom she visited at the Russell. MacBeth was surprised to have been invited to Miss MacMurchy's bedroom because "People...usually visited in one of the lounges or a private 'parlour.'" MacBeth 59.

2.6
Advertisement for the C. Ross Co. of Ottawa
Report of the National Council of Women of Canada, 1901-3, n.p.

Ottawa also had its share of department stores. The C. Ross Co. sold dry goods and furniture and built a large five story Italianate building near the Russell.



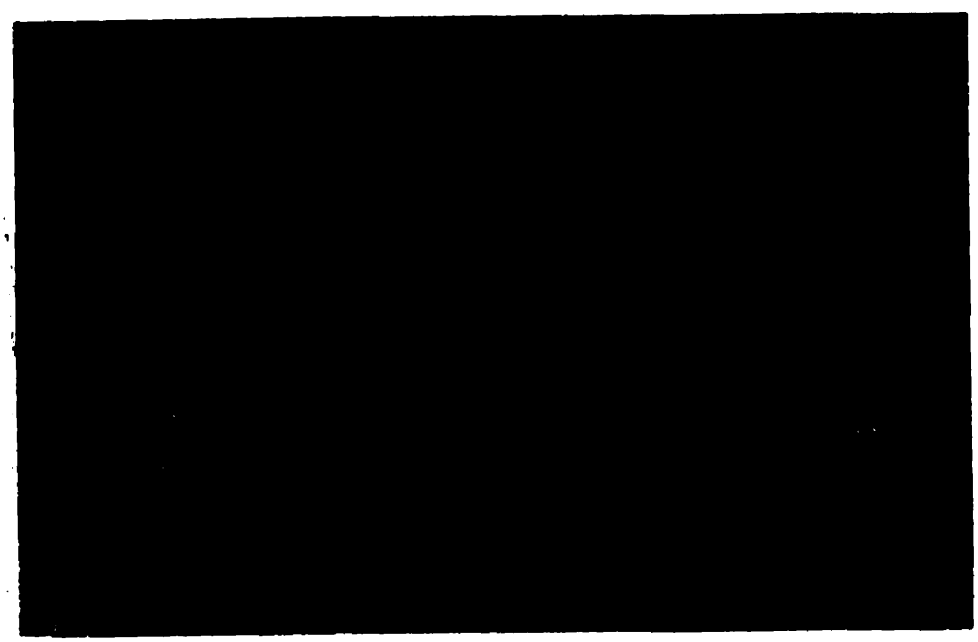
Ottawa's first department store was the T. Linsday Store, better known today as the Daly building, which was built in 1904. Designed by Moses Chamberlain Edey, it was a four story, glass in steel frame building, Ottawa's only example of the Chicago Style.

2.7
Rotunda of the Russell Hotel.
The Tourist and Sportsman, 13, C 16410.

"There was a good deal of red plush about, and miles of red chenille tassels dripped from the ponderous furniture."
Madge Macbeth, *Over My Shoulder*, 59.

2.8
Photograph of the Ladies' Drawing Room, Russell Hotel
C16414

This room was in fact a double room. It is comfortable with plush furniture, plants, carpet and elaborate drapes. Women would be able to see the city out the windows, but would also be on display for passing pedestrians.



2.9
Dining Room at the Russell House
Canadian Illustrated News, April 5, 1873.

"Hospitality breathed from the Russell Hotel."
Madge Macbeth, *Over My Shoulder*, 85.

According to *The Tourist and Sportsman*, the Russell was famous for its hot breakfast: buckwheat cakes "done to a turn." It was a popular meeting place and dining venue. There were two different lunch menus and a gourmet dinner menu.

2.10
Photograph of the bar at the Russell
C16413

2.11
Drawing of the Hall of the Russell House
Canadian Illustrated News, November 8, 1873

The busy hall is depicted as an exclusively male space where business and political gossip likely discussed.

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(fig.2.9) Typical of Victorian sexual propriety, there were separate men's and ladies' rooms distinguished as such by their gendered decor. (fig.2.10) The bar had a marble floor, polished oak counter with brass finishings, quartered oak and wainscotted walls; the adjoining café was decorated with hunting pictures; and, the comfortable reading room was full of oak tables, wide sofas, and a pressed brick fireplace. Along with the smoking room, billiard room, reading room and barber shop, these rooms suffused masculinity. They were dark, paneled and used for traditionally male activities such as drinking and smoking, like the design of gentleman's country houses, they were connected one to the other.

Also included in this configuration of rooms was the main lobby, depicted by *The Canadian Illustrated News* as an exclusively male domain. (fig.2.11) Madge Macbeth remembers that "unattended women did not fit casually in and out of hotels or any other public places. I felt frightfully conspicuous ... as I walked across the lobby."[20] However, as Mme. Lavergne's "at home" indicated, women did have their place in the hotel. There were two tastefully furnished drawing rooms reserved for ladies and a separate one for men. The Ladies' Entrance on Sparks Street was separated from the busy hall; its cozy waiting rooms were curtained off with rich brocaded hangings and had crimson velvet furniture. Catering to "feminine" needs, it was home to a splendid mirror, several writing tables and soft-coloured pictures.[21]

Mme. Lavergne's commanding use of the Russell's drawing room is indicative of her confidence not only as a hostess, but also of the increasing acceptability of women living and working in a wider variety of environments. While women of the upper class lived in the hotel, working-class women found employment there as maids. (fig.2.12) The Russell Hotel offered respectable employment. An 1898 photograph shows a young, respectable-looking working-girl employed by the Russell. She stands tall and is rather distinguished for her fifteen years, dressed in a white shirtwaist, long black skirt, laced shoes, a handsome, ornate hat, and holding an umbrella.

While some critics were pre-occupied with the phenomenon of the working girl, others worried that hotel living was detrimental to woman's "true" role as a wife and homemaker. For a strong-minded, cultured woman like Mme. Lavergne with social ambitions and high social standing, the pros of the hotel lifestyle outweighed the cons.[22] She was of a new breed, a "new woman" and "[i]nasmuch as such women threatened the

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[20]MacBeth 59.

[21]*The Tourist and Sportsman* 13-18.

[22]There was also a concern about women's propriety. At first, single women were barred from hotels for fear that they were prostitutes. Mme. Lavergne was married and brought her daughter, Gabrielle, with her.

dominant culture, their hotel homes were a threat as well."[23] The Russell House's central location and its high potential for social and political contact meant that Mme. Lavergne could weave herself into the appropriate social circles without the immediate pressure and expense of setting up a new home.[24]

It was almost inevitable that Mme. Lavergne should chose the Russell as her home away from home; few Ottawa hotels at the time could rival the Russell in its popularity and omnipresence.[25] The massive six storey building took up an entire city block. (fig.2.13) Like many commercial buildings constructed in Ottawa in the 1870s, it was built in the Second Empire style and was distinguished by its mansard roof, rusticated ground floor and round-headed windows.[26] This choice of architectural style was significant. It blended with the uniformity of Wellington Street on which the Parliament Buildings were located. (fig.2.14) A view of Wellington Street shows that it had become "a grand Second Empire thoroughfare ... provid[ing] Canadians with an imposing symbol of the power and stability of their new nation."[27] But the Russell's architectural style also

> satisfied the desire to impress the viewer with the wealth and power of the building owner ... as well as exemplifying new nationhood and the French connection, important symbolically for the new Capital of Canada.[28]

The Hotel's location put it squarely at the centre of activity in Ottawa. (fig.2.15) It was on the south east corner of Sparks and Elgin, across from City Hall and the Post Office, south of the Parliament Buildings and on the tram line. But more than its central location, its colourful diversity of people who inhabited and frequented the establishment made it such a dynamic setting. The Russell Hotel was the political and social hub where everyone went for dinner, met before and after the Opening of Parliament or the Speech from the Throne. Kit Coleman wrote before the Opening of Parliament in 1896,

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[23]Groth 210. See also Cromley's *Alone Together. A History of New York Apartments.*

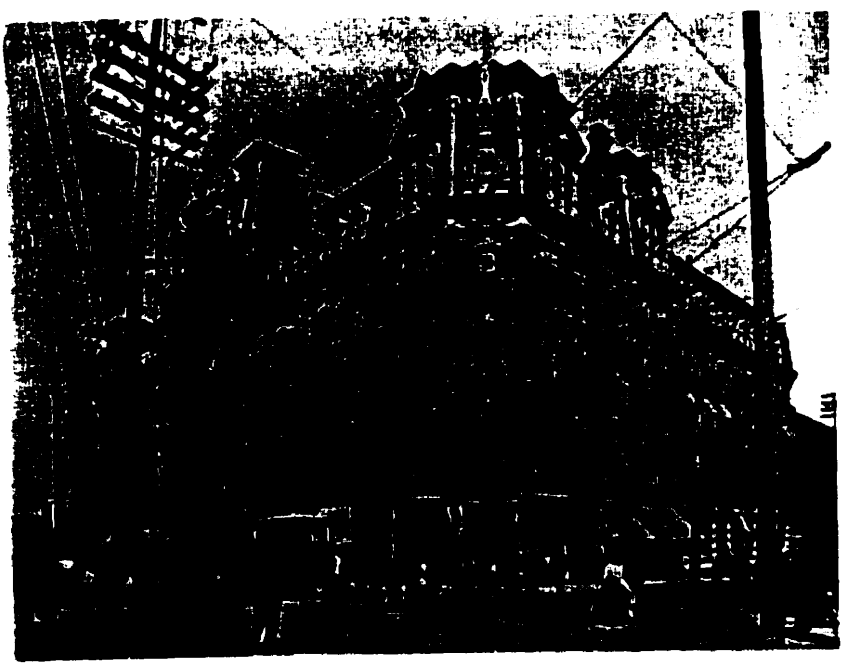
[24]The Lavergnes later took a house on Theodore Street, a few doors away from their friends, the Lauriers.

[25]Later, the french Gothic, Chateau-style Chateau Laurier, built in 1912, would rival the Russell by achieving an international reputation.

[26]"Together with the buildings of the Russell Hotel, the Langevin Block and the Financial Houses along Wellington Street facing Parliament Hill, Ottawa's central area at the end of the nineteenth century presented a coherent architectural parti in the Second Empire Style." Italianate was also popular at this time, but was confined mostly to Sparks Street. John Leaning and Lyette Fortin, *Our Architectural Ancestry* (Ottawa: Haig and Haig Publishing, 1987) 52; J.C. Taylor, *Some Early Ottawa Buildings: Manuscript Report No. 268* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1975).

[27]Other Second Empire buildings on Wellington Street were La Banque Nationale, the Bank of Ottawa and the Quebec Bank. Christina Cameron and Janet Wright, *Second Empire Style in Canadian Architecture: Canadian Historic Sites No. 24* (Hull: Minister of Supply and Services, 1980) 101.

[28]Leaning and Fortin 52.

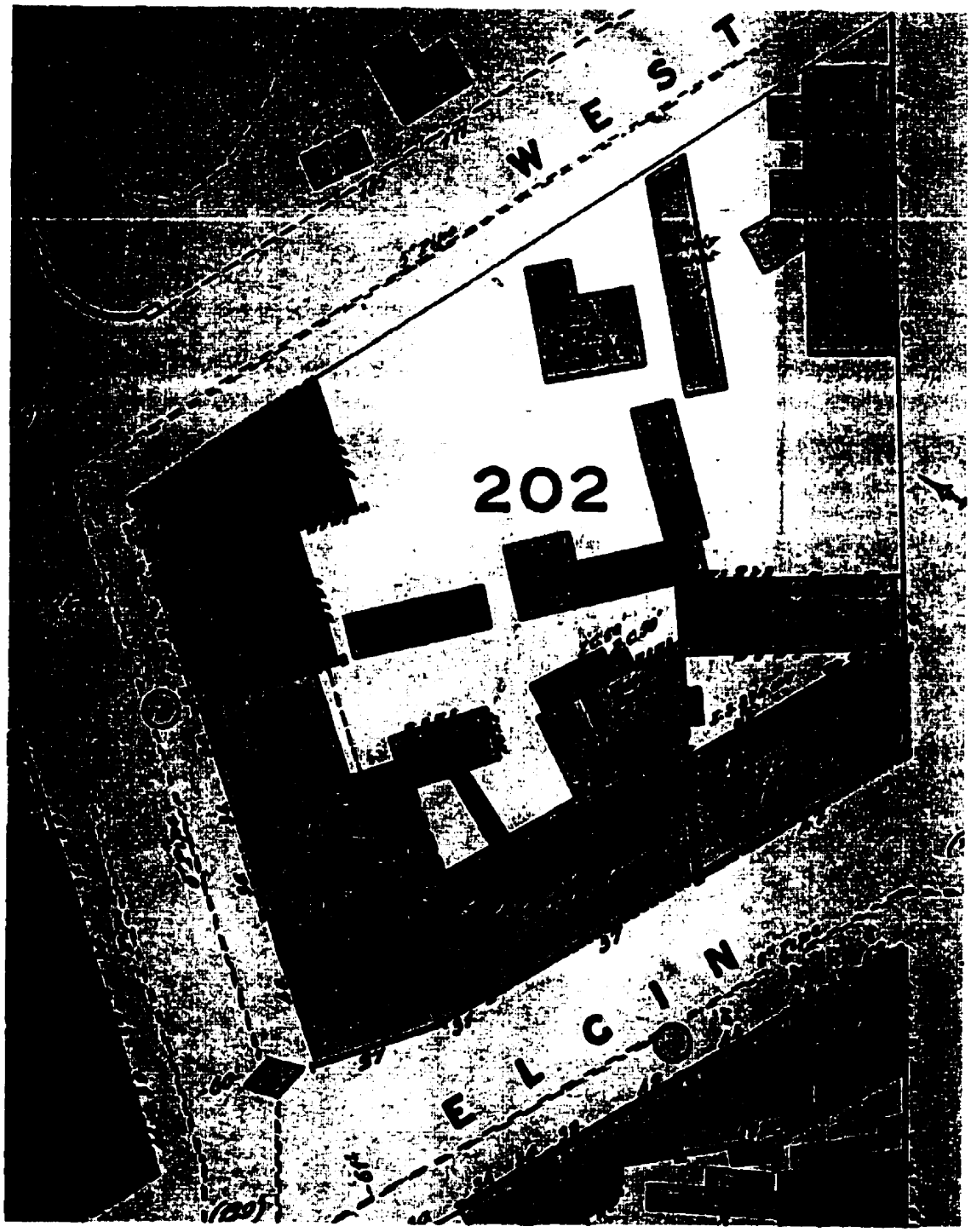


2.13
Russell House Hotel, 1898
View from Elgin and Sparks Street
CA 0162.

"The Russell stood in a class by itself; as much a landmark as the Parliament Buildings. Like the *boulevards* of Paris, it furnished the background for many a secret caucus. Politicians were made and destroyed there."
Madge Macbeth, *Over My Shoulder*, 59.

2.14
Wellington Street looking south, as viewed from the Parliament Buildings.
CA 1459

The white building on the south-west corner of Wellington and Metcalfe is the Rideau Club. Adjacent to it, but cut-off in this photograph is the Langevin Block, a government buildings designed by Thomas Fuller.



2.15
Insurance Plan of Ottawa
from George P. Steiner, *The Russell House, Social Annex of the House of Commons: Destroyed By Fire, 1928*, 1967

> The same excitement [as in the train station] pervaded the rotunda of the Russell house - members everywhere, luggage piled about in heaps.... The women murmured politics over their slice of melon, and you heard that the Conservative caucus was to come off... at 10 o'clock.[29]

The Russell existed and subsisted in direct relation to the events taking place in the Parliament Buildings. Its dining and drawing rooms were full before and after debates, as many politicians and observers would continue their diatribes over dinner or a drink. In this way, the Russell took the place of the exclusive "great houses" which had epitomized the elite nature and membership of politics in England in the nineteenth-century. In fact, British parliamentary and social affairs were so interconnected "that when Parliament was in session many dinner parties were timed to begin when the House rose and members expected to go straight from the debates to the home of their favourite hostess where, along with their coterie of supporters, political discussion continued far into the night."[30]

This was the lifestyle at the Russell Hotel. The *Dominion Illustrated* observed in a special number devoted to Ottawa: "It is often remarked that in the rotunda of the "Russell" there is often more political discussion than in the House of Commons."[31] In July of 1895, during the Manitoba School Crisis, Governor General and Lady Aberdeen took a room at the Russell for convenience in order to be closer to the Parliament Buildings, but also because it was the place where they could keep track of the pulse of popular opinion. There they took a rest between the debates and were joined in the morning for breakfast by Sir Wilfrid Laurier who also had a room at the hotel.[32] In a city as political as Ottawa, the Russell provided privacy amidst public activity, it was the unofficial centre of political exchange. Yet while men were depicted discussing business in the lobby where, according to Madge Macbeth, careers were made and destroyed, women were behind the scenes murmuring politics over their slice of melon, taking a room with their husbands for the debates or throwing a who's who party in the drawing room. Women and men practiced politics differently, but each had their essential role.

The Russell was one of several public spaces in Ottawa which blurred the lines between public and private spheres. While not a private residence, it was home to some

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[29]Kit Coleman, "Kit in Parliament - She Journeyed to Ottawa to Attend the Opening," *Toronto Mail and Empire* 19 August 1896: n.p. MG 27 1B5 Vol. 21, 145.

[30]Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles; Society, Etiquette and the Season* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1973) 26.

[31]*The Dominion Illustrated* (Montreal: The Sabiston Litho. & Publishing Co., 1891) 104.

[32]MacKenzie Bowell also had a room at the Russell during this time. These are references to Lady Aberdeen's journal entries on July 15, 1895 and July 18, 1895. Aberdeen, *The Canadian Journals of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1960) 240-245.

and a communal social space to others. In particular, it provided a dynamic space in which women could live, socialize, entertain or find employment. Many people found temporary residence there while the House was in Session and it was an ideal meeting ground for reporters, observers, visitors and pundits, men and women alike. It combined the privacy of personal rooms with the possibility of public display and entertainment. Women's place in hotels gave them a higher profile in public; they lived and played downtown in an urban space which had been largely defined as "masculine." Business, politics and working men mingled with department stores, hotels and working women. The result was a reformulation of the definition, practice and spaces of "femininity." Emilie Lavergne's "at home" at the Russell did not have direct bearing on the politics of the day, on the running of Parliament or even on the design of the Parliament Buildings. It was, however, an important thread in the complicated weavings of the political landscape. Politics was not played out solely in the great House on the Hill by the men elected to office; it permeated the civic landscape and flourished in the private and semi-private locales in which women of a certain standing played a consequential role.

Another such place was Rideau Hall, or Government House, the residence of the Governor General. It served as the private home of the Governor General and his family; it also had an explicit public function as an official residence. Here, too, careers were made and broken as behind the scenes negotiations took place even more regularly than state dinners. During Lord and Lady Aberdeen's tenure as Governor General (1893-98), the house saw an unprecedented number of people come through its doors for private business and public entertaining. Again, like the Russell House Hotel, much of Rideau Hall's activity centred around or depended upon the activities of Parliament. At the centre of this activity was Lady Aberdeen, touted by some as the Governess General of Canada during her years in Ottawa.[33] She was one of few women at this time who dared to display her power openly. In her role as one of Ottawa's primary political hostesses, Lady Aberdeen was a keen observer of and active player in Canadian politics. Her use of public buildings and private spaces indicates the extent to which she was involved in the many layers of political negotiations.

Lady Aberdeen's vast and influential network allowed her to hold

> "[f]ormal dinners or informal luncheons or suppers ... almost daily as [she] sought to bring influential people

[33]John Saywell implies this in his Introduction to Lady Aberdeen's Journals as does Sandra Gwyn in *The Private Capital.*

> together behind some grand project. People co-operated despite themselves."[34]

Upper- and middle-class women like Lady Aberdeen were the specialized personnel who carried out the formalized functions of Society as "semi-official leaders but also as arbiters of social acceptance or rejection."[35] Political hostesses controlled the sieve through which many people's access to political power and influential circles was regulated. Unlike the "great houses" in England, which acted as closed camps for politics for an already established elite, Rideau Hall under the socially conscious Aberdeens welcomed a wide array and constant flow of visitors.[36] Lady Aberdeen was most certainly an *insider* in the world of Canadian politics, and her home proved a base for her intrigues.

An eleven room villa built in 1838 by Thomas MacKay on an eighty-eight acre site, Rideau Hall had been the official residence of the Governor General since 1868. A long rectangular gray stone country house constructed in the Classical tradition, the home had been considered somewhat uncouth - "a rambling mass of buildings" - and inconveniently far from the Parliament Buildings.[37] (fig.2.16) It underwent numerous alterations since its purchase by the government in order to befit the role of an official residence for the Governor General.[38] (fig.2.17) By the time Lord and Lady Aberdeen arrived in 1893, Rideau Hall had a large and small drawing room, a small dining room, a tent room and ballroom for entertaining guests, a smoking room, library and billiard room for His Excellency, and a sitting room for Her Excellency.

The house, built two miles east of the downtown core, was not at the physical centre of political activity and unlike the Russell, its political function was ceremonial rather than casual. One could not drop in for a drink. One had to be invited and an invitation "required discipline to attain."[39] Although Rideau Hall's role was far more exacting than that of the Russell, formal *and* informal political negotiations took place both in the rooms

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[34]Aberdeen xxvii.

[35]Davidoff 16. Lady Aberdeen essentially "overturned" the verdict on Mrs. Foster, wife of the Minister of Justice, when she accepted Mrs. Foster into society. Lady MacDonald, who had ruled Ottawa social life with an iron rod had excluded Mrs. Foster because she had separated from her former husband. Lady Aberdeen sought counsel from the then prime minister Sir John Thompson, and on his advice invited Mrs. Foster to her home.

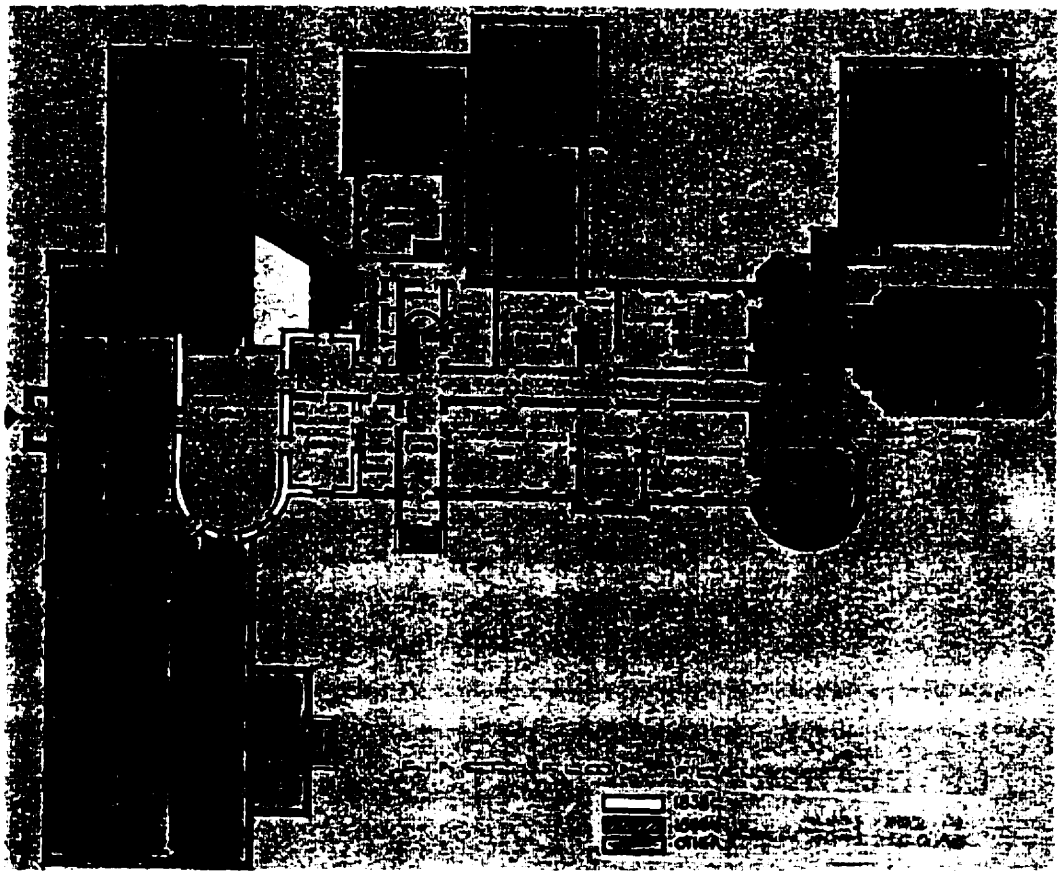
[36]"Personal contacts channelled through Society also made nineteenth-century British politics extremely flexible with an interchange of information and personnel across party lines ensuring continuity of the governing group." Davidoff 27-28.

[37]Sir James David Edgar, *Canada and its capital: with sketches of political and social life at Ottawa* (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1898) 116. The Aberdeens insisted that the tram lines come directly to the door of Rideau Hall in order to encourage those without access to carriages to visit during their "at homes."

[38]Rideau Hall was rented by the government as a residence for Canada's first Governor General, Viscount Monck, in 1865. Three years later the government purchased the house to make it the Official Residence and has since added a great deal to the original structure, including two wings on either side of a new facade.

[39]MacBeth 29.

2.16
Map showing the MacKay Estate, Park, villa and village plots, 1864
NMC 0017613



2.17
Plan of Rideau Hall, showing additions
Rideau Hall, 5

Her Excellency's drawing room was located at the end of a long corridor, across from the Library and Billiard rooms and down from two other drawing rooms.

and on the lawns of the Governor General's residence. This next section examines the dual function of Rideau Hall as both home and public building, highlighting the unique role played by Lady Aberdeen as mistress of the house. Her active participation in all aspects of her home's life, from household organization to public functions, provided her with a route to the public sphere without leaving the comfort of her home. Yet, Lady Aberdeen's hospitality and role as political hostess had far reaching repercussions as she took these roles into a wider arena and took the lead in the creation of a women's sphere in public.

The Aberdeens were concerned with democratizing Rideau Hall for members of their household and the public. They entertained on the lawns in the summer and on the skating and curling rinks and toboggan hills for the winter season. Those who signed their guest books were invited to these social events. The Aberdeens could therefore invite large numbers of visitors without having to introduce them into the drawing room of their home. The Aberdeens hosted three to four hundred people at these "at homes" every Saturday from 3 to 6 during the months of January, February and March, 1894.[40]

Much to the public's interest, the Aberdeens ran their home as a "club" called the Haddo House Club which brought staff, servants and family members together once a week to eat dinner and meet in the ballroom. The Club provided members with singing lessons, art and French class, reading circles, social meetings, lectures. A W.J. Topley photograph from the Aberdeen period reveals that the 40 x 80 foot ballroom, enriched with gilt cornices in 1897, was grand and sophisticated: vaulted ceilings, ornate moldings, magnificent arched windows and fine draperies of red and gold silk damask.[41] (fig.2.18) This room, which was also used for official dinners, was the location for inaugural meeting of the Canadian Branch of the Haddo Club on November 16, 1893.[42]

The Aberdeens did not adhere to the strict social and spatial segregation which epitomized Victorian household planning in town and country houses. In their extremes, and as a result of social rituals such as morning calls, afternoon tea and after dinner smoking, typical Victorian country houses created segregated domains which were expressed in the design and prescriptive ideals associated with "place" in society. These homes were built by a powerful and coherent class, urbane and distinct from the local country dwellers. Built to influence or impress, "people did not live in country houses unless they either possessed power, or, by setting up in a country houses, were making a

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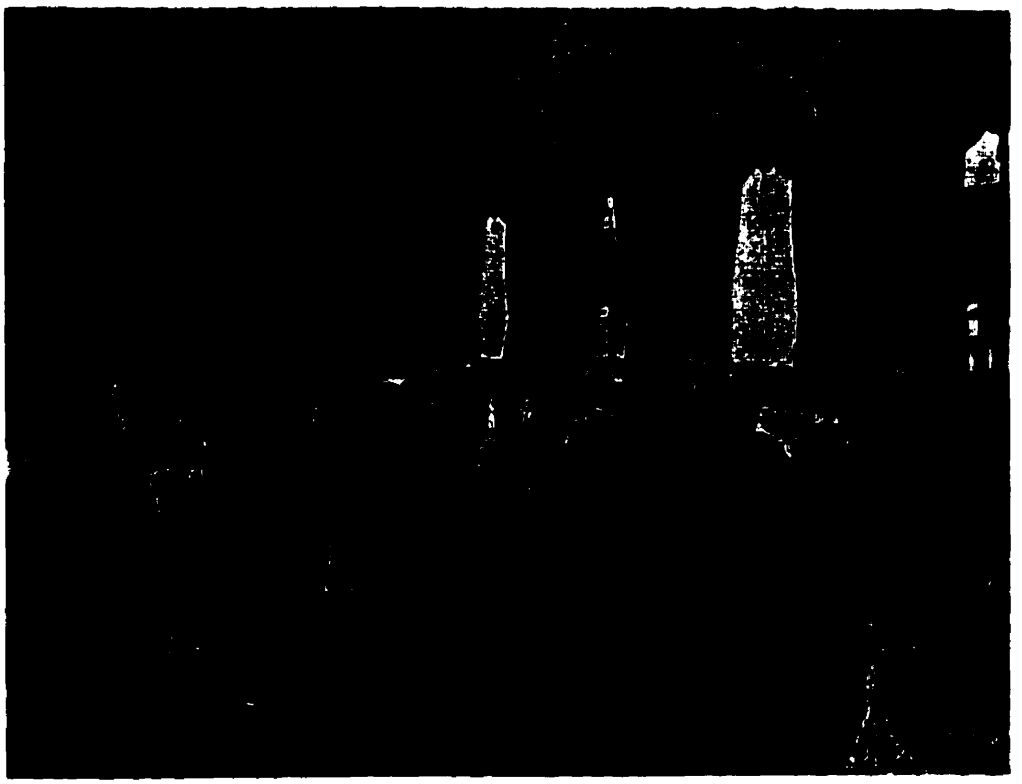
[40]Aberdeen 54.

[41]R.H. Hubbard, *Rideau Hall: An Illustrated History of Government House, Ottawa* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967) 94. This Topley photograph is from the National Archives, PA 9058.

[42]Aberdeen 30. Lady Aberdeen was criticized in the newspapers for fraternizing with her servants.



2.18
Photograph of Rideau Hall Ballroom
Rideau Hall, 87

bid to possess it."[43] Owners indicated, in the size and pretensions of their house, their ambitions and at what level of power they were aiming.[44] In fact,

> [t]he entire Victorian house - its location, arrangement, style, and size - also served to situate men (and women) in a culture ordered according to class. Like clothing, language, behaviour, and even smell, the house expressed to the public world the aspirations and economic mobility of all its inhabitants.[45]

Rideau Hall, through its many additions and the construction of a grand facade became the most recognized symbol and the nearest expression of a Canadian aristocracy. (fig.2.19) The Aberdeens relished this distinction, and simultaneously rebuffed it in their multiple uses of normally exclusive or official rooms such as the ballroom.

The conscious attempt at making distinctions between male/female and master/servant through Victorian domestic design was apparent in the interior organization of the house.[46] Many wealthy households divided servants and family members according to a hierarchy, an "upstairs/downstairs" philosophy. Grand houses were designed and run such that the master and mistress would not see or hear the servants. Servants would have separate staircases, their bedrooms on a top floor and their workspace in the basement. While plans of country houses show that servants were relegated to, and expected to move within, spaces separate from the owners, they also show spatial segregation according to sex; "place" according to class was expressed along gender lines as well. While a different floor or wing for servants meant that servants and patrons often didn't see or communicate with one another, morality and a more efficient design philosophy were especially observed in the servants' wing: "Morality meant - in addition to compulsory attendance at daily prayers and Sunday church - separation of the sexes except when they were under supervision."[47] Male and female servants performed different jobs in different locations and slept in separate quarters from each other. Lord and Lady Aberdeen were unusual in that they shared both their time and their space with the paid members of their household at designated times, but often enough to draw comments and criticism.

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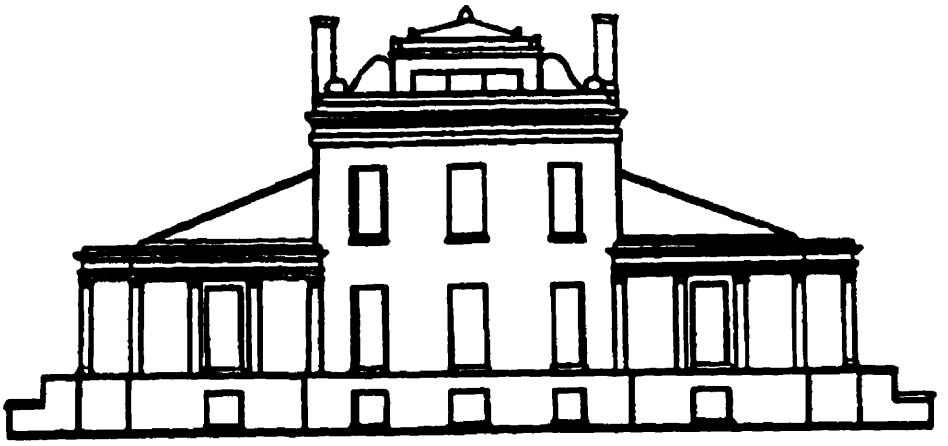
[43]Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History.* (London: Yale University Press, 1978) 2.
[44]Girouard 3.
[45]Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, Women, 1870-1900* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens' University Press, 1996) 79-80.
[46]"The Victorians had a genius for analysis and definition; everything was to be divided up into departments." Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 16.
[47]Girouard 276.



2.19
Drawing of Rideau Hall by F.J. Rubidge south facade, 1864
Rideau Hall, 78

The house was an important backdrop for official, very exclusive events such as the state dinners which brought together the most influential politicians in Canada. These events offered the Lady of the house an opportunity to participate formally in political discussions. On January 9, 1894, the Aberdeen's first state dinner for the Cabinet Ministers was held. Lady Aberdeen entered the ballroom with two prominent government members, Prime Minister Sir John Thompson and Mr. Mackenzie Bowell.[48] The Prime Minister discussed Canada-U.S. politics with Lady Aberdeen and informed her that he would be speaking to her husband about this confidential matter at a later time:

> Sir John told me about the definite league being made in the U.S.A. to annex Canada headed by some men of wealth, Carnegie amongst others - he does not himself think it will come to anything much but is to come & speak to His Ex. about it with the object of deciding whether to inform the home Government officially or not.[49]

Lady Aberdeen was more than an attentive ear at dinner or a buffer between politicians and her husband, the Governor General. She invited politicians, and politicians came of their own volition, into the privacy of her home for confidential discussions specifically *with her*.[50] She acted as an operative in political intrigues and had personal correspondences with Prime Minister Thompson, Prime Minister Laurier and Charles Hibbert Tupper (Jr.). In fact, in 1895 Lady Aberdeen and Wilfrid Laurier had entered a compact to alleviate a bitter situation between Laurier and a colleague, Sir Frank Smith. She wrote in her journal,

> [Laurier] said he would be very glad if I would write to him or let him know of anything he could do on any future occasion in this direction or anything which would tend to alleviate bitterness. I v. readily entered into a compact to do so.[51]

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[48]Bowell became leader of the Conservatives for a short period after Sir John Thompson passed away.

[49]Aberdeen 51.

[50]Lady Aberdeen excelled in the role of the operative. After the death of Sir John Thompson, the Conservative government struggled to stay together and battled serious challenges to the leadership. Mr. MacNeill, M.P., sought private counsel with Lady Aberdeen at Rideau Hall to discuss party members' fears of a potential Sir Charles Tupper (Sr.) regime. At the same time, she and Wilfrid Laurier, leader of the opposition, communicated through a messenger, Mrs. Cummings, who was a member of Lady Aberdeen's National Council of Women. It was at one of the previously-mentioned skating parties, in January 1896, that messages were passed between Lady Aberdeen and Wilfrid Laurier regarding the possibility of forming a Liberal government and cabinet. Eventually, and much to the wrath of Sir Charles Tupper, the Governor General *and his wife* decided that if the Conservatives could not form a government, they would call on Laurier to do so. For more on Lady Aberdeen's exploits, see Aberdeen, *Through Canada with a Kodak* (Edinburgh: W.H. White & Co., 1893); John Campbell Gordon, Marquis of Aberdeen and Temair, *"We Twa:" Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co., 1925).

[51]Entry from July 13, 1895. Aberdeen, *Journals* 239.

She played many roles as Her Excellency and the lady of the house; she was a confidante, a hostess, a political organizer as well as a mother and wife. Similarly, her home molded to the diversity of roles she took on, as the ballroom, for example was transformed into a meeting room or a dining room for large events and her drawing room became a private caucus room for political negotiating.

A direct link to the public activism to which Lady Aberdeen used her physical house and the ideals associated with women's place in the home was through her presidency of the National Council of Women. A photograph of the National Council executive shows the members with Lord and Lady Aberdeen in Rideau Hall. (fig.2.20) During one of their first national meetings in April, 1894, the Council executive was invited to dine at Government House. The next evening Lady Aberdeen hosted a reception and invited M.P.s and Senators to meet the delegates. At the Council's public meeting on the Friday, the prime minister spoke. Lady Aberdeen's station enabled her to provide the prestigious meeting place and influential company to the National Council.[52] She thus used her home as a stepping stone into the public sphere.

Rideau Hall itself was used for many purposes and to many ends. It was a home, clubhouse, and a party grounds for the public, it played host to official dinners and functions as well as private, confidential meetings. Lady Aberdeen's role therein was a combination of public display as an "official" wife and behind the scenes organizing. While the Russell Hotel provided women with the opportunity to live and meet in the public sphere, women were still very much a decorative addition to the overall glamour. The few spaces created explicitly for them in hotels, in particular, the drawing rooms, as well as the mixed-sex dining room were places of social display and entertainment. Women were, however, a necessary element in the hotel lifestyle as it was part of a burgeoning urbanism, one in which the glitter of social events contributed to the aura of cosmopolitan sophistication. Emilie Lavergne, in hosting her own function in the hotel had a subtle impact on the ever-changing social and political landscape because it brought influential people together and displayed her singular social status.

Lady Aberdeen's activities at Rideau Hall were often bold and had public consequence. Her role as mistress of Government House and her gregarious personality were a potent combination. She used the network and resources available to her through her social station and husband's position to partake in and initiate numerous projects, many of which originated or were consolidated in her own home. It was also well known, as

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[52]There were clear class distinctions in men's and women's clubs. Many of the early clubs were founded by middle and upper-class women because they were financially capable of doing so. Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for SingleWomen, 1850-1920* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985) 298.

2.20
Lady Aberdeen and the National Council of Women Executive at Rideau Hall
PA 28033.

Lady Aberdeen is seated, holding a book. Behind her stands Lord Aberdeen.

with the case of Emilie Lavergne and Laurier, that Lady Aberdeen was the direct link to the Governor General. Her "in" to practicing politics was through her role as his wife: her abilities as a hostess were an essential component of his political success. Yet what does their access to and use of these spaces tell us about the state of women's public presence?

Lady Aberdeen and Emilie Lavergne were two of many women of good breeding who confidently moved within Ottawa's influential circles. Both women used their respective "homes" as a space for politics and for networking; they were able to participate in public affairs in this way by adhering to the traditional role of "wife" or "hostess." Like most women at the time, their ability to do so stemmed from an association with male spheres of influence. This, coupled with the increasing number of women working outside the home and using public spaces for leisure, meetings, social events and club activities, had both a material and ideological impact on the urban landscape. While Emilie Lavergne established herself as an important participant in the social circuit and player in the Liberal backrooms, Lady Aberdeen stepped beyond this and initiated new networks of women for the purpose of social change, not just socializing. She took her personal and political interests outside the sphere of her home into a separate female sphere in public. Couched in a rhetoric of domestic responsibility, her actions broadened the scope of women's political influence. They were critical in the creation of a collective female consciousness and had a physical impact on the urban landscape.

Clubwomen: The Ottawa Normal School and the National Council of Women of Canada.

Lady Aberdeen became the first president of the National Council of Women (NCW) upon its establishment in 1893.[53] The NCW's mandate indicated a desire to redefine conventional associations between women's domestic and maternal responsibilities into a context of organized activism:

> We, Women of Canada, sincerely believing that the best good of our homes and nation will be advanced by our own great unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, and that an organized movement of women will best conserve the highest good of the Family and State, do hereby band ourselves together to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law.[54]

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[53]Lady Aberdeen writes in her *Journals* on April 7, 1894 that Lady Thompson and Lady Laurier were chosen as vice-presidents as "a view of showing that we were above all political parties & to make a precedent." Aberdeen 87-8.

[54]N.E.S. Griffiths, *The Splendid Vision: Centennial History of the National Council of Women Of Canada, 1893-1993* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993) 23.

Its mandate aimed to increase the presence and influence of women in public and highlight the issues particular to them. Although not identifying itself as a suffrage society, the National Council realized that without the vote, and thus lacking full powers of influence from within established institutions, reform would be impossible. Some prominent suffragettes were members of the NCW; however, the Council did not want to be overtly involved in the movement for fear of alienating other members. The Council defined itself in terms which relegated women to the domestic sphere. It functioned as a separate female sphere within the public realm, was connected to male spheres of influence and was influential in creating new spaces of women while reconfiguring the uses and meanings of many already established ones.[55] As one journalist wrote after hearing Lady Aberdeen speak in public: "The present movement among women [is] described as the most hopeful sign of the times, as showing that women are entering into the broader consciousness of the race."[56]

The NCW was part of a burgeoning women's club movement which emphasized the ideals associated with women's role and responsibilities in the home while also offering them the opportunity to translate these skills into activism for the larger public good. It was a form of "Domestic Feminism."[57] Advertisements for women's groups such as those found in the National Council of Women's annual reports emphasized women's household responsibilities and the importance of bringing women together for the "interchange of ideas."[58] The *Women's Institutes of Ontario*, which advertised in the NCW annual reports, was aimed at rural women and invited rural and urban women to come together for lectures and to network. (fig.2.21) In other words, the *Women's Institutes* encouraged the sharing of knowledge among women, some of whom may have otherwise been extremely isolated. Clubs like these politicized domestic skills by supplementing self-improvement programs with speeches, conferences and the opportunity to consider public decision-making as a legitimate domain for women. Such clubs "nurtured pride in the lady's special

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[55]The list of life patrons for the National Council as of 1899 were: The Earl of Aberdeen, Mrs. Drummond, Hon. Senator Sanford, Hon. Senator Drummond, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, Sir William Van Horne, Mrs. John McDougall, Sir William C. MacDonald, Hon. Senator Cox, and Hon. Senator McKeen.

[56]"Council of Women: Mass Meeting of Ladies to Greet Lady Aberdeen," *Toronto Globe* 10 September 1896: n.p. MG 27 IB5 Vol. 22, 94.

[57]Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman and Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc. 1980) 4. The term was first coined by Daniel Scott Smith to describe women's autonomy within the nineteenth-century home when women limited intercourse with their husbands to provide better childcare to their children.

[58]*Report of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women* (London: Head & Co., 1904) 174.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES
OF ONTARIO.

AN ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN OF RURAL DISTRICTS.

A woman's interest in HOME and WOMEN'S INSTITUTES should be synonymous, because the latter have been organized with a view to improving home conditions.

There are 61 Institutes organized, and from two to eight meetings are held monthly in each Institute District. The membership for 1904 was 6,287, and over 22,000 ladies attended the meetings.

Some of the Benefits of Membership are

1. An Interchange of ideas for lightening household duties.
2. A better understanding of the economic and hygienic value of foods.
3. An opportunity to hear lectures by graduates of Schools of Domestic Science.
4. Social intercourse.
5. Town and country women are brought into closer sympathy.
6. The receiving of literature published by the Ontario Department of Agriculture.
7. Mutual helpfulness in all lines relating to home life.

If you are interested, write for information to

GEO. A. PUTNAM
Superintendent of Women's Institutes
Parliament Buildings, Toronto.

2.21
Women's Institutes of Ontario advertisement
Report of the National Council of Women, Eleventh Annual Meeting, 174

Clubs were an important way for women to acquire and share knowledge. In fact, libraries were often the starting point of clubs; the first activity of some literary and community clubs was the collection of books and journals, others located their headquarters in public library buildings.

qualities and confidence to reach out into the public domain."[59] This pride was further expressed by the desire to choose and/or construct a physical space as a dedication to the group and its ideals and activities.[60]

Significantly, calls for club gatherings meant that women would congregate outside the space of their homes, possibly in a purpose-built club building, or in an already existing space such as a church or community centre. In their designs, women's club houses attempted to reconcile the tensions between femininity/domesticity and the bold ideology of a club. Like the separate women's colleges and girls' schools, whose presence also permeated the public landscape and Council reports, these clubs constructed ideals of "femininity" directly into their architecture and design. Descriptions by women of their clubs were full of appreciation for their "sensuous beauty." Their design and decoration, described in terms such as "light," "pale," "fine," reflect the gendered interiors of women's rooms such as the boudoir and morning room in the typical Victorian house. The function of certain rooms such as club dressing rooms reinscribed gender in their insistence on the formality of women's "proper" dress and their appearance as "ladies."[61]

The act of building separate clubs and schools was "the concretizing and permanent record of self-image, aspirations, and perceived needs."[62] Women architects were often commissioned to design and build clubhouses.[63] Perhaps being conscious of the implications of creating a separate female sphere, but more likely because clubs and educational facilities still identified strongly with the imagery of "ladydom," the buildings were in fact houses, and thus blended into the community.[64] The ideal of "home" is prevalent in the physical setting and structure of the schools advertised in the NCW reports

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[59]Blair 5. The first influential literary clubs, such the New England Woman's Club, established in 1868, combined these elements.

[60]Cynthia Rock, "Building the Women's Club in Nineteenth-Century America," *Heresies* 11 3.3 (1981): 88.

[61]Rock 89.

[62]Rock 88.

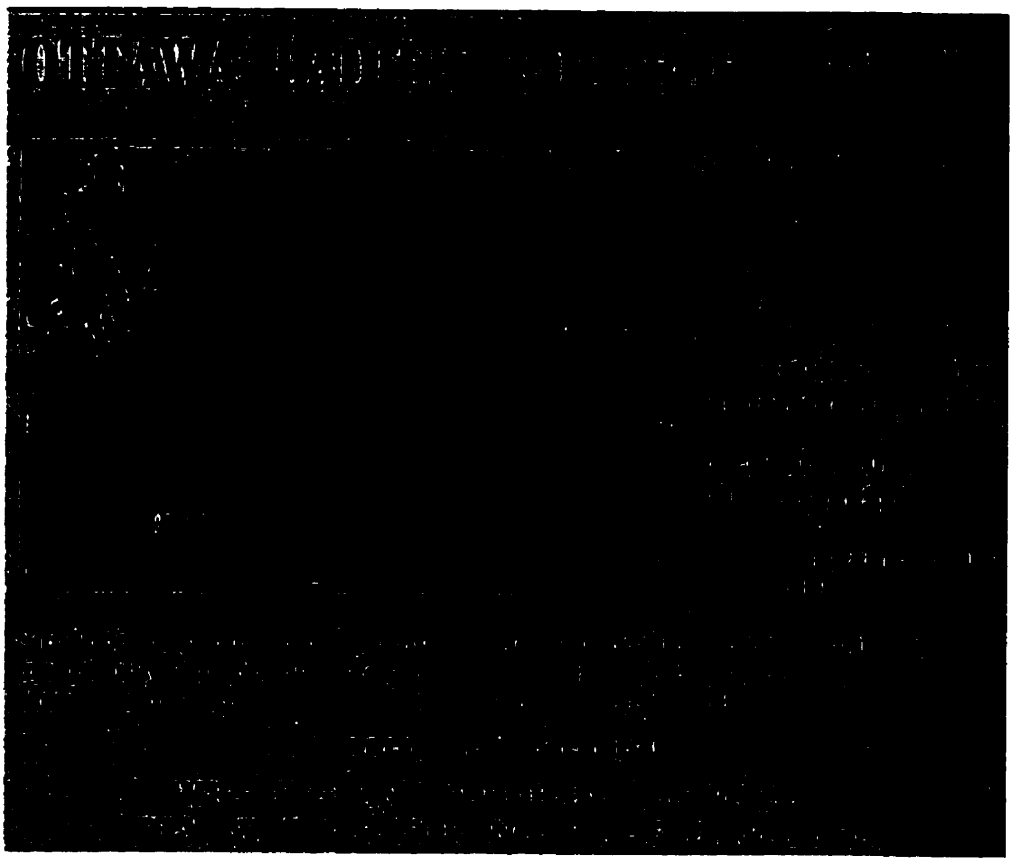
[63]American architect Julia Morgan had a strong network of women clients and was commissioned to design and build a number of clubs in her home state of California: the Foothills Club in Saragota (1915), the Sausalito Club (1918) and the Berkeley Women's City Club (1928). "Julia Morgan Architect," in *Architecture: A Place For Women.* ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989). Julia Morgan designed more than 700 buildings in her 47 year career and her "old girls network" or sorority included Phoebe Hearst. Other American woman architects of the time were Sophia Hayden who designed the 1893 Women's Building at the Chicago Fair, Josephine Wright Chapman who designed women's clubhouses in Worcester and Lynn, Mass., Caroline Severance who designed the Friday Morning Club in Los Angeles and the New England Woman's Club in Boston, and others such as Elise Mercur, Hazel Wood, Gertrude Sawyer and Blanche Geary. Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and their Amateru Arts Associations in American, 1890-1930* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994) 187.

[64]Martha Vicinus labels this the "big house syndrome" in *Independent Women: Work and Community.* See also Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

2.22
Kingthorpe Residential School for Girls in Hamilton
Report of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women, 1904, 172.

2.23
Glen Mawr Residential and Day School for Girls
Report of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women, 1904, n.p.

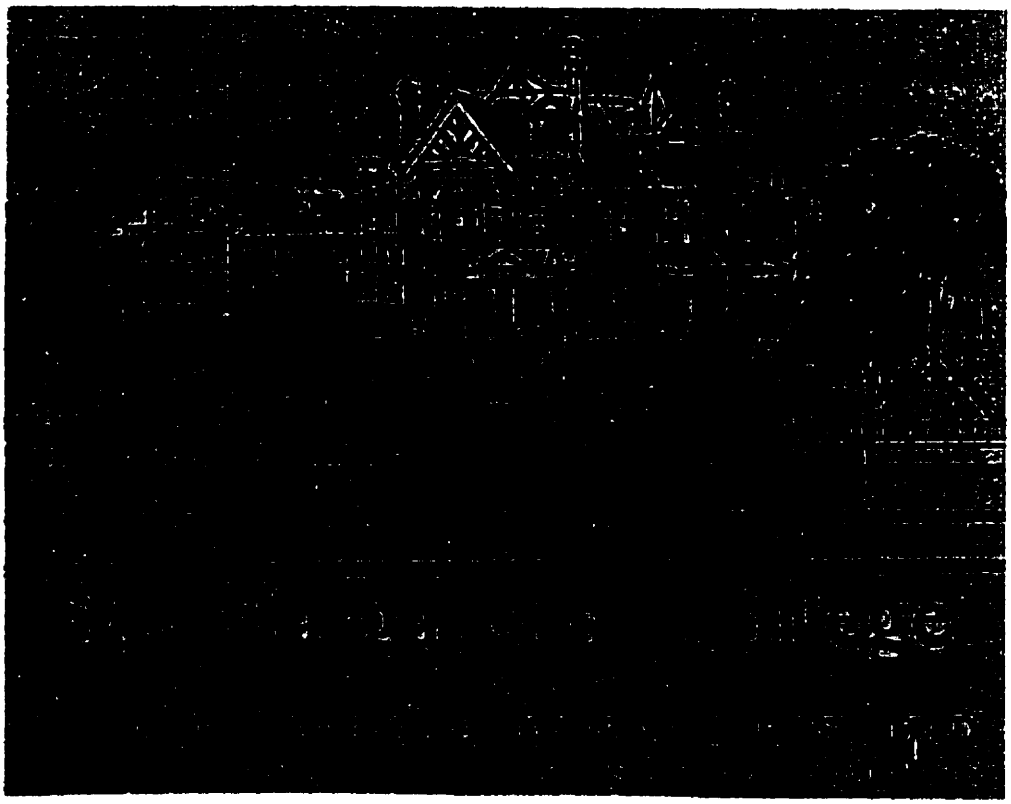
The schools are depicted in a "natural setting", protected by trees and separate from the potentially threatening elements of the city.



2.24
Ottawa Ladies' College
Report of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women, 1903, n.p.

2.25
Ontario Medical College for Women, 291 Sumach Street, Toronto
Report of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women, 1903, Appendix, xlii.

"The only medical college for women in the Dominion" was more closely aligned with residential rather than institutional design. Men's clubs, like the McGill Faculty Club in Montreal, an immense residence built by a Montreal millionaire, were often associated with an established institution, duly reflected in the dignified outward appearance and lush interior decor of the club. Conversely, women's clubs were closely aligned with domestic exteriors and interiors, they subscribed to many of the rigid formalities of dress and etiquette while at the same time offering women the opportunity to apply feminine qualities to public affairs



2.26
St. Margaret's College
Report of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women, 1903,
n.p.

- in other words, in the image they attempted to project. They highlight the physical setting; they were houses tucked away behind trees. Accompanying literature emphasized "home life," the "healthful" living atmosphere (proper ventilation), and the good reputation of the matron or principal. (fig.2.22-.25) Toronto's St. Margaret's College, for example, was depicted as a large Victorian house with gables, its grounds were nicely landscaped and there were no signs of any nearby or encroaching city. (fig.2.26) It projects an image of a safe place, one which presumably would protect young women from the vices of society; its image also reflected the class of the women it hoped to attract.[65] These parallels between the women's school and women's club movements are important to note. Both constructed buildings for their use, emphasized the acquisition of knowledge, the formation of a community and the formulation of a female ideology in the public, particularly in terms of their responsibilities in and contribution to the public sphere.

When women could not afford a purpose-built structure, they moved into existing buildings thus moving away from women's place being in the home to finding "a woman's place" in the city.[66] When Lady Aberdeen opened the Alexandra Ladies Club, "the first of its kind", in Victoria, B.C., the *Victoria Colonist* wrote:

> A number of ladies who have experienced the inconvenience of there being no place in the city where they could make their headquarters, leave parcels, write letters or rest during a shopping expedition, set to work to remedy the trouble. They picked out a nice suite of four rooms in the lock on Broad Street, near Fort. These rooms are fitted up for reading, correspondence or resting, and the members can go there and get lunch or a cup of tea, and have a chat with their lady friends, just in the same way as their husbands and brothers go to their clubs.[67]

This journalist makes a strong link between the ladies' club and consumerism; it is a resting place, much like hotel parlours, between social engagements and shopping sprees. But the establishment of a space outside their home gave women the impetus to travel downtown, to meet and to exchange gossip and ideas. It also provided (or expressed) freedom from household responsibilities and was thus very class conscious. Regardless of individual

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[65]See Annmarie Adams, "Rooms of Their Own: The Nurses' Residence at Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital," *Material History Review* 40 (Fall 1994): 29-41.

[66]N.E.S. Griffiths' *The Splendid Vision: Centennial History of the National Council of Women Of Canada, 1893-1993* and Rosa C. Shaw's *Proud Heritage: A History of the National Council of Women of Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1957) only mention the location of annual meetings, not the spaces in which these and local meetings took place nor details or photographs of the Central Office on 254 Lisgar Street, Ottawa.

[67]*Victoria Colonist* 6 November 1894: n.p.

club philosophies or intents, the creation of a separate female sphere outside individual homes and the claiming of a physical and/or ideological space in the form of a club were political acts; ones which paved the way for women's participation in and integration into mainstream political and public institutions. Because they were built *for* women as primary users and sometimes *by* women architects, these provide a point of departure to discuss the extent to which women exerted social power from separate, yet public spheres.

The Ottawa Normal and Model School, located downtown at 195 Elgin Street in the nation's capital, was an educational facility for women and men and a meeting place for the popular National Council of Women. The building's architectural style, stood in relation to the Parliament Buildings and was recognized as a important, unique structure in the Ottawa landscape. In its interior organization and function, it addressed women as users of both the building and the public sphere. It prepared women for their roles as teachers and provided the NCW with a place to hold meetings. Its exterior architecture and interior activism both existed in relation to the predominant activities and architecture of the Parliament Buildings. Significantly, the National Council of Women worked from within existing structures, both literally in terms of the buildings it used, and figuratively in terms of the patriarchal structure from which it gained legitimacy, but which it also challenged.

Designed by Walter Reginald Strickland, a well known architect of public buildings, the Normal School occupied a four acre site on the By Estate and opened in 1875.[68] The T-shaped design was an eclectic mix of Gothic Revival, English Romanesque and Norman styles. (fig.2.27) As a local, recognized institution and part of a formal public landscape, the Normal School conformed both to the tradition of educational institutions of the time and the stylistic precedent set by the nearby Parliament Buildings.[69] It used both Gloucester and Hull stones and:

> While the general massing of forms, with central and side pavilions, follows the 19th century academic tradition, the use of disparate architectural details including the pointed Gothic windows, semi-circular Italianate window, Romanesque columns and Second Empire roof, reflects a spirit of eclecticism.[70] (fig.2.28)

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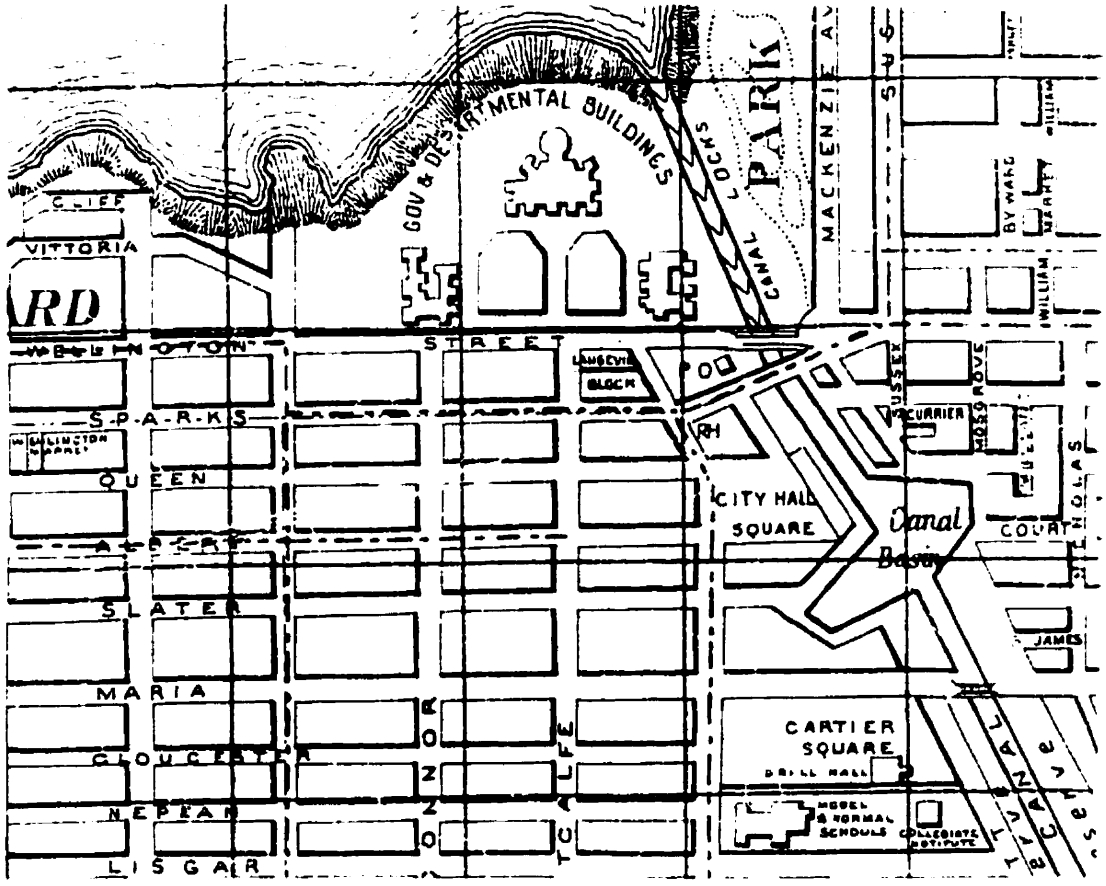
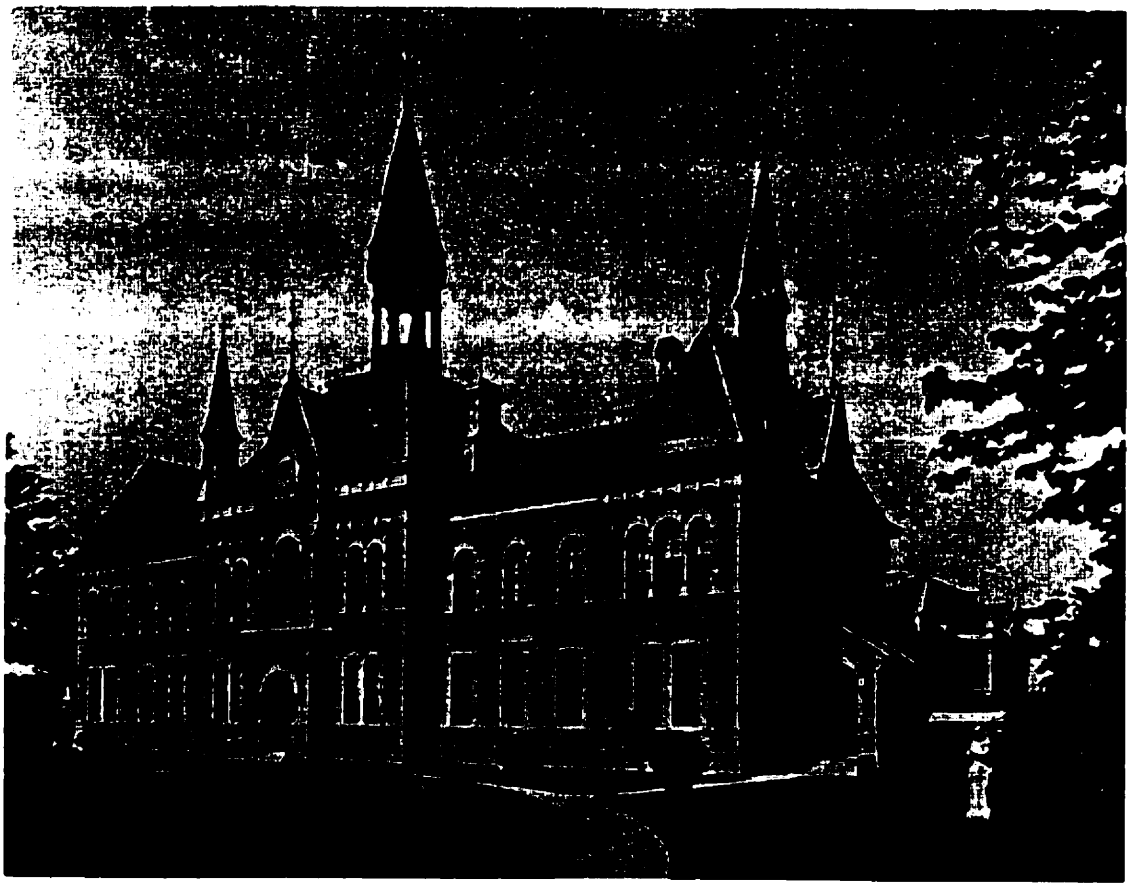
[68]Egerton Ryerson made his last appearance as Minister of Education at the opening of the Ottawa Normal School, October 22, 1875.

[69]See Deborah Weiner, *Architecture and Social Reform in Late-Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).

[70]Dana Johnson, *Ottawa Teacher's College, Ottawa, Ontario* (Ottawa: Heritage Commemoration Series, Environment Canada, 1988) n.p.

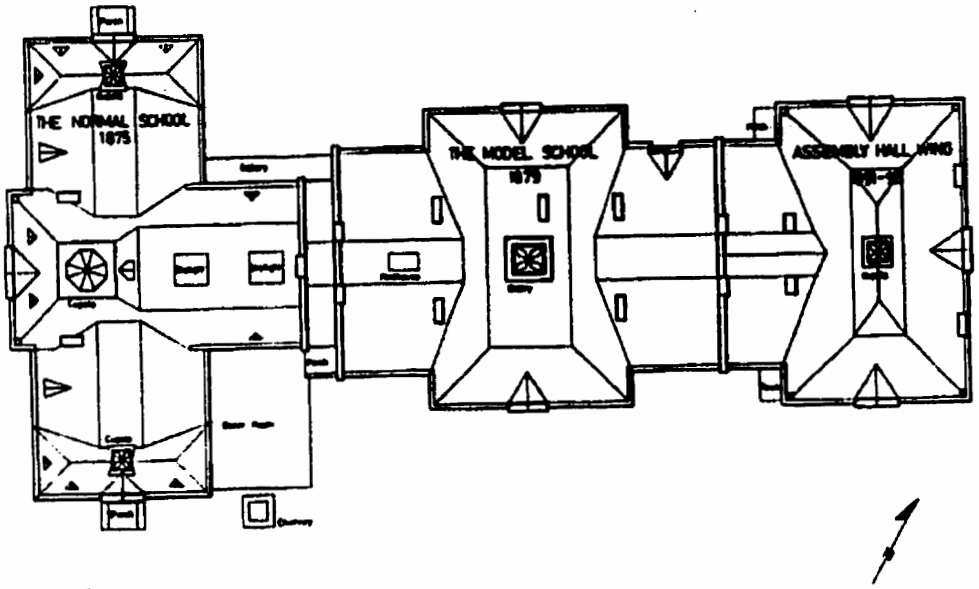


2.27
Map of location of The Ottawa Normal School, the Russell Hotel and the Parliament Buildings.



2.28
The Ottawa Normal School. 1898
CA 1601

The precedent set by the construction of the Parliament Buildings meant that most nearby commercial and public buildings were built in stone. The exterior of the Normal School was of Gloucester stone and its corners in Hull stone.

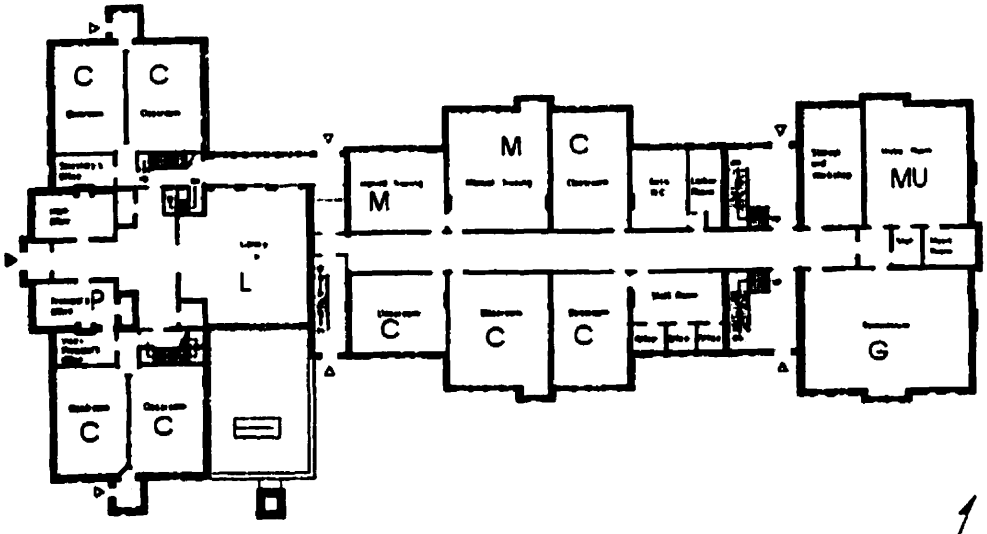


ROOF PLAN

FIG: 3.4

2.29
Roof Plan of The Ottawa Normal School
As Found Drawings of the Ottawa Teacher's College redrawn from those contained in the 1980 Eriksson Padolsky Feasibility Report.

This plan shows the development of the Normal School with the addition of the Model School in 1879 and the Assembly Hall Wing in 1891-92.



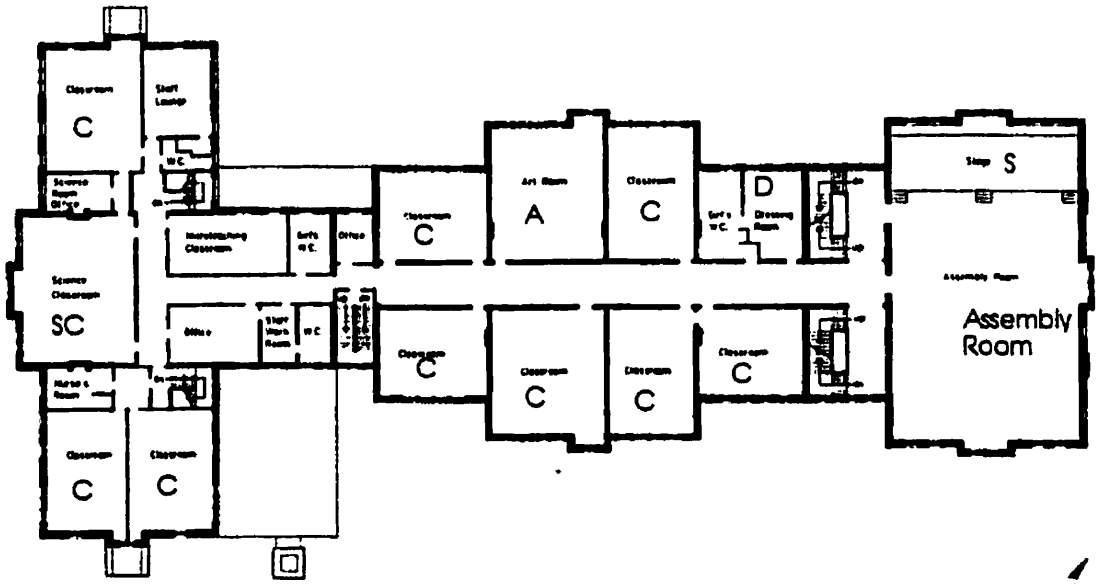
GROUND-FLOOR PLAN

FIG: 3.2

2.30
Ground Floor Plan
As Found Drawings of the Ottawa Teacher's College redrawn from those contained in the 1980 Eriksson Padolsky Feasibility Report.

The Model School was organized under two separate departments, the Girls' Model School and the Boys' Model School, both of which were under the direction of the principal of the Normal School. The Model School rooms on the ground floor were for manual training (men) while the second floor rooms were for art and domestic science (women).

C- classroom
M= manual training
L= library
MU= music
P= principal
G= gymnasium



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

FIG: 3.3

2.31
Second Floor Plan
As Found Drawings of the Ottawa Teacher's College redrawn from those contained in the 1980 Eriksson Padolsky Feasibility Report.

The "woman's floor." Household science was introduced in senior classes of the girls' department of the Model School in 1902.

C= classroom
A= art room
D= dressing room
SC= science room
S= stage

The School itself is significant in the discussion of overlapping spheres on two levels. It is an example of a mixed-sex institution which spatially and ideologically separated students according to sex; and, the school acted as a public meeting space for an organized women's group to discuss strategies of social reform. In other words, it was a space in which dominant and changing notions of women's "place" were negotiated.

The design of the Normal School separated male and female students spatially with separate entrances for each classroom, "an arrangement, the architect primly noted which 'will ... prevent the sexes from communicating with each other during intermission, with it coming under notice of the [teaching] masters.'"[71] In 1880, the Model School, designed by Kivas Tully, chief architect and engineer of the Ontario Department of Public Works, was added to the Normal School. Male and female students occupied separate floors; female students on the second floor and male students on the ground. (2.29-.31) On the ground floor were classrooms for manual training and on the second floor, those for art and domestic science.[72] (fig.2.32) Much like the typical Victorian gentleman's houses, the design of the Model School separated male and female domains, placing women furthest from the bustle of the street and city, and specifying gendered activities within these spaces. (fig.2.33)

It was on this second floor, the women's floor, in the Assembly Room that the local and National Councils of Women held meetings, but they were by no means relegated only to this space. In fact, the National Council did not have a purpose-built club house to their name. Instead, they used a variety of prominent, prestigious buildings in which to hold their meetings. The wives of the prime minister and leader of the opposition were vice presidents of the National Council, their appointments a result of their husbands' positions. Further connections to male spheres of influence and institutions are evident in the locations of National Council annual meetings. On October 2, 1893, a preliminary gathering took the form of a mass meeting in the Horticultural Pavilion, later known as the Allan Gardens, in Toronto, where 1500 women and "a few men" were present. Once the National Council was established, its meetings were conducted inside well-known buildings. Annual meeting locations changed each year and took place, ironically, in institutional settings which excluded the full participation or leadership of women: municipal governments, churches, and universities. The Council's first annual meeting, April 1894 in Halifax, included distinguished personalities who drew a great deal of attention and legitimacy to the event, such as Governor General Aberdeen and Prime

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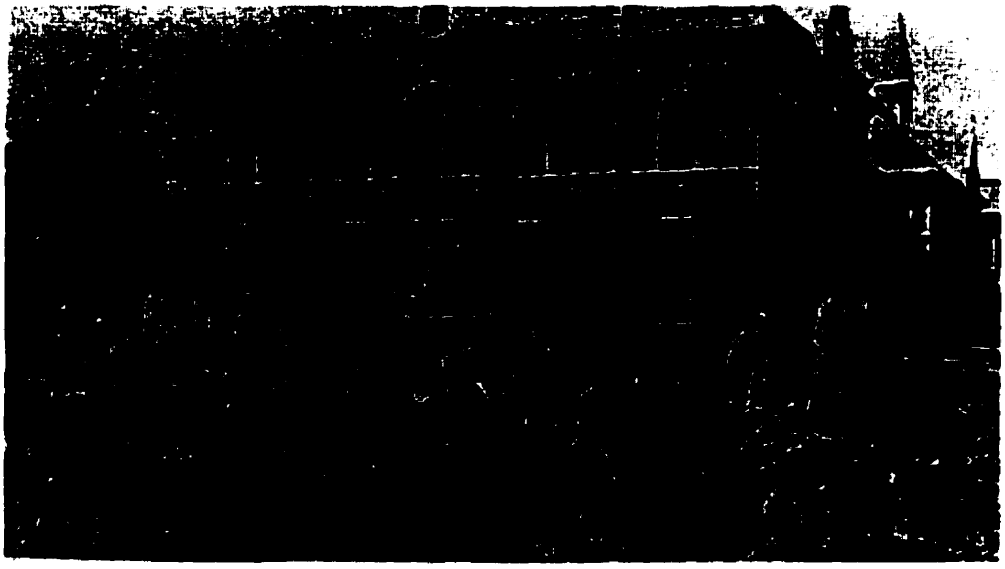
[71]Johnson n.p.

[72]Domestic science training was introduced to the Model School in 1902.

2.32
Manual Training classroom
NA PA28201

This classroom had high ceilings, gas lighting, inlaid cabinets, wood panel walls, retangular desks and drawings on the wall explaining how to properly use the instruments.



2.33
Women gardening outside the Normal School
NA C38987

The school garden movement of the twentieth century encouraged small scale domestic agriculture as a means of learning science and nature. It combined experience in the out of doors with beautification of the school's landscape. The women in this photograph are appropriately dressed not necessarily for gardening, but in their role as "ladies".

Minister John Thompson.[73] In October 1899 and 1906, the sixth and thirteenth Annual Meetings were held in Hamilton in the Council Chamber of the City Hall. In 1900, meetings were held in Victoria in the Lecture Rooms of St. Andrew's Church and public meetings in the Theatre and City Hall, and in 1909, meetings were held in Convocation Hall, University of Toronto.[74]

The Council also accepted financial contributions from male patrons to realize and materialize their goals. One of these goals was the institutionalization of domestic science teaching, from public school grades into high school, in teacher training courses like those offered at the Normal School, and up to university degrees.[75] This merged women's skills and responsibilities in the home with their public participation in institutions; it also affected the built environment as schools were built across the country. In introducing domestic skills into the public landscape of formal learning and teaching, the National Council of Women was responsible for the construction of new buildings whose function furthered women's participation in the public sphere. The building of schools required financing, which they received from male patrons. Sir William MacDonald, a Montreal tobacco magnate and philanthropist, donated $125 000 to erect a suitable building for an institute of household science at the Ontario College of Agriculture in Guelph.[76] The building was ready for occupancy in September 1903. MacDonald again donated money to establish a college at Ste. Anne de Bellevue for courses in agriculture and domestic science.

> Sir William MacDonald's benefactions were an outstanding example of Council's own principle of initiating a needed movement or reform and then turning it over to others to develop further once it had gained general acceptance. Sir William established manual training centres for girls and boys in all Provinces, and maintained them for three years under agreements with the public authorities that they would then assume the responsibility.[77]

Women entered these schools as teachers and students. The Victoria Institute, built in 1901, was the most elaborately equipped school of domestic science in Canada, with few

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[73]The Principal of Queen's University Reverand Grant and Superior Court judges were also present. Griffiths 34.

[74]National Council of Women, *Report of the Annual Meeting* (Toronto: W.S. Johnson & Co'y, Printers, 1899, 1900, 1906, 1907).

[75]Shaw 76.

[76]Sir William Macdonald was heavily involved in education institution building and was one of McGill University's greatest benefactors. Buildings for which he was the donor include the Macdonald campus and college, Ste. Anne-de-Bellevue, the Macdonald Engineering Building, Macdonald-Harrington Building, Macdonald-Stewart Library Building, and the McCord Museum.

[77]Shaw 81.

to equal it even in the United States. The Winnipeg School of Domestic Science was "housed in a fine new building" and Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless ran the Ontario School of Domestic Science, in affiliation with the Ontario Normal College at Hamilton, and trained teachers for domestic science work in public and high schools.[78] Not only were women involved in the planning of curricula, but they worked as professionals in their field. Although still participating largely within a separate female sphere, as the domestic sciences were clearly associated with the home and women, the establishment of colleges and professions for women was a significant step toward further integration into the public sphere.

The Ottawa Normal School, then, was an appropriate setting for Council meetings. It represented the kind of public role the National Council reinforced as suitable, even necessary for women; suitable in that the development of their skills was still closely associated with their role as home-makers, but necessary because women's success in the home had a direct impact on the public sphere. The Council's rhetoric, in fact, linked women's responsibilities to Canadian nationalism. Women were crucial to the advancement of a young country because "moulding the thought, and shaping the future [of Canada]" began in the home.[79] The Normal School and other educational institutions which trained women as teachers of and experts in domestic science were critical if women were to create the proper home environment. If these homes were to be "full of power ... to send out men and women inspired with the spirit and devotion to all that is true and beautiful to serve their day and generation," then they must be properly organized and women must be knowledgeable, ready to learn and ready to pass on their skills.[80] In their role as home-makers or domestic scientists, women were essential to the development of a strong, moral public sphere, indeed, to the successful building of the nation.

Less oblique and equally important was women's open participation in the Council's meetings, on both the local and national levels, which further established their role as members of a dynamic public. In using spaces not initially intended for their use as political figures - the church, city halls, and universities - Council members altered the use and meanings of those spaces.[81] The institutions became, for the duration of the meetings, a space used by women, to discuss and debate issues which affected women,

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[78]Shaw 78-80.

[79]"Women's Life Mission: Lady Aberdeen is Eloquent on the Subject of Home" found in MG IB5 Vol. 22, 93.

[80]"Women's Life Mission" n.p.

[81]In Toronto, when the National Council of Women met in the Council chamber in City Hall, Lady Aberdeen sat in the mayor's chair. *Toronto Mail* 17 January 1894: n.p.

families, workers, the community, and ultimately, the nation.[82] Whether perceived by the male public as effective, powerful or even legitimate, members of the Council understood their actions to be important, useful and meaningful to their definition of the public, a public which included women. They established the norm that annual meetings would take place in recognized, respected institutions, a result of their powerful connections to political and public life through their husbands. Regardless, the National Council became part of a network in which decision-making and power was negotiated: "[p]ower is the ability to take one's place in whatever discourse is essential to action and the right to have one's part matter."[83]

Women, both the politically active clubwomen and the influential hostesses, practiced politics in subtle and overt ways and they did so from an increasing variety of spaces: the hotel parlour, schools of domestic science, churches, university and city hall assembly rooms and, of course, their domestic drawing room. The lines between public and private, masculine and feminine spaces were in negotiation, as women began to share the public landscape with men, albeit from separate women's spaces. Even so, women were carving out their space in the affairs of the nation; they took on the role of public housekeepers, shaping public policy, and in effect, becoming "public architects." Indeed, those women with connections to influential men had an indisputable "in." Their networks were powerful and far-reaching and the result of their work was said to have an impact on the successful development of the nation.

The spaces examined in this chapter have shown that parliamentary affairs filtered outward into the Ottawa landscape and that, contrary to the strict dichotomy promoted by the ideal of separate spheres, spheres overlapped on many levels and women were active in the public and private side of politics. Women in late nineteenth-century Canada were increasingly involved in public affairs. They were vocal members of and the initiators of new buildings in the civic landscape. Women used their association with the home to exert power in the public sphere. But how was women's increasing presence in public life and more overt display of power in social and political circles manifested in the Parliament Buildings? Can the Parliament Buildings be used as an index for women's changing role in society? To begin to answer these questions, the next chapter examines the design of the Parliament Buildings as an active agent in the construction of gender and power, as a space in which power was practiced and continually redefined and where the layers of overlapping spheres found their most complex expression.

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[82]One example of the Council's work was to "ascertain the cause" behind the large proportion of farmers' wives, housekeepers and domestic servants who were inmates in "lunatic asylums."

[83]Carolyn Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Balantine Books, 1988) 42.

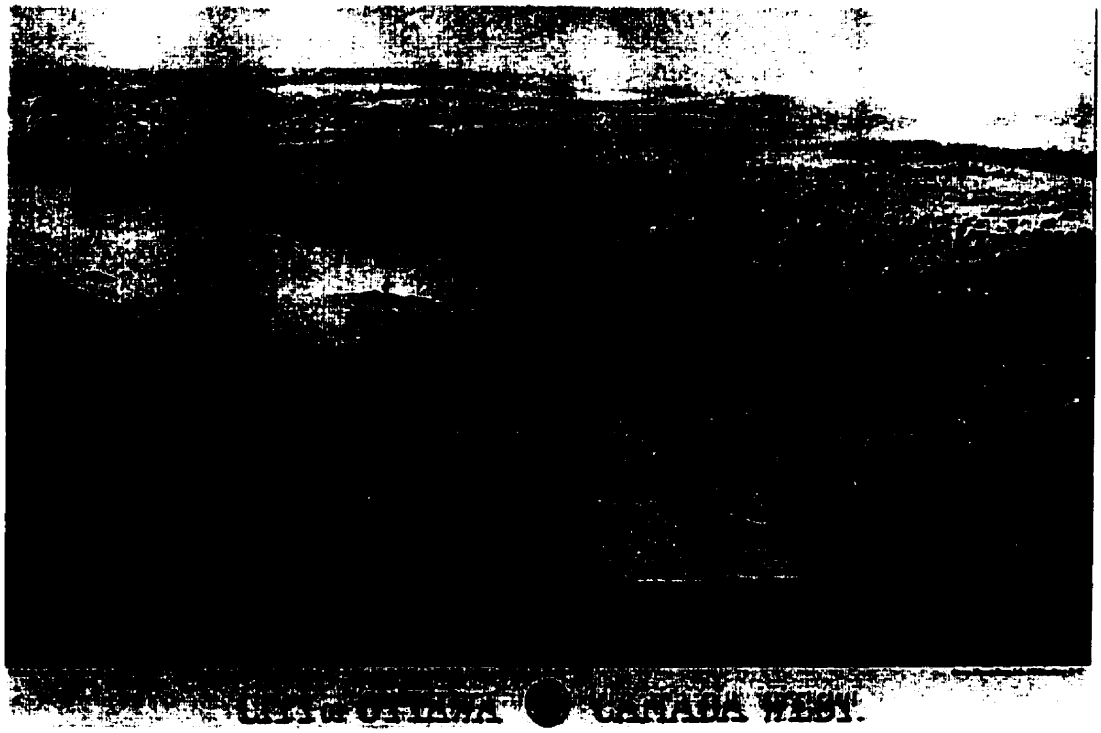

fig. 3.0
Lithograph, City of Ottawa, Canada West, 1859
CA 18603

CHAPTER 2

MASCULINE DOMESTICITY, EXECUTIVE FATHERHOOD:
The Construction of Gender and Power in Canada's First Parliament Buildings

In March of 1896, Kit Coleman, parliamentary reporter for the Toronto *Daily Mail* sat in the seat of the most powerful person in Canada, Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Wandering through the Parliament Buildings after the Speech from the Throne, Coleman found herself alone in the Commons Chamber, with "[n]ot a soul in the great room of Canada's Parliament."[1] Although "[t]he rustle of women's skirts in the sacred place seemed like a profanity," her curiosity triumphed:

> A moment in Sir Wilfrid's chair. ... Peace, serenity, urbanity, will surely descend upon you if you rest awhile in the seat of that "charming Sir Wilfrid." But you find it hard... As for pcor Mr. Speaker's seat - up on the throne - no prisoner in Sing-Sing could have a harder seat than this straight-backed, uncushioned chair. It can't be very nice to be a member of Parliament. One wonders why they do it.[2]

Her tone in describing the Chamber is one of awe: "through the glass roof shone softly ... - a superb light - like sunset - soft, yet glowing.... Not anywhere that I have ever been have I seen anything that can in its line compare with the lighting of the House of Commons."[3] Similarly, her inference regarding the nature of the work implies deferential respect. Coleman seems relieved there are men strong enough to withstand the demands of this harsh and uncomfortable environment, effectively dismissing the possibility that she herself could be included in this group. At this moment, Coleman spatially and psychologically distances herself from a public position while simultaneously taking one on, in her role as a reporter.

Her comments exemplify women's complicated relationship with the public sphere; although she is uneasy moving through this space, stating that there is no place for women's skirts on the floor of the House Chamber, she appropriates the space and publishes her excursion in the newspaper. Whether her tryst on the floor of the Commons is fictional or real, Coleman blurs the boundaries of women's proper place in society, and specifically, in the House of Commons.

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[1]Kit Coleman, "Debate on the Address in the Ottawa House Sketched by Kit," *Mail and Empire* 21 March 21 1896: n.p. Found in Lady Aberdeen's scrapbooks, MG 29 D112 Vol. 9, File 1.
[2]Coleman n.p.
[3]Coleman n.p.

Women's place in the Parliament Buildings in the late nineteenth century was not in the seat of power. It was, according to the architects' plan, one floor removed in the Ladies' Gallery. To the same effect, dominant ideology, pervasive in advice books, popular magazines, medical journals and religious writings prescribed women's place as in the home, spatially separate from the workings of political and public decision-making. Spatial as well as ideological, the ideal of the "domestic" woman was upheld by Canadian laws which prohibited them from entering institutions of higher education, being elected to public office or acquiring professional status in most fields.[4] Kit Coleman, however, was a professional woman with a public persona. As a reporter, she was a woman in a man's profession and her "beat" was the politics of the nation.[5]

Canada's first Parliament Buildings, built between 1860-65 and designed by Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones, were not designed for either Kit Coleman or any other woman as its primary user. The architects' plan, both as a drawing and an arrangement of spaces, reveals implicit cultural assumptions about "place" in late-nineteenth-century Canadian society. The design of the Parliament Buildings as "complex representations of latent values"[6] addresses and divides definitions of the public along gender and class lines; it assumes men in the role of public decision-makers, indicates women's use of the building as visitors to the Ladies' Gallery, and places male and female servants, out of sight, in the basement.

This chapter examines the building as an active agent in the construction of gender. It first establishes the Parliament Buildings as a central, organizing force in the emerging public landscape of the new capital of Canada. As a central feature of this landscape, the Parliament Buildings reflected and embodied patriarchal hierarchies in a capitalist society as well as the ideals of the elite involved in the nation's institution building and inscribed a selective definition of "public" persons. Secondly, this chapter illustrates how the buildings' internal organization operated within this system of hierarchies, in which the

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[4]See Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* Toronto (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988) and Linda Kealy and Joan Sangster, *Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).

[5]Coleman's "Woman's Kingdom" was a popular feature in the Toronto *Daily Mail* a paper which later became the *Mail and Empire*. She was hired in 1889 at the age of 25 by managing editor, Christopher Bunting, who sought to increase the paper's circulation by attracting women as readers. Coleman's "Woman's Kingdom" ran for 21 years; she covered domestic affairs, fashion, romantic advice, travel, national, and international affairs such as the Spanish American War. See Ted Ferguson, *Queen of Hearts: Kit Coleman, Canada's Pioneer Woman Journalist* (Markham, Ontario: PaperJacks Ltd., 1979). Kay Rex, *No Daughter of Mine: The Women and History of the Canadian Women's Press Club, 1904-1971* (Toronto: Cedar Cave Publishing, 1995); Barbara Freeman, *Kit's Kingdom: The Journalism of Kathleen Blake Coleman* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989).

[6]Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," in *Material Life in America, 1600-1850* ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987) 18.

construction of gender is both implicit and explicit. It takes as its model the highly gendered site of the Victorian house to discuss the complex nature of "private" spaces in the Parliament Buildings and to show how its design created an exclusively masculine enclave in which both public and private were associated with masculinity. Coleman's experience of the buildings, however, shows us that however uncomfortable she may have been in the space, there was a feminine presence in the building, and a stirring of women's public presence.

As both a physical manifestation of Canada's emerging identity and as a means of asserting a collective self-definition, the Parliament Buildings, constructed between 1859 and 1865, were "arguably the most important architectural event in nineteenth-century British North America."[7] When Queen Victoria chose Ottawa, in 1858, as the new capital of British North America, it was an empty and barren slate upon which government and nation building would develop.[8] Balancing political and social pressures and conflicts, the decision to make Ottawa the capital was complex. Just as buildings are products of social and cultural conditions, capitals "are the various products of human will and historic circumstance."[9] Queen Victoria's choice of Ottawa as the new capital took into consideration proximity to the American border and tensions between Canada's English and French speaking citizens. There was support and disagreement regarding the decision. Ottawa was a compromise. It was thought to cause the least offense to Upper and Lower Canada as it straddled the two regions; situated in Upper Canada, it overlooked the Ottawa River and Lower Canada.[10] (fig.3.1) Lord Monck, Governor of the Province of Canada, stated his ambivalence toward the decision in 1866:

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[7]Carolyn A. Young, *The Glory of Ottawa: Canada's First Parliament Buildings* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) 3.

[8]On January 1, 1855, Bytown became the city of Ottawa. Barrack's Hill, the site on which the Parliament Buildings were constructed, had been used by Lord Bytown as a base while overseeing the construction of the Rideau Canal. He had built three military barracks and a hospital on the Hill. See Peter D. K. Hessel, *From Ottawa with Love: Glimpses of Canada's Capital Through Early Picture Postcards* (Ottawa, National Capital Commission, 1979).

[9]Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 13.

[10]In 1841, the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada united and formed the Province of Canada. Parliament had alternated cities for many years until Queen Victoria decided on Ottawa as the captial city: 1841-4 (Kingston), 1844-9 (Montreal), 1849-51 (Toronto), 1851-55 (Quebec), 1855-59 (Toronto), 1859-65 (Quebec). The Montreal Parliament House, St. Ann's Market Hall opposite the Grey Nunnery was leased on May 1, 1844 for use as the Legislature. It was destroyed by fire on April 26, 1849 at which time the legislature was transferred to Toronto until 1851. G. F. Baillairge, *Description and cost of the public buildings constructed or improved by the department of public works, Appendix No. 23* (Ottawa, 1867) 249.

fig. 3.1
Watercolour by Lieutenant C. Sedley of Wellington Street c.1853
PA C1548

Ottawa had been labelled by Goldwin Smith, Oxford don, a "subarctic lumber village transformed by royal mandate into a political cockpit." The structure on Barrack's Hill is the military hospital which was torn down for the construction of the Parliament Buildings in 1860. The Confederation Building now stands on the site of the residences.

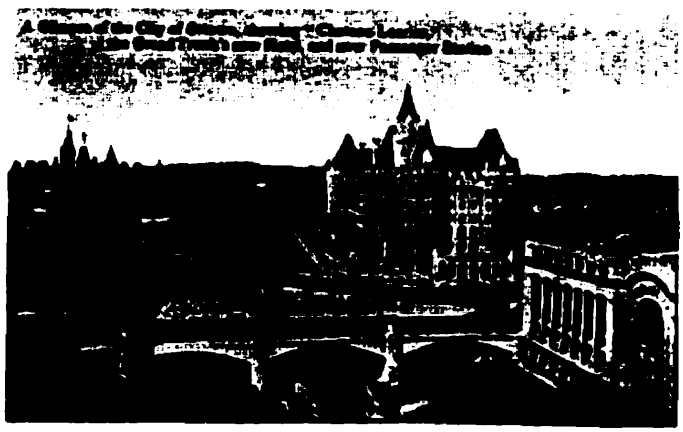

fig. 3.2
Postcard view of Ottawa
CA 2023

Postcard view showing a "glimpse of Ottawa showing Chateau Laurier, the Grand Trunk's new Hotel, and new Passenger Station."

fig. 3.3
Map of City of Ottawa, Canada, with views of Principal Business Buildings, 1893
CA 2925

> It seems like an act of insanity to have fixed the capital of this country away from the civilization, intelligence and commercial enterprise of this Province, in a place that can never be a place of importance... My confident belief is, notwithstanding the vast expense incurred here in public buildings, Ottawa will not be the capital four years hence.[11]

Lord Monck's statement regarding the transience of Ottawa as capital stood in opposition to the permanence of the building construction that immediately took place. The federal buildings quickly became the prominent feature in Ottawa's representation of itself; its urban landscape was represented *as* buildings and, particularly, as buildings which existed in relation to the federal houses of Parliament. (fig.3.2) In figure 3.3, a street plan entitled simply *City of Ottawa* is framed by drawings of Ottawa's buildings. Each building represents a business or profession, is three or four storeys high and constructed of stone. The press building, the furniture shop, the business college did not advertise their goods, their products or their people. They simply advertised that they had an impressive building. Similarly, the buildings were constructed in Second Empire style and with stone, not the lumber which had been Ottawa's main industry. The construction of the Parliament Buildings inspired a proliferation of secondary architectural trends, and an influx of stone masons to what had been a small lumber town. (fig.3.3, 3.5) A government city called for a sophisticated, cosmopolitan look and feel: Wellington and Sparks Streets, in proximity to the Parliament Buildings, soon replaced Rideau and Sussex Streets as the centre of Ottawa and quickly developed a substantial number of commercial buildings, banks and hotels, as we have seen in Chapter One.

Investigating the nature of the relations between Ottawa's built environment and its political agenda inspires two questions: "[w]hat assumptions are made in the design of a capital city, and how is the presence of government within it expressed?", and: what "can the structure and appearance of such government-sponsored zones tell us ... about the balance of power in the society that produces them?"[12] In the case of Ottawa, practical and symbolic reasons were integral to the choice of site and ceremonial precinct. Perched high on the heroic escarpment called Barrack's Hill, overlooking the Ottawa River, the Parliament Buildings were to enjoy a dramatic location. (fig.3.6, 3.7) Although approachable, their central location in the expanding lumber town of Ottawa, their location on a hill and river indicated prominence and omniscience. It was a powerful use of the natural landscape:

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[11]National Film Board, *Stones of History: Canada's Houses of Parliament* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1967).
[12]Vale viii.

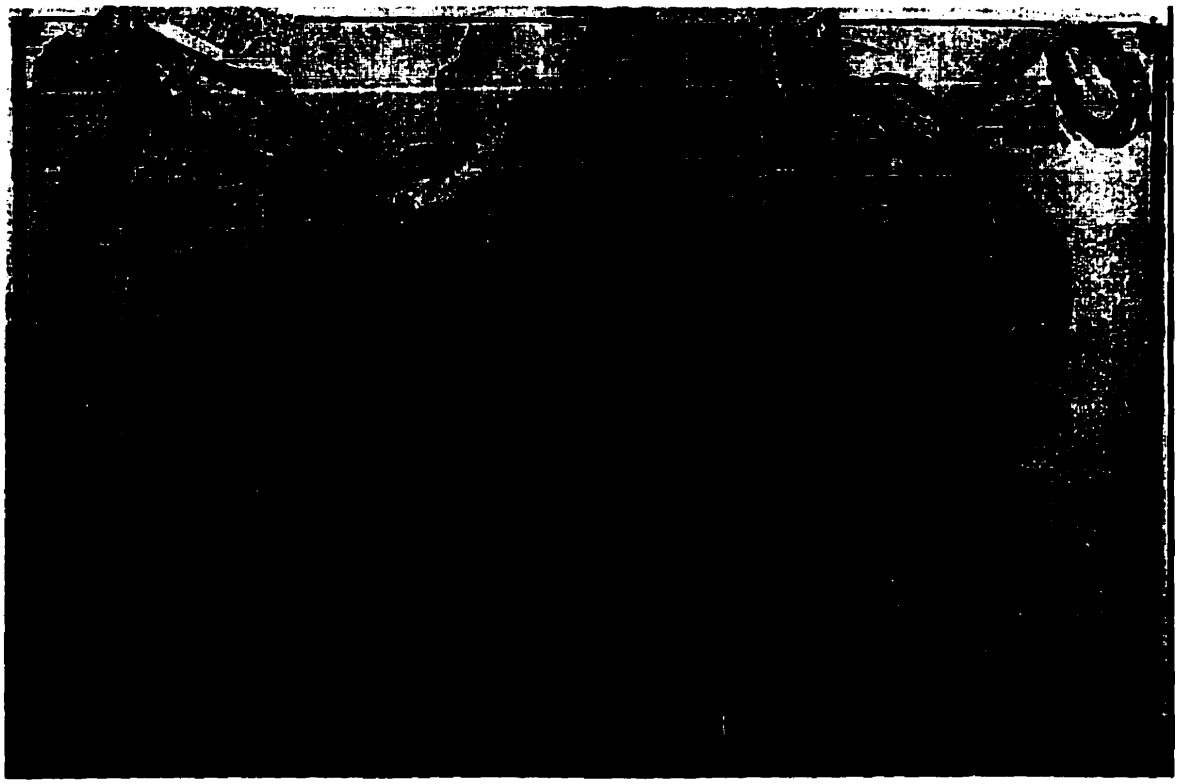

fig. 3.6
Map of Ottawa, *Belden's Historical Atlas for County of Carleton, 1879,*
CA 11967

The Parliament Buildings could be viewed from two waterways, the Ottawa River and the Rideau Canal.

fig. 3.7
Drawing of Ottawa showing the new Parliament Buildings, May 30, 1863
CA 18604

The Parliament Buildings created a formidable view.

> Being essentially a Government city, the center of its energy and interest is the magnificent building known as the Federal Houses of Parliament, an imposing, tower crowned, gothic pile, surmounting and dominating the plateau which overlooks the broad and glistening Ottawa River and from which a commanding view of the surrounding country is obtainable.[13]

The physical structure of the federal buildings and choice of architectural references further indicated the degree to which the interplay of culture, politics and architecture expressed power and national identity. In 1859, the Province of Canada comprised Upper and Lower Canada and was moving towards its establishment as a Dominion. In 1867, the Canadas celebrated Confederation with the addition of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The idea of national identity at this point was in process, being negotiated between the French and English speaking populations (and largely excluding Native Canadians.) The design and construction of the Ottawa Parliament Buildings offered the opportunity for powerful and symbolic use of the built environment as "[t]he association of particular building forms with political or social ideals [was] one of the hallmarks of mid-nineteenth century architecture."[14] The buildings were meant to embody, and be a visual counterpart to, the political aims and values of the Fathers of Confederation, thus reinforcing the dominant politics of an elite through built form.[15]

As a result, the choice of style of the Parliament Buildings were heavy with historical and symbolic meaning and were closely connected to Canada's ties to Britain: "It was practically mandatory to express the country's close ties with Britain by taking as their model Westminster New Palace home of the 'Mother of all Parliaments' in London."[16] Yet, the entries by Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones, who won the competition for the construction of Canada's buildings, were more closely aligned with civic architecture; they were called "Civic Gothic" by competition officials because "the design motifs were derived from medieval town halls or guild halls rather than from ecclesiastical buildings."[17]

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[13]Both the first and second Parliament Buildings were constructed on the same site, enjoying a formidable location. *Ottawa, the Capital City of the Dominion of Canada,* 1920.

[14]Geoffrey Simmons ed., *Documents in Canadian Architecture* (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 1992) 60.

[15]Alan Gowans, *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966) 120. As Lawrence Vale points out in *Architecture, Power and National Identity*: "[t]he national identity communicated through the production of a parliament building ... highlights the identity of a dominant group within a plural society," 49.

16Gowans 119.

[17]Georges LePape, *Three Centuries of Architecture in Canada* (Montreal: Federal Publications Service, 1971) 97.

Furthermore, although Gothic was considered a "patriotic"[18] expression in its ties to Britain, it was in fact popular in many other European countries. By 1859, "advanced critical opinion had come to consider the Parliament Buildings of London obsolete, symbolically speaking."[19] The design of the Canadian buildings, therefore, were to be an exciting manifestation of architectural trends and an emerging national identity.

The stage was then set for "Canada's biggest architectural show, the construction of what turned out to be the most spectacular group of romantic buildings in America."[20] The competition entries of 1859 for the commission of the Parliament Buildings took into account the function of the buildings and needs of the site as well as prevailing political goals such as nation-building. They would be "monumental buildings with practical and symbolic roles";[21] monumental in their ability to impress, convey the importance of government, and assert themselves as a centre-piece in the capital city and Dominion. They would be practical in their responsibility to house parliament and stand in relationship to an emerging civic design; and symbolic in the sense that they would exist as a manifestation of "national" ideals, while paying respect to cultural traditions and references.

The buildings were impressive. The southern facade of the new Parliament Buildings presented a three story, multi-coloured stone building, 472 feet long.[22] (fig.3.8, 3.9) Its leading horizontal lines were a result of symmetrical windows the length of the facade: twenty-eight cusped windows on the ground floor, fifty-two smaller, paired windows on the first floor, and in triplets on each of the towers. These were interrupted only by the heavy projections of the seven towers, the impressive, 180 foot central Victoria tower and six smaller wing towers, characterized by high pitched, truncated roofs. Further irregular massing was created by the distinctive, polygonal Library of Parliament, based on the British Museum Reading Room. Flanked on each side by the East and West Blocks, designed by the architects Stent and Laver, the Centre Block formed the tip of a triangular formation and could be clearly viewed from Wellington Street. (fig.3.10)

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[18]"To many observers, the style itself symbolized British values such as parliamentary democracy." Simmins 59.

[19]Gowans 119.

[20]Le Pape 97.

[21]Young 33.

[22]The basement was above ground and had its own row of windows; this is not included as a storey. The multi-coloured stone refers to the variety of stone used in the construction of the Parliament Buildings. The dominant stone in the exterior was light coloured Nepean sandstone. Many of the non-structural elements such as stairs, gables and pinnacles were of grey Ohio freestone, while window openings and door arches were of red Potsdam sandstone. Local limestone was used for foundations and interior portions of the walls. Other materials for the exterior were marble and brick. John Page, *Report of the Public Buildings at Ottawa: Sessional Paper No. 8. Appendix No. 21* (Ottawa, 1867) 205.

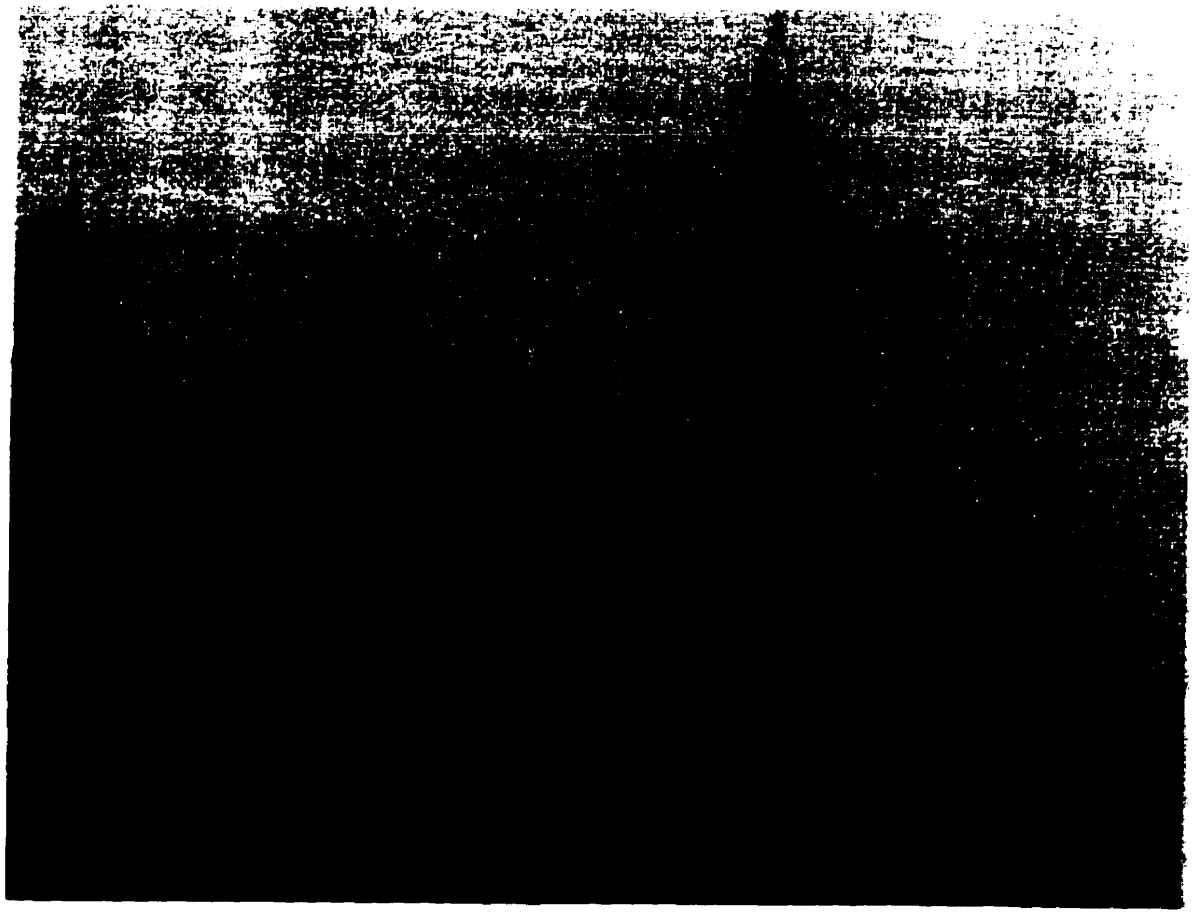

fig. 3.8
Photograph of Fuller and Jones' parliamentary building, c.1880
NA C3760

There were a wide variety of stylistic interpretations of Fuller and Jones' buildings ranging from Ruskinian, High Victorian, pointed and Civic Gothic to Italian Gothic: *The Builder* stated in 1859 "[t]he style is a fashionable one, Italian Gothic."
"Proposed Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, Canada West." *The Builder.* December 10, 1859, 808.

fig. 3.9
Rear View of Parliament Buildings showing the Library of Parliament
NA C3760.

Fuller and Jones retained important stylistic characteristics particular to the Gothic Revival such as pointed arches, steep gables, vaulted roofs, buttresses and flying buttresses, turrets, pinnacles and spires.[23] However, their interpretation of Gothic, as was the Revivalist trend in the 1850s, was eclectic, borrowing details and materials from a number of sources. Its mansard roof and pavilion plan, for example, was more aligned with Second Empire than Gothic. The architects' style was further distinguished as Neo-Gothic in their use of "bold geometric forms, solid walls surfaces, and - its most distinctive feature - polychromy,... the use of contrasting coloured building materials as a form of decoration."[24] This synthesis of architecture and art was a principle of John Ruskin who believed strongly in the role of craftsmen and in the social responsibility of art. Although "Ruskin's principles alone were too limited to engender a distinctive architectural style," the Parliament Buildings took aspects of his principles including the "eclectic assembly of architectural details, richly associational story-telling sculpture, naturalistic relief carving, and constructive color."[25] Distinguished by its central tower, massive form and grand landscaping, the parliamentary grounds and buildings evoked beauty, authority, pride. (fig.3.11, 3.12)

Fuller and Jones' Houses of Parliament were themselves an expression of power, democracy and national identity, and a living archeology of the priorities and beliefs of a powerful elite. The siting of the Parliament Buildings, at the centre of the city, on the top of a hill made it a powerful organizing force for Ottawa's further urban development. Women were not part of this "official" urban landscape; they were neither its builders nor decision-makers and ideally, they were peripheral, occasional users.[26] Popular ideology strongly associated women with the suburban, residential periphery of cities. They needed the *protection* from the *dangers* of urban life; men were an essential part of that urban

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[23]Gothic "derived its origin from the efforts of Christians of preceding ages to embody the principles and characteristics of their faith in the structures which they reared for the services of their religion." Simmons 44.

[24]Leslie Maitland, Jacqueline Hucker, and Shannon Ricketts, *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992) 77.

[25]Eve Blau, *Ruskinian Gothic: The Architectural of Deane and Woodward, 1841-1861* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) 139.

[26]For more on women as "builders" or women in the architecture profession see Blanche Lemco van Ginkel, "Slowly and Surely (and Somewhat Painfully): More or Less the History of Women in Architecture in Canada," *The Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada Bulletin* (March 1991): 5-11. Ginkel writes that the first woman admitted to a school of architecture in Canada was in 1916, which was the year of the fire which destroyed Fuller and Jones' buildings. Women, by default could not partake in the reconstruction of the federal buildings, as they had been excluded from professional training. Also, Monica Contreras, Luigi Ferrara and Daniel Karpinski, "Breaking In: Four Early Female Architects," *The Canadian Architect* (November 1993): 18-23; Ellen Perry Berkeley ed., *Architecture: A Place for Women* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989).

fig. 3.10
Photograph of Wellington Street and West Block, 1875
CA 1094

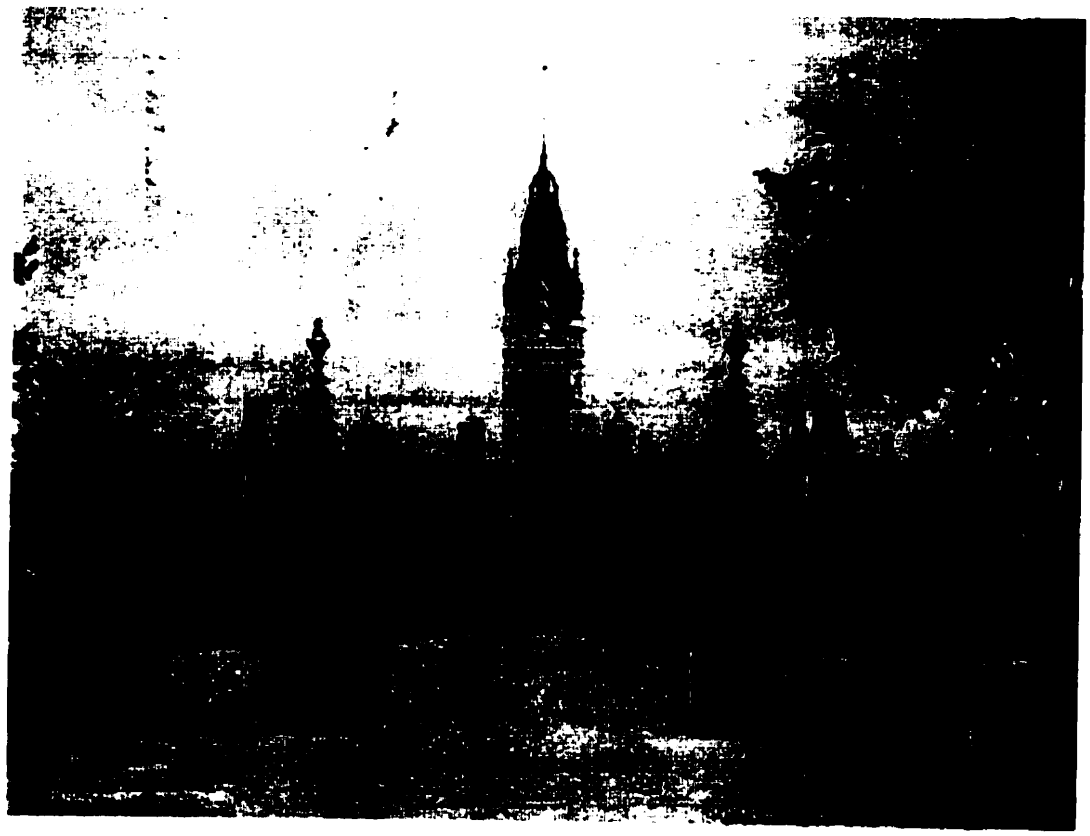

fig. 3.11
Photograph of Old Centre Block Building from Main Gates, Wellington Street, 1903
CA 1340

Fuller and Jones' design showed innovative derivations from the British model of Westminster New Palace adapting their them to the site, climate and historical context. Canada was a young country and a more modern Gothic style, achieved by incorporating new technology and previously unacceptable materials, was meant to symbolize a new age of progress. The resulting buildings, as architectural historian Carolyn Young states, "were among the most avant-garde and eclectic interpretations of the British secular Gothic Revival of the 1850s." Carolyn Young, *The Glory of Ottawa: Canada's first Parliament Buildings, 3.*

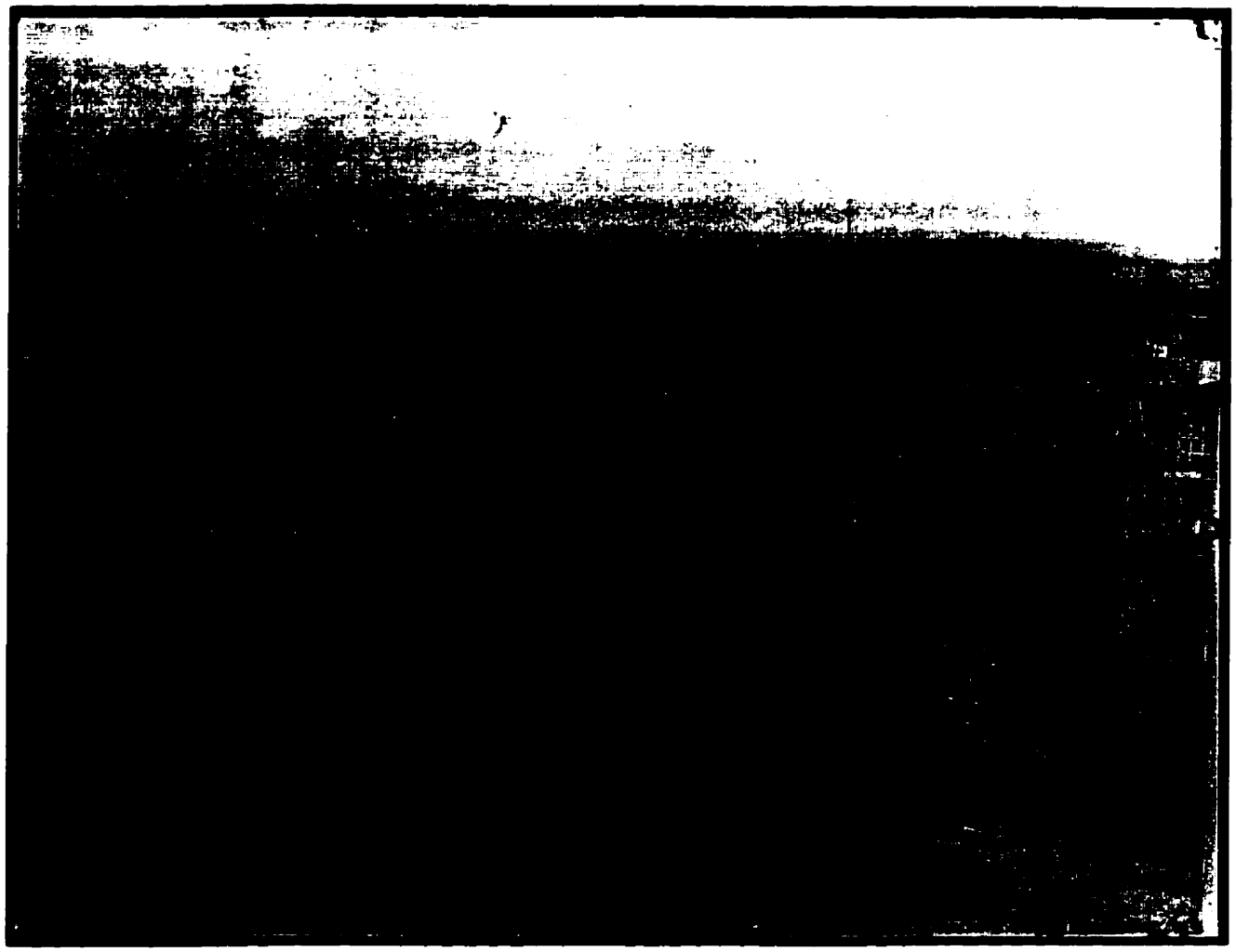

fig. 3.12
Aerial view looking east from the Tower on Parliament Hill, c. 1912
CA 0267

A dialogue between the new buildings and the emerging urban landscape of the Dominion created a continuum between the search for, and the ensuing cultivation of, a national style. The symbolic image of the Parliament Buildings spread in urban and rural areas across the country as Thomas Fuller took the post of chief architect of the Department of Public Works in 1881. He designed churches such as St. Albans' (on King Edward and Daly Ave. in Ottawa) and federal buildings across Canada, such as the Langevin Block (1883).

The Parliament Buildings were simultaneously a product of, and a force behind the production of, a national spirit and tradition in architecture seen in churches, farmhouses and institutional edifices.

fabric.[27] Yet, as we saw in Chapter 1, women filtered into the urban landscape, using a variety of spaces for both social and political purposes. (3.13) Even though the nineteenth-century city was an increasingly segregated place with strong distinctions between residential, commercial, and leisure areas, there were also many connections between these spaces; the Russell Hotel, for example, was a mixture of all three. Women's actual use of space challenged these distinctions; their experience of space did not always conform to architectural intention.

The representation of women as potential users of the parliamentary buildings reflected popular images of women in the public, in other words, these images promoted the gendered division of space. Just as men were associated with the construction and administration of the Parliament Buildings, it seems that women were more closely associated with its landscape.[28] In Fuller and Jones' competition drawings, women and men are shown leisurely walking the grounds. Women were also acknowledged as users of the Lovers' Walk, a quarter mile path which weaved its way along the edges of the parliamentary grounds. (fig.3.14, 3.15) Jean Blewett shows this in her writing about the "poetical side of the political capital:"

> We find a seat on 'Lovers' Walk,' and sit facing the mountains half-hidden in the deep blue mist, which mother nature has borrowed for their beautification from the skies stretching over them.[29]

She and her companion overhear two young lovers. The young man says: "I wanted you to see the view from here... The wooded hills beyond the water make me think of poetry. I

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[27]For more on women and suburbanization see Annmarie Adams, "The Eichler Home: Intention and Experience in Postwar Suburbia," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture V,* ed. Elizabeth Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995); Susan Helen James, "'Bedroom Problems:' Architecture, Gender, and Sexuality, 1945-63," M.Arch Thesis, (McGill University, Montreal, 1996); Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Joan Ockman, "Mirror Images: Technology, Consumption and the Representation of Gender in American Architecture since World War II," in *The Sex of Architecture.* ed Diana Agrest, Patricia Conway and Leslie Kanes Weisman, (New York: Henry N. Abrams Inc., 1996) 191-210. For women and urban space see Mary Ryan, *Women in Public Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Esther da Costa Meyer, "La Donna e Mobile: Agoraphobia, Women and Urban Space," in *The Sex of Architecture* 141-156 and Bonnie Lloyd, "Woman's Place, Man's Place," *Landscape* 20.1 (October 1975): 10-13.

[28]Interestingly, in today's landscaping, the grounds are covered with monuments to the "great" men who built Canada, prime ministers such as John Diefenbaker, Lester B. Pearson and Fathers of Confederation such as D'Arcy McGee. The only woman represented on the grounds is Queen Victoria. Prominent Canadian women are primarily represented in bust form and are placed in *interiors,* conforming to dominant ideological stereotypes of women and the private sphere (women in the House, so to speak) and men and the public sphere (affecting the public landscape, making their mark on the nation.) For related reading on women's "affiliation" with interiors, see Annmarie Adams, "Building Barriers: Images of Women in Canada's Architectural Press, 1924-73," *Resources for Feminist Research* vol. 23 no. 3 (Fall 1994): 11-23.

[29]Jean Blewett, "As Seen by a Woman," *Toronto Globe* 29 August 1896: n.p.

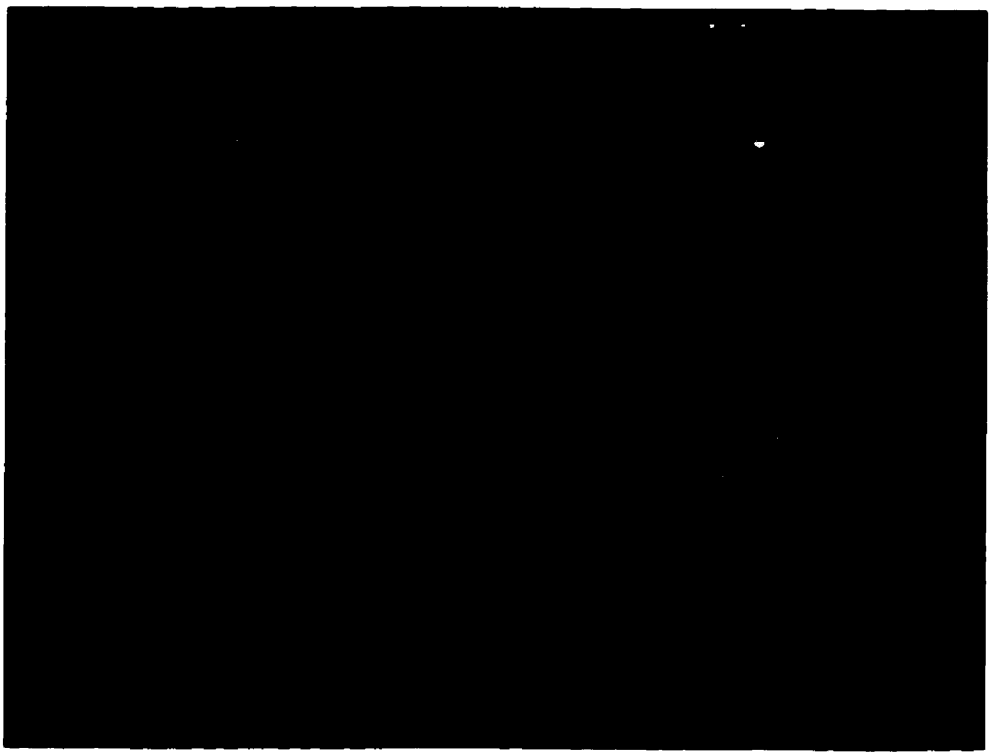

fig. 3.13
Photograph of the Architects, Superintendants and Draughtsmen of the original Parliament Buildings, 1860
CA 0161.

Photo taken at the temporary office on Barracks Hill. Left to right: J. Lebreton, Rene Steckel, C. Baillarge, W. Hutchinson, G.B. Pellam, F.P. Rubidge, John Bowis, J.H. Patterson, J. Larose, Mr. Arnoldi, Thomas Fuller, Mr. Kelly.

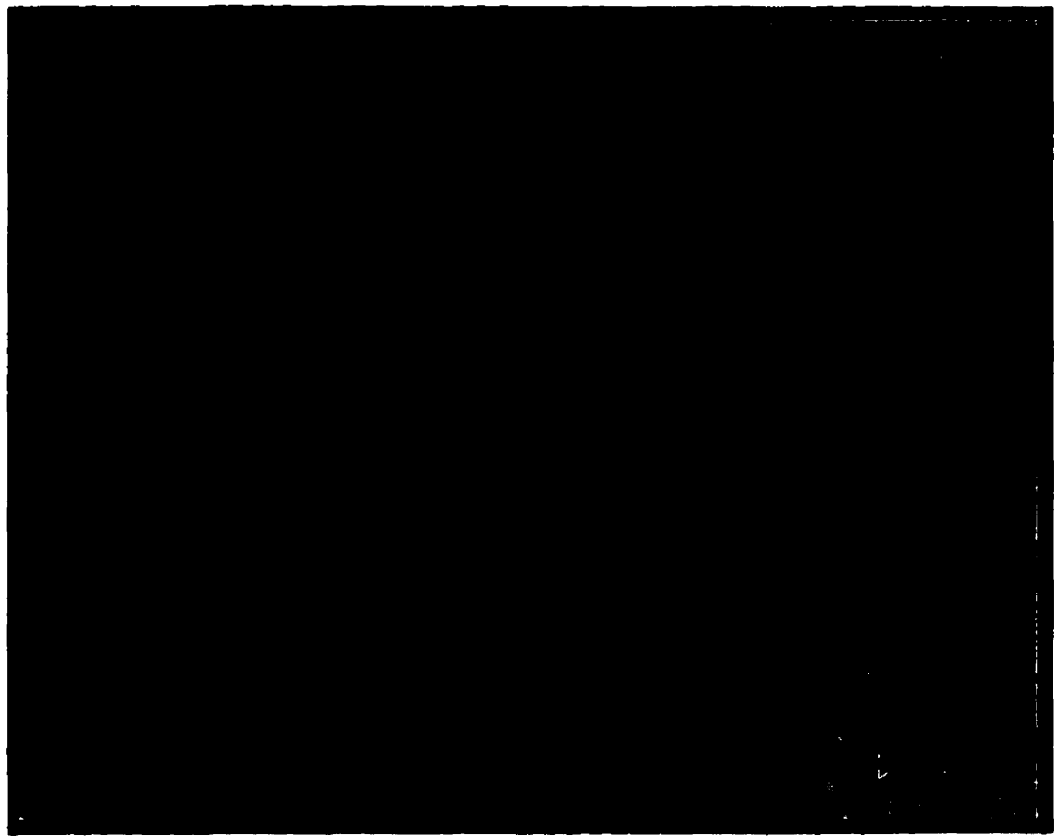

fig. 3.14
Photograph of Lovers' Walk below Parliament Hill, 1903
CA 1350

The parliamentary grounds were to be a place much like a public park, which encouraged promenading and socializing, but only within the rules of respectability and propriety. None of the women depicted in this drawing are alone, and note the family pictured in the foreground, a man, a woman and a child.

fig. 3.15
Drawing, Fuller & Jones' winning design for the Centre Block published in *Building News*, 25 November 1859

couldn't think of having you go back without seeing Ottawa from this vantage point."[30] Not surprisingly, women were associated with the romance of the place and with the tame nature surrounding the buildings rather than with its essential function as a legislative space. Women were expected to experience Ottawa from this vantage point, as observers, as well as objects of observation.

Although practical and symbolic reasons were clearly part of the choice of site for the Parliament Buildings, it also conformed to and re-affirmed a masculine, urban middle-class public. While the Russell Hotel and Rideau Hall were both associated with the man of the house, the proprietor or Governor General respectively, the Parliament Buildings were home to an elite group of men, politicians and senators. All three structures constructed a separate ladies' space: the Russell had its ladies' drawing room, Rideau Hall had Her Excellency's parlour and the Parliament Buildings had the Ladies' Gallery. The Parliament Buildings and the new, professional buildings which were quickly being developed in Ottawa's downtown shared a prestigious space to which women were offered specific, separate, limited access. But as we saw with the first two examples, women made themselves quite at home in "houses" built by men. Were the Parliament Buildings any different?

As Kit Coleman strolled through the interior of the Commons chamber, she was in awe of its beauty and magnificence, yet uncomfortable moving through the space. Clearly, it was not her place to be in the inner sanctum of the federal buildings, but on a March afternoon, 1896, Coleman found herself seated at Sir Wilfrid Laurier's desk. It is not enough to examine the historical and architectural context of her serendipitous excursion into the Chamber without turning a critical eye towards the implications of gender. Kit's action took place within a hierarchical system of ordering, one in which the allocation of space was closely related to the acquisition and exertion of power.[31] She had ventured into the space in which the ceremonial and practical negotiation of power took place. The Commons Chamber was the central link in a complex network of private and public spaces which were host to ongoing, formal and informal negotiations. Kit Coleman, as a woman in late nineteenth-century Canada, was ineligible as a participant in this exclusive process, and as such, was not "constructed" into the fabric of the building. By investigating the interior arrangement of spaces in the Parliament Buildings,

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[30]Blewett n.p.

[31]Leslie Kanes Weisman explores the association of power and space in *Discrimination by Design* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992). See also Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); and, Matrix, *Making Space: Women and the Man Made Environment* (London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1984).

particularly, its "private" side, one can begin to understand how gender was constructed in such a building and the many layers on which public overlapped with private.

The Parliament Buildings combined public and domestic architecture and imagery and, like hotels and some Victorian houses, did not fit neatly into the monolithic categories of public and private.[32] If the nineteenth-century ideal was that public and political affairs should be spatially separate from the domestic sphere, the Parliament Buildings were an example of how these spheres overlapped in their integration of domestic environments into a public institution. The buildings' function was threefold: a legislative building, open to the public; an office structure used by employees of various ranks and status; and a residence inhabited by servants and "masters" alike. As a result, there were various levels on which the lines between private and public intersected.

The architects' design shows a clear *progression* of public to private. Fuller and Jones' 1860 plan was a hierarchy of spaces; the wide front entrance and porte cochere welcomed the public and provided smooth access to the public hall and landing, waiting room and galleries. (fig.3.16) Moving east or west toward the two wings, one encountered more specialized spaces whose function related to the inner workings of the House of Commons, for example, the clerks', members' and reporters' rooms. These corridors connected to north/south corridors which lead north to the rear of the building, where a series of "private" spaces were located: the Speaker's Apartment, the Smoking and Reading Rooms, the Library of Parliament and its three retiring rooms. The most private spaces, as one progressed further away from the public face of building, had private entrances.

Visitors would likely be introduced and accompanied into the building in stages. The processional space allowed the building to unfold in a formal way; a visitor could travel directly from the grand public hall to the galleries or pause in the waiting room to be escorted to a specified room. The public entrance evolved in two stages, first between the columns and then the archways of the central tower, to a semi-circular space located between the rear line of the tower and the front of the building, and finally through the large front door which led to the impressive public hall. This entrance acted as a threshold, a visual and spatial differentiation, between the public grounds and the real space of parliament. (fig.3.17, 3.18) Once inside, a visitor would face five tracery windows which opened onto the large central court. These windows also formed the north wall of an east/west corridor. The visitor, then, entered a large, ornamented, beautifully lit space but

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[32]See Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) and Abigail A. Van Slyck. "The Lady and the Library Loafer: Gender and Public Space in Victorian America," *Winterthur Portfolio* 31.4 (Winter, 1996): 221-242.

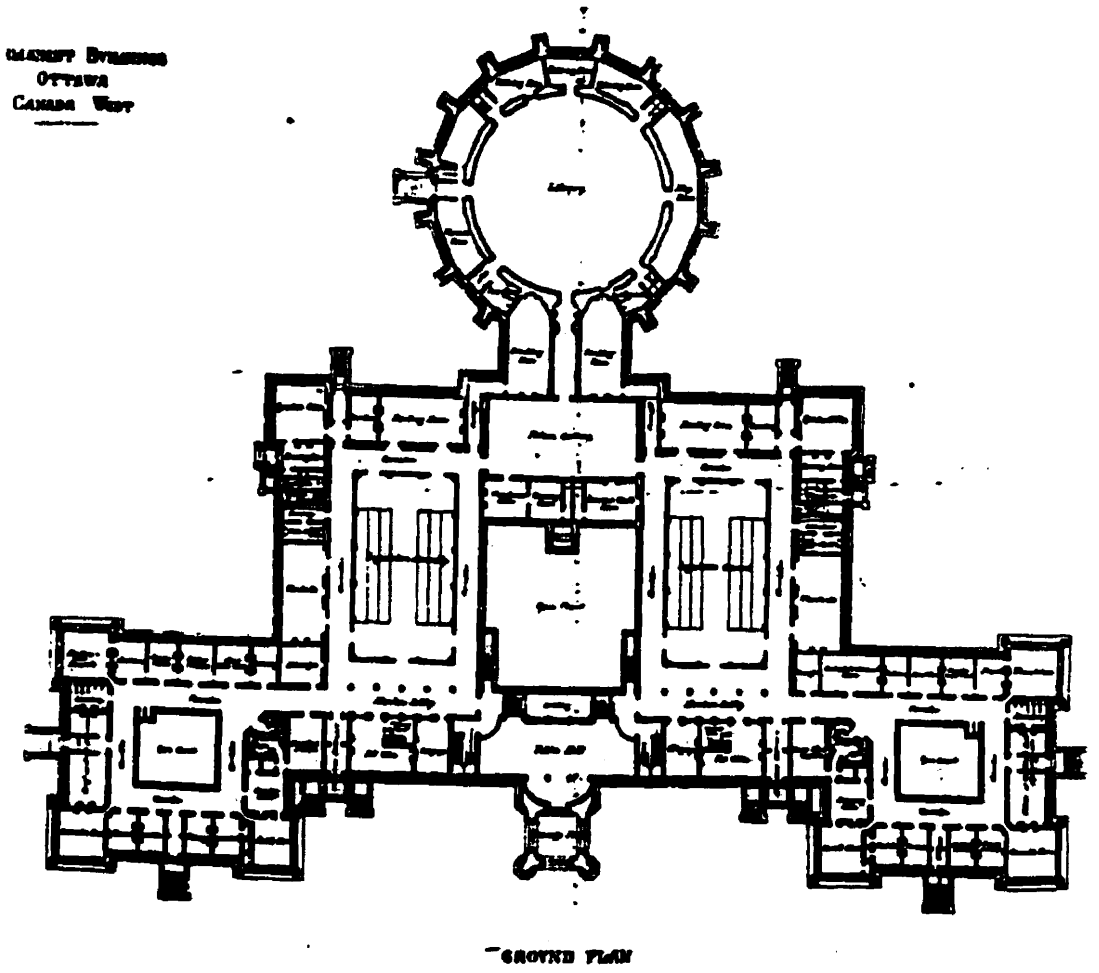

fig. 3.16
Ground floor plan, 1859
NMC 23174

The main entrance was one of five on the southern facade. As the public entrance, it was linked to the large public hall and to the public staircases which led to the Galleries. On either side of the main entrance were the members' entrances -- "double flights .. with molded cut stone railings and carved balusters"* which lead directly to the Assembly rooms. (* Sessional Papers, 58.) The clerk's entrances gave direct access to the offices and committee rooms in each of the wings. These five entrances faced Wellington Street and the public grounds of the Parliament Hill.

fig. 3.17
Detail of main entrance, Parliament Buildings
NMC 23174

fig. 3.18
Photograph of Victoria Tower entrance
NA C9976

fig. 3.19
Interior of main entrance, hall and landing, showing tracery windows and staircase.
NA PA 2409

could not see the workings of the building at first glance. He or she would have to pass yet another threshold to see or partake in the workings of the building by traveling east or west along the aforementioned corridor, up a ten foot wide staircase to a landing from which the public gallery stairs could be taken.[33] (fig.3.19)

The status of visitors, their social rank or their intimacy with members or employees of the building was associated with the spaces into which they entered: "an individual's perception of a landscape changes with the experience of moving through it."[34] A member's perception of space and his pattern of circulation between the Commons Assembly room, caucus room, the reading room or Speaker's office would differ greatly from a servant's which would be focused more precisely on their workspace and the rooms he or she serviced. The servants' entrance was purposefully located, situated at the west side of the building and leading directly to the basement and boiler room, their workspace. As a result, servants would not participate in the same kind of unfolding of space nor would they experience the processional space in the same way as a distinguished guest.[35]

The factors shaping the use of rooms according to the "place" of its intended users were plentiful and took place along: partisan lines, affiliation with the Senate or House of Commons, kind of employment (servant, clerk, reporter, member of parliament), as well as gender. The interior organization and sequence of spaces recalled the hierarchical, gendered divisions in the Victorian gentleman's house, specifically, the division and invisibility of servants and service areas from the main activities of the building and the separation and categorization of rooms according to position or sex of the user. (fig.3.20) In the Parliament Buildings these divisions were highly gendered, yet not in the same way as in the home. Feminine domestic spaces, such as the boudoir, morning room, music room, which in the home provided a balance to masculine activities and imagery, were non-existent in the design of the Parliament Buildings. Although a partially domestic environment, the federal houses of parliament were exclusively masculine. In other words, even the domestic spaces were masculine; and, while the home was meant to "protect the womanliness of woman and encourage the manliness of men,"[36] the design of the

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[33]The front entrance was elaborately designed with columns and moulded arches down to the steps which had "an ornamental stone balustrade." Page 208.

[34]This idea is explored in Dell Upton's *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (The Architectural History Foundation, New York, New York. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1986) and "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Places* 2.2 (Summer 1984): 59-72.

[35]Ironically, however, servants had access to the most private spaces in the Parliament Buildings due to the nature of their work.

[36]Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 16.

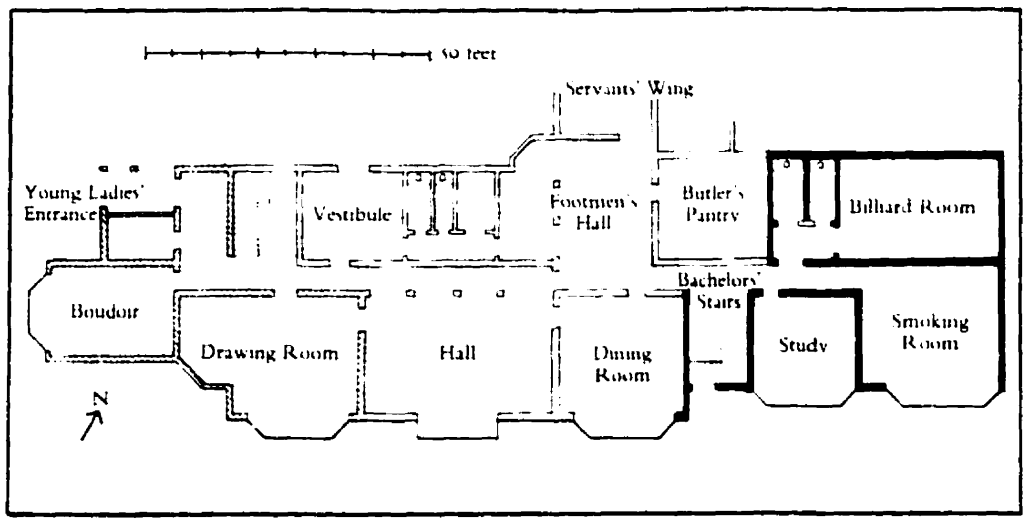

fig. 3.20
Ground floor plan of a Gentleman's Country House
Girouard, *Life in the English Country Home*, 298

The feminine spaces in domestic design were a balance to the "masculine territory" which was located in a separate space in the house. This plan shows the divisions according to sex (ladies' domain, gentlemen's domain) and class (servants' quarters). The Parliament Buildings' plan eliminated feminine spaces but appropriated those associated with masculine domesticity.

Parliament Buildings "protected" women from the manliness of men, effectively excluding them from the private affairs and public business which defined the legislative process.

As a domestic space, the Parliament Buildings recreated the masculine domestic ideals and spaces of the home, what architectural historian Marc Girouard refers to as the "male territory".[37] Men's rooms in the typical gentlemen's home such as the smoking room, library, study, billiard and dining rooms were often placed in sequence, had private entrances directly to the outdoors, and were furnished with massive, dark furniture and outdoor imagery: "[i]n nearly every type of home, furniture was unmistakably masculine or feminine: the dining room and smoking-room were emphatically male, the drawing room and the bedroom female."[38] In the Parliament Buildings male domestic spaces were recreated in two ways, by incorporating the sequence of the male "territorial" rooms and by providing individual, self-contained bachelor apartments.

The suite of parliamentary "private" rooms, the Reading Room, Smoking Room and Library, were all connected and ran along the north wall of the building. The parallel rectangular Senate and Commons Smoking Rooms formed the connection between the main body of the Parliament Building and the Library. A narrow north-south passage connected the smoking rooms to a perpendicular corridor, along which were located the Senate reading room and Speakers' office to the east and the Commons' rooms to the west. This suite of rooms could be reached internally, or from outside by way of the Speakers' private entrance, while the three retiring rooms at the north of the Library and the Library itself could be reached by a separate private entrance.[39] Their location furthest from the public spaces (Hall, galleries, waiting rooms) and the nature of activities enjoyed therein (leisure, smoking, retiring, socializing, reading) implied that these rooms were exclusive, private spaces.

Both the Reading and Smoking Rooms were among the largest rooms in Fuller and Jones' original plan, almost double the size of the Speakers' office and equal only to the wardrobe room. As in the typical home, the location of these rooms and their furnishing made implicit reference to their intended users.[40] The Smoking Room was just down the

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[37] "If the billiard room was placed next to the owner's study or business room with a w.c. and a wash basin adjacent, one had the makings of a comfortable little male territory." Girouard 35.

[38] John Gloag, *Victorian Comfort: A Social History of Design from 1830-1900* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1961) 61. Ladies rooms were decorated in a "feminine" manner, light and floral as opposed to the dark, serious, massive furniture in the men's rooms. The paraphernalia decorating the men's rooms reflected worldly, public concerns: books, outdoor iconography such as hunting or fishing scenes or equipment would adorn the walls in the study, billiard, smoking or gun rooms. Men's furniture was often upholstered in leather so that it was more difficult to tear and stain (tobacco) and easier to clean.

[39] NMC 23174.

[40] No photograph of the first smoking room has been located, but the 1921 Senate and House of Commons smoking rooms for the second buildings, designed by architect John A. Pearson, and both located on the

hall from the Commons' and Senate Chambers. The Smoking Room was serviced and cleaned, not enjoyed by servants. It is possible that members and Senators invited their guests to visit with them in the communal sitting rooms since few members were allocated private offices. Members could meet privately in specific caucus rooms, such as the Conservative or Liberal members rooms which were divided by province (i.e. the Manitoba Liberal member's room) and located in the basement, or rooms for entire caucuses such as the Conservative or Liberal Caucus rooms on the ground floor (in the new wing created by the 1909 extension). These rooms, however, were exclusive to members of parliament; for less confidential and partisan rendez-vous, members could meet in the smoking and reading rooms. Similarly, the saloon and dining room in the basement of the buildings were less formal retiring spaces for members and Senators and their guests, out of sight and out of hearing from the more formal business space of the main floor. These rooms, again, were enjoyed by members and their guests and serviced by servants whose workplaces and accommodations were nearby.

There was a public element to the retiring rooms such as the Smoking and Reading rooms. In the home, the gentleman's study was a private space, but one in which the master's business was conducted; its location in the home stood in relation to its function as a private room with a semi-public purpose. It often had its own private entrance so that friends or associates would not have to enter the formal space of the house; they could simply visit the master of the house and leave. Similarly, the parliamentary smoking and reading rooms were business rooms in which informal exchanges took place among members of parliament and Senators. Unlike the many formal meeting rooms throughout the Parliament Buildings which divided members by geographic region or partisan affiliation, the reading and smoking rooms were communal spaces, open to all members. They were private, business rooms in the sense that they were domestic spaces, located in a public building, both of whose "membership" was exclusive on the basis of sex and arguably class.[41]

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main floor of the new buildings embodied many of the ideals of typical smoking rooms. The Senate Smoking Room, for example, was orginally intended to be a Senate caucus *and* smoking room. John A. Pearson designed special furniture for the room such as sofas, armchairs, card tables, easy chairs, to make it comfortable and acquiescent. It is now called *la salle de la francophonie* while the Commons smoking room is known as *the Commonwealth room.* It is likely that the smoking rooms in the first buildings were also "homey" and comfortable, as the prescription of the day suggested.

[41]There were a variety of smoking rooms for men in domestic dwellings, in clubhouses and communal living environments. Separate smoking rooms for women were unheard of. Interestingly, the nuns in the Mother House of the Grey Nuns in turn-of-the-century Montreal "indulged elderly women who used snuff; they received weekly refills for the snuffboxes." Tania Martin, "Housing the Grey Nuns: Power, Religion and Women in fin-de-siecle Montreal," (M.Arch. Thesis, McGill University, 1995) 54. Women and smoking, however, was equated with sacrilege, "To pursue the habit [of chewing tobacco] in a [Masonic] lodge-room is scarcely less reprehensible than in a lady's parlor or in a cushioned and carpeted church." "For Tobacco Chewers to Read," *The Masonic Chronicle* 13.10 (July, 1894): 153.

In the nineteenth century, the separation between public and private, male and female, master and servant, saw its most acute expression in social rituals such as smoking: "[o]ne curious feature of Victorian houses is the increasingly large and sacrosanct male domain."[42] Rooms like the smoking room began to appear in homes in the 1850s as a result of the ritual of men retiring after dinner to discuss business matters. Smoking and smoking room stories became acceptable if they took place in a specific room.[43] Smoking rooms "rapidly became one of the most important features of Victorian houses. They acted as a safety valve. The male half of the house party could retire to them and talk about all the subjects concerning which Victorian women were expected to be ignorant."[44] Smoking or billiard rooms often became the nexus of a male territory and were counter balanced by an equivalent territory for women at the other end, or on an upper floor of the house.

The behaviours deemed appropriate in the parliamentary smoking room, in the company of male colleagues, signified an exclusive, gendered membership. When members stayed late on March 19, 1896, some, as Lady Aberdeen noted in her journal, slept in the committee rooms while

> "[o]thers cheer[ed] themselves by other means. Mr Taylor the Conservative whip told me that last night they had what they call a Symposium & finally Mr Davin M.P. for Assiniboia was called on to give a Blackfoot Dance in the Smoking Room. They had a long table with refreshments put up & Mr Davin wound up his dance by springing on this & jigging down the centre, kicking over bottles & tumblers & plates at every step.[45]

Is it unlikely that a woman or a servant would be privy to such a performance in either a public institution or in a "proper" Victorian household. The smoking room was distinguished as a uniquely male space in its location among other "masculine rooms," by the primary activity enjoyed therein and its distinctive decor.

As an all-male residential space, the Parliament Buildings were strongly linked to a masculine/public ideology and differed from a typical nineteenth-century female residence.[46] As Lady Aberdeen briefly mentioned in her journal, members who stayed late

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[42]Girouard, *Victorian* 34.

[43]Smoking room stories were mildly naughty in nature. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (London: Yale University Press, 1978) 20.

[44]Girouard, *Life* 295.

[45]Ishbel Gordon, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Tremair, *The Canadian Journals of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1960) 330. The entry is from March 19, 1896.

[46]The "protective" and domestic nature of women's residential institutions as integral to their architecture and landscaping is explored in Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920.* Women in Culture and Society Series, ed. Catharine R. Stimpson (Chicago:

for evening debates "acted-up" and slept in committee rooms. The Parliament Buildings were a place of business which housed many of its employees; both its work and leisure spaces were intended for male users and its domestic environments were primarily bachelor apartments. Unlike the home, a highly gendered site in which masculine and feminine spaces were balanced, the Parliament Buildings were a fraternity, essentially a club house, in which the feminized elements of house and home were all but eliminated, including the women themselves. In effect, the Parliament Buildings embodied the ideal which associated masculinity with public affairs; it was a prestigious building, located at the centre of the city. It was institutional in character and lush in its interior. Conversely, all female institutions were typically located in "romantic", natural settings, characterized by external and internal domestic architecture, but more importantly, they lacked equivalent financial resources and the activities and movements of the women were highly supervised.

There was a variety of living quarters throughout the buildings. The 1860 plan indicates two independent apartments; one for the Sergeant-at-Arms on the western wall of the House of Commons wing and one for the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod mirrored on the Senate side.[47] The Sergeant-at-Arms apartment consisted of two square bedrooms separated by a staircase and w.c. while the Gentleman Usher's apartment consisted of two smaller bedrooms and dressing room with the staircase and w.c. in between. A later, more detailed plan indicated the apartment on the House of Commons side extended into the basement and consisted of a full nine rooms including two bedrooms, a nursery and kitchen.[48] It also indicated that the rooms on the southwest wall of the same wing included two bedrooms and a sitting room; they were allocated to the Chief Messenger and also functioned as living quarters. (fig.3.22)

University of Chicago Press, 1985); Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984); Annmarie Adams, "Rooms of Their Own: The Nurses' Residence at Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital," *Material History Review* 40 (Fall 1994): 29-41 Adams suggests that "[t]his domestic imagery was probably intended to smooth the transition for middle-class women to the world of paid work, while at the same time offering the promise of gentle protection in that realm." It was also supposed to attract a certain class of woman, 33-34. A non-architectural, astute social commentary comes in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* in which she points out that women's colleges were poorly funded, and as a result, the quality of women's education suffered, *A Room of One's Own* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1929) 22-28.

[47]Ground floor plan NMC 23174 shows Fuller and Jones' orginal plan for the ground floor. Originally there was to be an apartment for the Librarian and for the Speaker, but these were omitted in a later version of the plan.

[48]NMC 121260. The Sergeant-at-Arms is appointed by the Crown. He takes all orders from and is in immediate attendance upon the Speaker of the House of Commons. His duties include apprehending and taking into custody all those who are committed for any offence by the House. "All messengers and servants of the House, except the Clerks, are under his orders. He has his seat at the Bar of the House, and directs all arrangements for the maintenance of order in the approaches to, or the galleries of the House." Joseph Bureau, *Handbook to the Parliamentary and Departmental Buildings, Canada* (Ottawa: G.E. Desbarats, 1867).

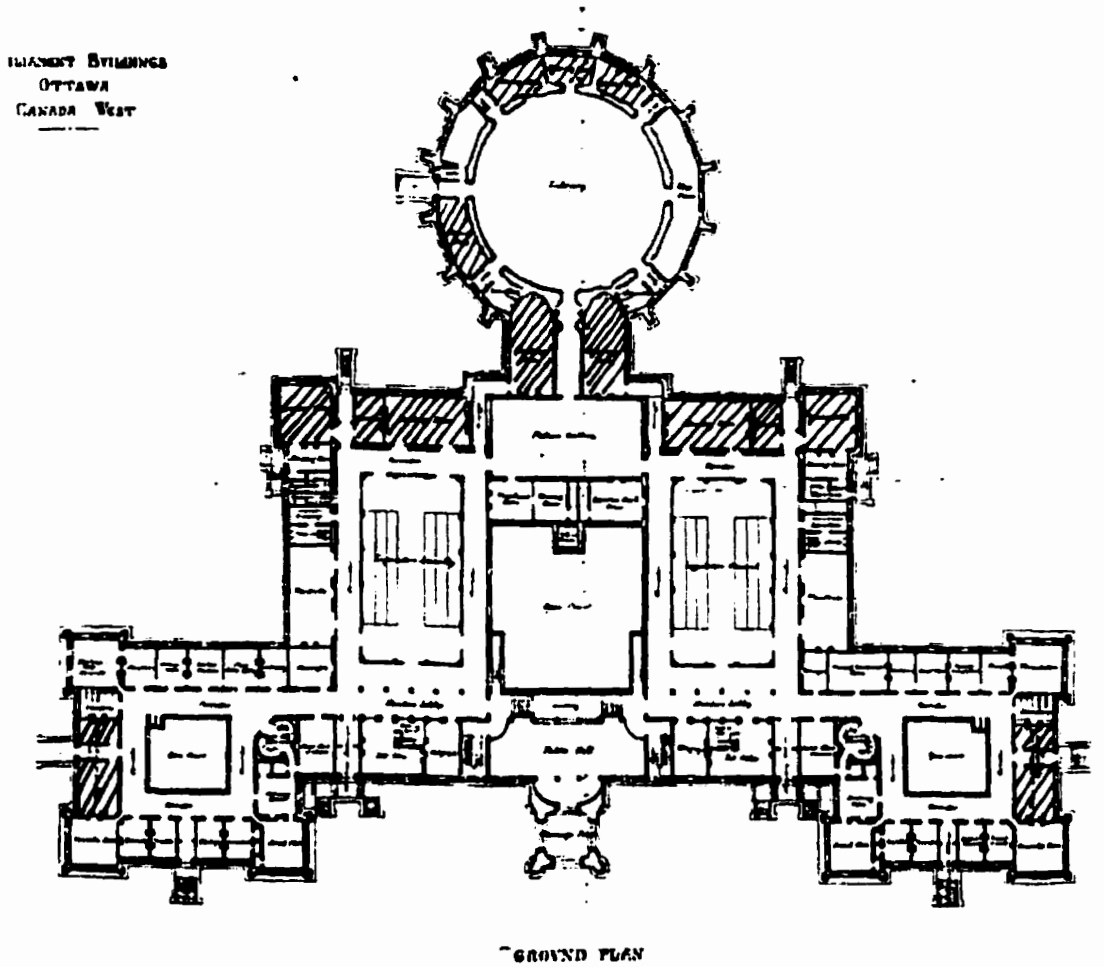

fig. 3.21
Parliamentary "private rooms"
NMC 23174

These include:

Sergeant-at-Arms and Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod's apartments
Speakers' office and reception rooms
Reading Rooms and Library Reading Rooms
Smoking Rooms
Library

The House of Commons was constructed to accommodate the 194 members of parliament in a working capacity. As more provinces joined the Dominion, new members needed space, prompting the division and conversion of several rooms and the construction of the northwest wing extension in 1909. (fig.3.23) As a result, additional living quarters were created; on the first floor, an apartment for the Deputy Speaker with bathroom, bedroom, office and vestibule was created south of the open court, above the main entrance. Committee rooms in the House of Commons wing were used as bedrooms: "[t]he Ministers have all beds in their rooms for the occasion & many other M.P.s ensconce themselves in blankets in various Committee Rooms."[49] (fig.3.24)

Servants were also allocated quarters and according to an early basement plan, their workspaces and apartments were in close proximity. Two rectangular kitchens were located directly underneath the ground floor Senate and House of Commons Smoking Rooms. These were separated down the central axis of the building by a long corridor and each kitchen lead to a Larder and Cellar behind which were Servants' Apartments. Presumably these work areas serviced both the Speaker's and member's Dining Room as well as the Commons' and Senate's Saloons.[50] Differentiation between servants' and members' spaces were made clear by the materials used: "[t]he basement floors, where used or occupied for rooms, are formed of Portland cement; but those of the dining rooms and saloon are of pine laid over the concrete."[51] The plan also indicated that the rooms on the north wall of each of the wings were "living apartments." These were most likely for the messengers and clerks.

A whole series of new "private" spaces were created in the basement following the the extension of 1909. The north wall of the new extension had a kitchen (with stairs leading to the Speaker's apartment), dining room, parlour and two bedrooms. What had been the member's dining room became the Sessional Clerk's room, and the kitchen became the Steward's office. (fig.3.25, 3.26) The private rooms in the west wing were more detailed on the plan; showing bedrooms, parlours, kitchens and dining rooms as well as private offices. This wing was primarily inhabited by the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Chief Messenger.

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[49]Aberdeen 330. Journal entry for March 19, 1896.

[50]According to the *General Report of the Commissioner of Public Works,* the Senate Saloon was "fitted up for records" and wasn't used as a social space. Page 210.

[51]Page 210.

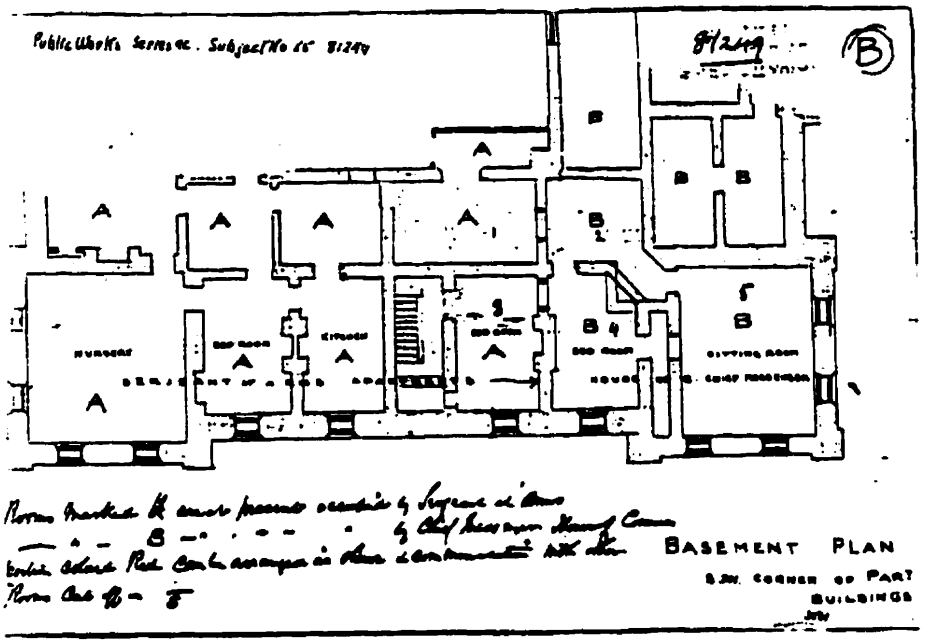


fig. 3.22
Chief messenger's apartment and the Sergeant-at-arms' apartment, Basement plan.
NMC 12160

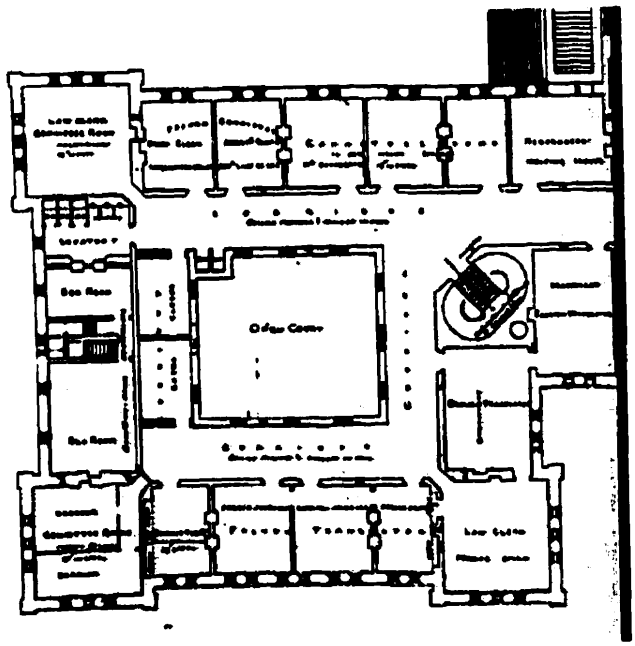
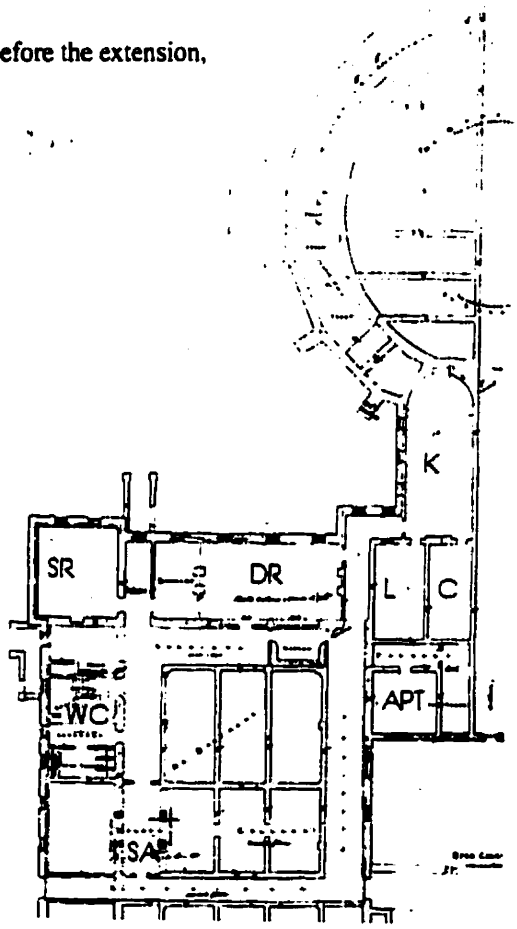


fig. 3.24
South-east committee room doubled as bedrooms

NMC 19012

fig. 3.25
Basement plan before the extension,
NMC 19001



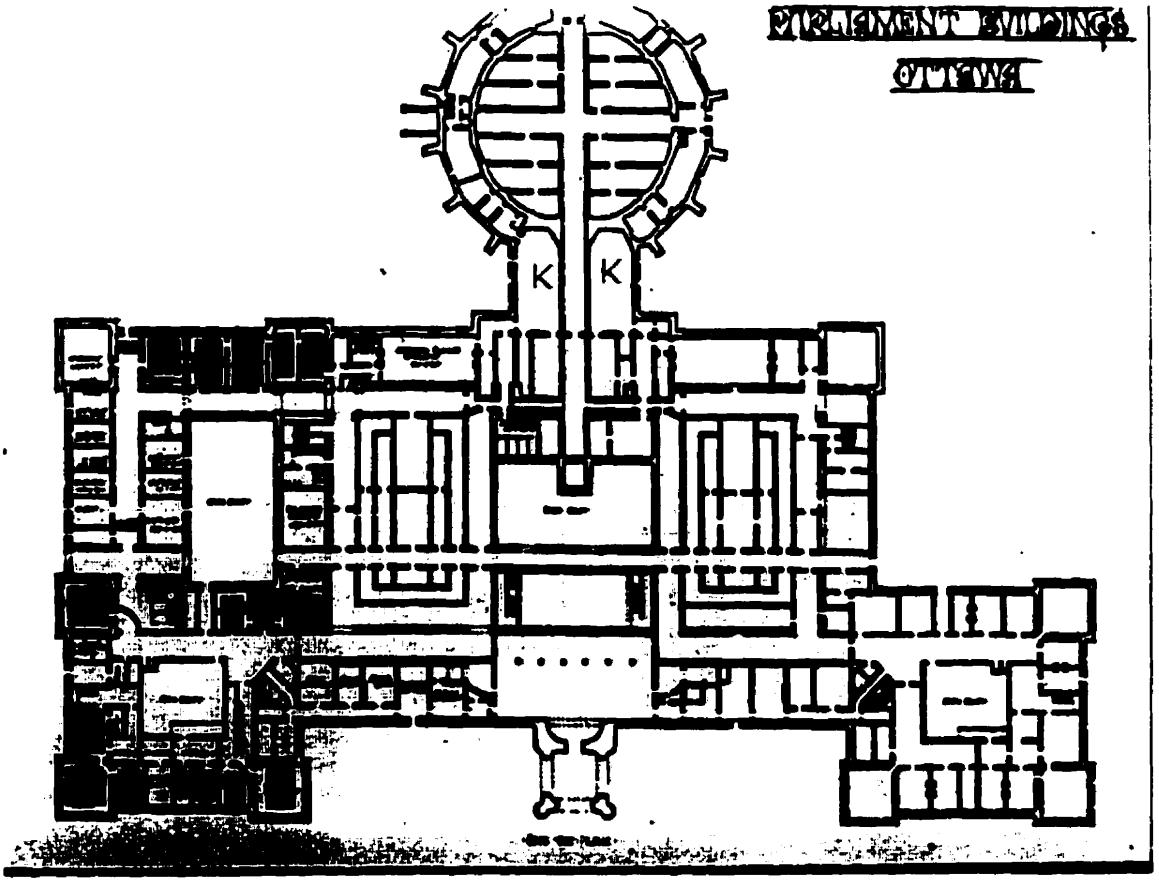


fig. 3.26
Basement plan after the extension
NMC 123538

The Parliament Buildings' plan, much like Victorian country houses, sequestered servants' quarters and workspaces to the basement. In the name of efficiency, this "involved analyzing the different functions performed by differednt servatns, giving each function its own area and often its own room, and grouping the related functions into territories accessible to the gentry part of the house which they serviced." Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 276.

B= bedroom
P= parlour
D= dining room
K= kitchen
O= office

Private rooms were a sign of prestige. In 1887, the Senate smoking room was divided into three offices, including a retiring room for Sir John A. MacDonald.[52] Other distinguished members displaced employees of lower profile:

> Sir Hector, it may be said, is now one of the favoured members of Parliament, who have private rooms of their own in the buildings. A room adjoining the House of Commons reading-room, which has heretofore belonged to the curator of the reading-room, has been taken from him and given to Sir Hector. The room has been altered and furnished quite elaborately for Sir Hector's comfort by the officials of the Department of Public Works under direction of Mr. Ouimet. The curator bewails that he is left out in the cold.[53]

While spaces were being created and others subdivided to make room for increasing numbers, the Speaker of the House of Commons gradually took over more space for his quarters.[54] Although apartments for the Librarian and two Speakers had been omitted in the final version of the 1860 plan, the Speaker of the House of Commons was eventually housed in an apartment which became the most sophisticated domestic environment in the Parliament buildings. Figures 3.27 and 3.28 show the initial changes to the final extension demonstrating the extent to which the Speaker of the House of Commons was accommodated. Initially, the Commons Reading Room was divided to create a room for a second, smaller sitting room for the Speaker, allowing him a secretary's room and two sitting rooms. It was changed from two office rooms in 1860 to a full three floor apartment by 1909 resplendent with parlour, living room, bedrooms and a private dining room in the basement. The full extension enlarged his space on the ground floor by adding a room west of the large, corner sitting room. On the first floor, a suite of rooms was created which could be reached by a private staircase from the ground floor; it consisted of a large bedroom with a private corridor leading to two smaller bedrooms, a full bathroom,

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[52] Other rooms were also divided as needs developed: the Picture Gallery located north of the open court on the ground floor became the House of Commons Reading Room, the south section of the open court in front of the landing was divided into four offices, the Senate Smoking room was relocated to the north east corner of the Senate wing.

[53] "From the Capital," *Mail and Empire* 16 March 1894: n.p. Lady Aberdeen scrapbook: NA MG 27 I B5, Volume 16.

[54] The Speaker's Apartment was for the Speaker and his family. Very little exists on the private life of the Speaker's families in the parliamentary apartment except accounts from newspaper articles of the official occasions such as the Opening of Parliament and the Speech from the Throne when the Apartment was converted into an "Official Drawing Room." The conversion of the Parliament Buildings into a spectacular house is more fully explored in Chapter Three. Family life was certainly a reality in the Parliament Buildings, for example, Mrs. Sevigny, wife of Speaker Sevigny, gave birth to her seventh child while living in the House of Commons.

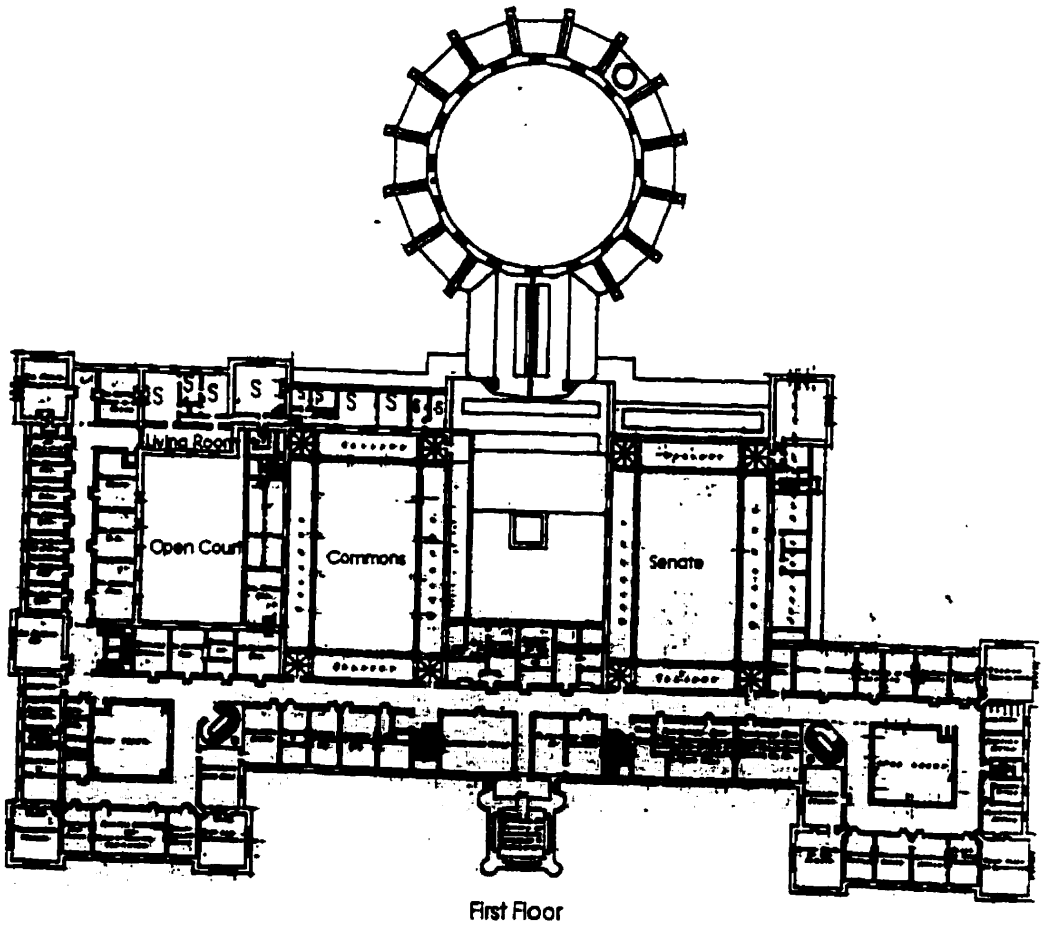

fig. 3.27
Plan showing Speaker's quarters after the extension
NMC 123527

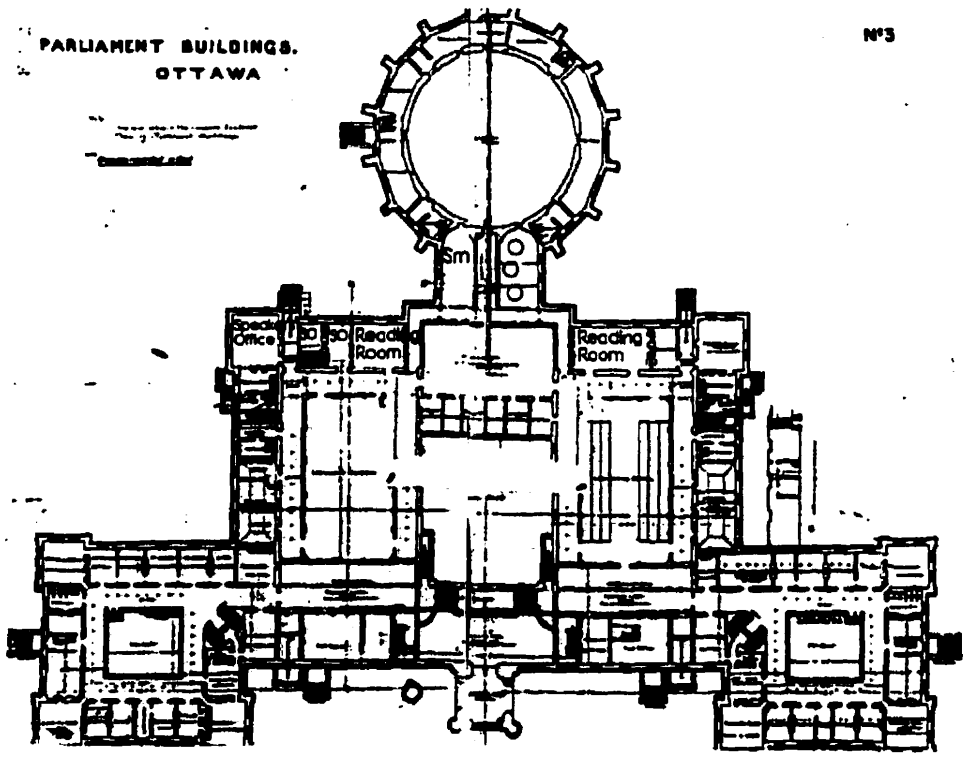

fig. 3.28
Plan showing original divisions before the extension
NMC 19012

Initially, the House of Commons Reading Room was divided to create a small office for the Speaker. What had originally been his office, the north/west corner room, was converted into a parlour. Attached to the parlour, to complete the Speaker's suite of rooms, was a dressing room. The Senate Speaker did not have a parlour, only a dressing room adjacent to his corner office and an office for his secretary.

two closets and a large living room.[55] These upper floor rooms were completely enclosed and were inaccessible from the nearby public galleries and ministers' offices.

A photograph of the Speaker's parlour, dated 1897, reveals not only that the parlour[56] was domestic in decor, but that it conformed to the ideals described in texts such as Lucy Orrinsmith's 1877 *The Drawing Room, its Decoration and Furniture.* (fig.3.29) The domestic imagery suggested by the furniture and decor of the Speaker's parlour was typical of Victorian interiors.[57] Elegant and welcoming, it was filled with an eclectic collection of furniture in accordance with the fashionable style of the times. Drawing rooms were considered the cozy hearth and rallying area of the home; they should have "the richest rugs, softest sofas, coziest chairs, prettiest treasures."[58] As the "best room" and setting for entertainment and important events such as wedding receptions, the parlour provided a family with the opportunity to present a civilized facade to the public.[59] It was also a comfortable, intimate domestic space, the fireplace symbolizing the heart of family life. The Speaker's parlour, with the large ornamental fireplace as the focal point of the room, its gilded mirror, statuettes and collection of vases and trinkets on the mantel piece, reflected the idea of a cozy hearth as well as a forum for displaying "treasures". A lush covering hangs from mantel to the carpet lending "softness, warmth, colour, and enhanc[ing] the beauties of the vase, glass," as well as the covered clock and other mantel pieces.[60] The floors are covered, but not completely, by a light coloured and floral carpet, and in front of the fireplace, a small rectangular carpet has been laid.[61]

One settee and a variety of arm and armless chairs, informal and comfortable, are scattered about the room, including several white lacquered wicker chairs with straight and curved backs, a voluptuous velvet armchair with rounded arms and upholstered

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[55]NMC 123528. Also Page 62.

[56]The room was transformed in 1874 from an office into a drawing room. The terms parlour and drawing room, according to Katherine C. Grier, were somewhat interchangeable. The distinction comes with the term sitting room which Sally McMurry states in her chapter "City Parlor, Country Sitting Room" was a less formal setting for entertaining. American country dwellers at the turn of the century were somewhat anti-urban and associated the parlour with urban customs and conspicuous consumption, 135. Sally McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth-century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). Katherine C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort: People, Parlours and Upholstery, 1850-1930* (Rochester: The Strong Museum, 1988).

[57]Photo of Speaker's Parlour 1898c. Ottawa City Archives Ch. 0075.

[58]Mrs. Lucy Orrinsmith, *The Drawing Room, its Decorations and Furniture* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1877) 24.

[59]Katherine C. Grier's *Culture and Comfort: People, Parlours and Upholstery* explores the culture of Victorianism as expressed through its parlours. She writes that in Anglo-America, the parlour was described as the best room, a family sitting room which served public, formal uses. As a result, there was a tension between the domestic, modest, intimate nature (comfort) of the parlour and the cosmopolitan, urbane, consumptive (culture) aspects of the room.

[60]Orrinsmith 34.

[61]According to Orrinsmith no drawing room carpet should entirely cover a floor, 51.

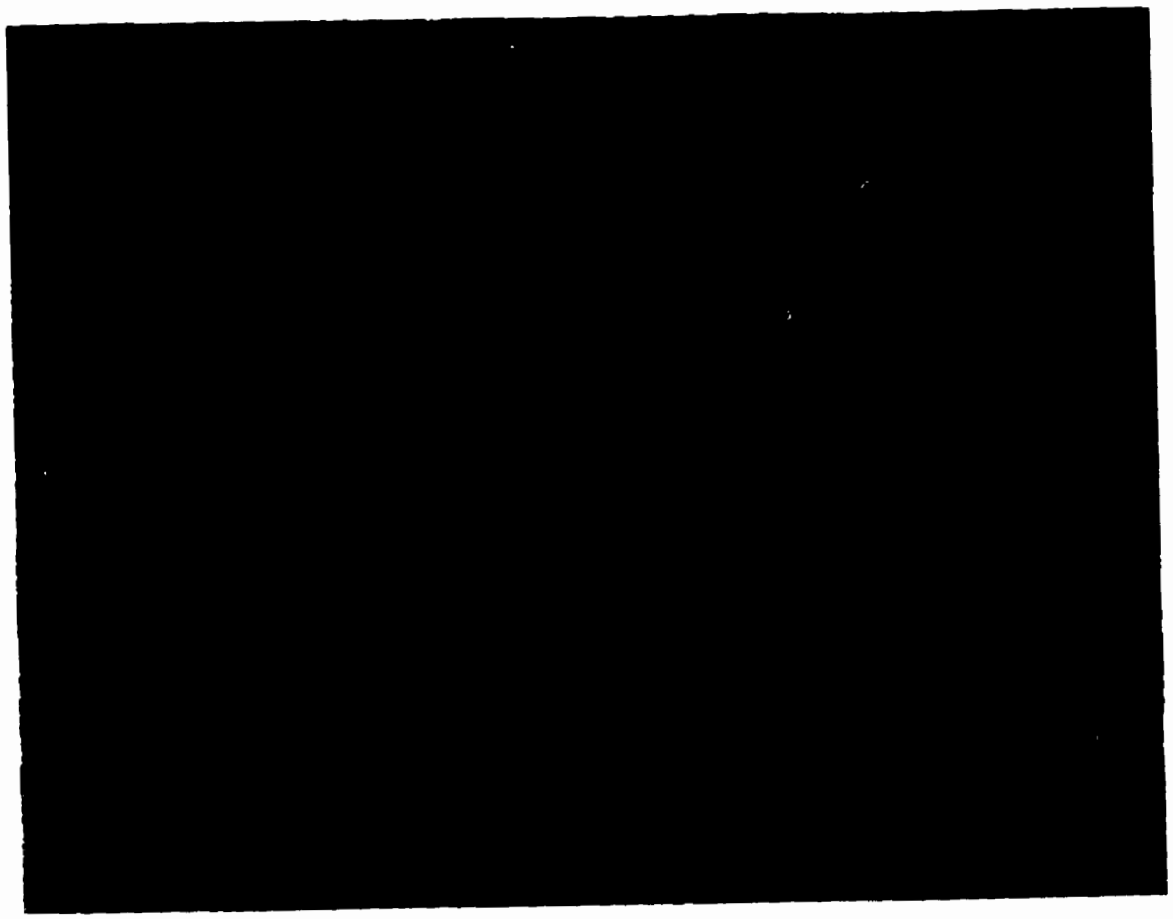

fig. 3.29
Photograph of the Speaker's parlour. 1898
CA 0075

straightback chairs with wheeled feet. The parlour, whose name originated from the French term *parleur,* was intended for conversation or music and, in this case, exhibits no bookshelves or writing tables as "[c]ustom has not assigned a suitable abiding place for books in the drawing rooms."[62] Side tables of different sizes are covered with decorative fabric:"[t]he natural beauty of polished wood was often deliberately hidden by cloths and covers."[63] Floral arrangements and numerous plants of different types and sizes are placed on flower stands, tables and on the floor, adding warmth and life to the room. A wood and fabric folding screen is placed in the corner of the room near the arched doorway.

Many details enhance the cosmopolitan, theatrical atmosphere of the room. The walls are papered a light colour, a floral pattern borders the ceiling while elegant, patterned curtains for the large windows hang from ceiling to floor and are attached by rings to a visible pole. A doorway curtain, or portiere, of a lighter shade also hangs from a horizontal pole, and covers the arched doorway. Formal portraits of historical figures, in gilded frames, hang from chords on the walls, one above the fireplace creating a full wall of decoration from floor to ceiling, one between the fireplace and doorway, and two less elaborate portraits hang, one on top of the other, between the two windows. A gas fixture and a sconce for candle lighting are fixed to the wall, and a crystal chandelier, normally used for "grand rooms", adds massiveness about the centre.[64]

The random layout of the furniture, the cover over the chandelier and various chairs, and the absence of people in the photograph suggest that it was either taken to show off the room and its contents or as an inventory to record the contents of the Speaker's parlour. As a conscious, contrived photograph of a room, the angle of the photograph accentuates the prominence of the fireplace and reveals the concentration of furniture in its northeast corner. The resulting photograph, as an "interior statement,"[65] records the aesthetic deemed appropriate for the Speaker's drawing room. The photograph reveals the assortment and "style" of furniture and objects as indicative of cultural trends, both in terms of interior decoration and its relationship to appropriate behaviour.[66] There is an

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[62]Orrinsmith 38.

[63]Gloag 83. The presentation on the table could be interpreted as a "still life" of what was important to the family, Grier 3.

[64]Orrinsmith 117.

[65] An "interior statement" refers to the way in which the placement of furniture and its role in the daily activities of its users becomes a living entity filled with meaning and consequence: "pieces of furniture in a room have a certain relationship to other pieces, both in terms of type (why certain objects and finishes are considered right for certain rooms), as well as their placement [in a room]." Gerald Pocius, "Interior Motives: Rooms, Objects, and Meaning in Atlantic Canada Homes," *Material History Review* 15 (Summer 1982): 6.

[66]Pocius explains that interiors are artifact systems which communicate "dynamic interactions of both people and objects, governed by certain rules of daily life." Pocius 5.

implicit reference to etiquette, a concept which went hand in hand with home decoration; both were thought to express the progress of civilization. Katherine Grier highlights this in her example from Janet Ruutz-Rees' 1881 advice book *Home Decoration :*

> 'Draperies,' [allowed] 'the skillful hiding of defects..., the softening of angles, and happy obliteration of corners,' just as the etiquette so important to respectable Americans in the nineteenth century softened the "angles" and "defects" of human character.[67]

How successful was Speaker's parlour in fulfiling a dual function as the public room of a residence and a private room in the Parliament Buildings?

Parlours expressed the family's personality to the public. They had two separate functions, as a space for family ritual and as a setting for social activities for both of which the woman was primarily responsible.[68] At the end of the nineteenth century, a flourishing middle-class woman's culture proliferated in parlours as women were said to control the access to and activities which took place there.[69] A closer look at the Speaker's parlour reveals that its historical portraits and central mantel do not exhibit an intimate, personal or feminine influence that a women's culture might contribute. The Speaker's parlour is residential, but neutral, domestic, but lacking familial artifacts and memorabilia; in other words, it is not *homey*. Although the draperies are dramatic and the upholstered furniture comfortable (even if somewhat carelessly placed), it is not an "emphatically feminine" room. If the home was the haven from a heartless outside world - "a space of psychological refuge from the rigors of economic life [and business and politics]"- one which provided "the gentle guidance of feminine morality,"[70] the Speaker's parlour offers little refuge in this sense, as there hardly exists a physical separation between the world of politics and the home and little feminine "softening" is in effect.

In fact, the Speaker's parlour was neither emphatically feminine or masculine, but a compromise between the feminine function of parlours and the masculine context in which this particular parlour was located. It was the one place in the Parliament Buildings where

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[67]Katherine Grier uses this example in *Culture and Comfort*, 1.

[68]In terms of family ritual, the parlour began to replace the church as the primary place of a family's spiritual growth. William D. Moore argues that the "feminization of religion" occured in the nineteenth century. What he doesn't explicitly state is that women were taking over the spiritual guidance of their families and conducting this *in the parlours*. Catharine Beecher, for example, devoted an entire chapter to "The Christian Family" and "A Christian House," in her *American Woman's Home*, suggesting that the woman was chief minister. William D. Moore, "The Masonic Lodge Room, 1870-1930: A Sacred Space of Masculine Spiritual Hierarchy," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture V* , (Knoxwille: University of Tennessee Press, 1995): 26-39 and Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home* (New York: The Library of Victorian Culture, 1979).

[69]McMurry 142.

[70]Grier 5.

some feminine presence existed, both spatially (as part of a domestic apartment) and in reality (since the Speaker's wife was part of the buildings' formal entertaining, and, after the extension, she lived in the apartment after the extension).[71] On many levels, the Speaker's parlour problematizes the strict definitions of masculine and feminine spaces: it was a domestic setting in a public building, the public room of a domestic space, a feminine room within an exclusive masculine place of business and residence. From the plan it is impossible to tell how the Speaker's wife might have used the rest of the building, or if she did at all. She may not have since the Speaker's parlour was part of a series of spaces on the main floor - the smoking, reading rooms, library, Commons' Chamber - which promulgated the masculine identity of the building. Although she lived in the space, the Speaker's parlour and apartment were named for, and primarily associated with, the Speaker, not his wife.

With a view of the Ottawa River and its own private entrance, the Speaker's apartment enjoyed a high degree of status within the buildings. Adjacent to the House of Commons chamber, and connected by way of a corridor to the library, House of Commons reading and smoking rooms, the Speaker's office and residence were part of a privileged circulation pattern. When Premier Sir Wilfrid Laurier took the northwest corner office of the new extension, the Speaker had quick access to the prime minister as well as to the House of Commons Chamber. The Speaker's chambers hosted official affairs, being transformed into a Drawing Room on special occasions such as the Opening of Parliament and the Speech from the Throne.

The Speaker of the House of Commons' apartment serves as an example of public meeting private in the function and decor of the space, but also as a contributing factor, even with its "feminine" elements, to the promulgation of an ideology of masculine domesticity. The Speaker was the only member whose wife and/or family lived with him contributing to his exalted status, but also to his role as symbolic "father" of the House. As Kwolek-Folland observes, "recreating a man's domestic, private space within a public place strengthened corporate claims of executive "fatherhood", and it encouraged the identification of personal life with corporate, public existence."[72] Indeed, the executive fatherhood exemplified in the private and public spaces of the Parliament Buildings reinscribed patriarchal ascendancy. Whereas women had power and influence in their homes - spatial as well as functional - the dominance of bachelor apartments (or the

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[71]The Speaker and his wife held receptions or "drawing rooms" after official ceremonies such as the Speech from the Throne and the Opening of Parliament. They would open their apartment to invited guests such as the Governor General and his wife, members of parliament and Senators.

[72]Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univeristy Press, 1994) 118.

exclusion of women's spaces) meant that their power was diminished in the houses within the houses of parliament. Both the private and public functions of the domestic spaces were associated exclusively with the Speaker and his function as the master of the house (or House).

His role as symbolic father is exemplified in his formal function when he sat as Speaker in the House of Commons chamber. Masculine domestic space, iconography and activities created hierarchies of privilege and appropriation within the Parliament Buildings but the ritual space and practice in the "public" areas of the buildings further reinforced a masculine and patriarchal ideology. The rectangluar House of Commons Chamber, with its high ceilings, ornamented windows, pine paneling, marble columns, pilasters and pointed arches, was organized such that the focal point of the room was the elevated, ornate Speaker's Throne.[73] In front of the Speaker's Throne, placed in the centre of the west wall, was a long rectangular table upon which was placed the mace. This aisle divided members' seven rows of identical double desks into two sections which faced one another. The first two rows were on ground level, and subsequent ones were raised on stepped platforms of seven inches. The result was a focus on the centre point of east west axis of the room towards which all members faced, and along which the Speaker sat. Proximity to this point indicated status and importance. The hierarchy of status moved outward in a triangular fashion: from the Speaker, who was differentiated from his colleagues by his elevated, singular throne, to the front rows of the members' desks where the prime minister and ministers of the Crown were seated and across from them, the leader of opposition and his colleagues. Reporters were separated from the floor only by a half floor (and located directly behind the Speaker's Throne) and members of the public were located another half floor up from there, behind the pointed arches in the galleries which framed and looked down to the Commons chamber. (fig.3.30, 3.31)

When Kit Coleman, woman, parliamentary reporter, wandered into this space, she entered a highly gendered, entirely masculine realm, defined by its association with past and present rituals of power and hierarchy. In both her defining characteristics, *woman* and *reporter*, she was an observer and commentator of public affairs, not a participant. As such, she was quite aware that in exploring the floor of the Commons, she was disrupting the sanctity and identity of this symbolic realm. Its furnishings, spatial organization and ritual enactments expressed order, all of which focused on the primacy of a patriarch and a household of men. Her rightful place was one floor removed, in the Ladies' Gallery, not at the desks nor in the private rooms of the House of Commons. But the very fact that

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[73]"The trefoiled Gothic-arched canopy over the Speaker's chair in the House of Commons was constructed in 1872 to harmonize with its setting." Young 100.

fig. 3.31
The Speaker of the House of Commons' throne
NA PA 46467

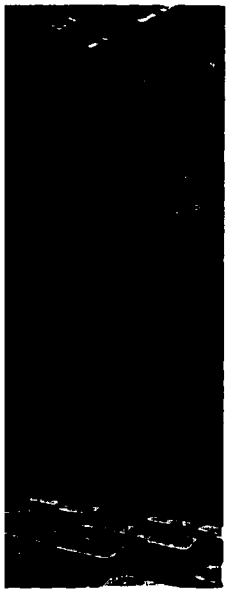

fig. 3.30
Interior view of the Commons Chamber
NA PA 8361.

Coleman transgressed the spatial boundaries constructed for women, and the knowlegdge that women like the Speaker's wife used the building on a daily basis show that the plan and official documents are inadequate indexes of women's activities in the Parliament Buildings. They also hint at the possibility that the Parliament Buildings' constructed masculinity could be challenged.

In summary, the design of the Parliament Buildings echoed, in significant ways, the assumptions and ideals of Victorian gentlemen's country houses; its outward facade was an expression of a national and collective identity and its interior compartmentalization of spaces was divided along gender and class lines according to the function of rooms. In both environments, there was a hierarchy of spaces from public to private and an unfolding of the processional spaces according to protocol, importance or intimacy of the guest or employee. Separate entrances were designated for use by the general public and other entrances for specialized persons -- business associates, servants, guests. The entrance by which one entered the Parliament Building or the house indicated the rank and "place" of that person. Like in the Victorian house, some public business in the Parliament Buildings was conducted in domestic environments, in private and semi-private spaces such as the Speaker's parlour and the House of Commons Reading Room. Servants' workspaces and living quarters were "invisible" in that they were located in the basement, out of sight of the public business conducted on the main floors. Women's spaces were differentiated by the term "Ladies", and according to the plan, were limited to the Ladies Gallery.

The design and decor of the Parliament Buildings' domestic environments created a closed, exclusive masculine enclave in which both public and private were associated with manhood; its private and business spaces embodied domestic masculinity. While domestic spaces in Victorian houses exhibited a balance of masculine and feminine, in the Parliament Buildings, women's spaces were all but eliminated. Kit Coleman's discomfort stemmed from her obvious intrusion into a consecrated space, one which not only constructed masculinity, but also a selective notion of public persons; the Parliament Buildings were a space in which the business of the nation was negotiated and men were, by right and by accommodation, the bearers of this work. This did not impede Kit Coleman. She was part of a new constituency, women, who moved within the Parliament Buildings with differing degrees of comfort and privilege. Just as the interior organization of the buildings blurred the lines between public and private, so did women's emergence into the public sphere. Women moved down from the second floor Ladies' Gallery to the exclusive rooms of the House of Commons, and in so doing renegotiated their "place" in both the Parliament Buildings and Canadian public affairs.

CHAPTER 3

TRANSFORMATION AND TRANSGRESSION:

Pageantry, Politics and the Feminization of the House

Mary O'Leary handed Mr. MacGregor, clerk of the House of Commons, the typewritten document. Although the House was not officially sitting, there was work to be done in anticipation of the upcoming Session. The date was January 1896. The Liberals under "charming Sir Wilfrid" had recently won the election and tomorrow was the Opening of Parliament. Mary would not be dressing for the event. She was one of the few women employed as a typist in the Parliament Buildings, but she could only imagine the scene in the Senate Chamber at Thursday's Opening of Parliament. Governor General and Lady Aberdeen would be at its glittering centre surrounded by ladies and gentlemen of consequence. It was one of the grandest affairs in Ottawa, but closed to a working girl like Mary. At nineteen, she was a handsome young woman, gracious and intelligent, with a lilting voice and slight Irish accent (doubtless characteristics contributing to her hiring as an assistant). But she was neither related to or adopted by a wealthy or political family. Mary would have to read Kit Coleman's report in the *Mail and Empire.*

A turn-of-the-century photograph shows a young woman in an office in what appears to be the East or West Block of the Parliament Buildings. (fig.4.1) Although the circumstances of the photograph are unknown, she could have been Mary O'Leary, a single wage-earning girl, perhaps the daughter of one of the many Irish immigrants to Ottawa.[1] The phenomenon of Mary, a working girl in turn-of-the-century Ottawa, was evidence of economic and social change.[2] She did not work in domestic service, but in a public building. During this time, women were permeating the public landscape; they traveled unsupervised to work and back and had money of their own to spend. Of greater concern was the possibility that Mary didn't live in a conventional home, but perhaps lived in a boarding house and this, combined with her independent wage, jeopardized her

[1]Mary O'Leary is a fictional name and makes reference to the large Irish community in Ottawa which had been established by the turn of the century.

[2]The relationship between working girls and social and economic change is explored in Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Trouble: The Pleasure and Perils of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

fig. 4.1
Woman in Parliamentary Office
PA 143667

expected transition to wifehood and motherhood.[3] The very fact that Mary worked for a living put her in a distinct and contentious class of women.

While there were women like Mary who worked in parliamentary offices, they did not have full rein of the Parliament Buildings by any means. As the last chapter established, the design of the buildings prescribed "place" according to gender and class and Mary's place, as a working woman, was far from the prestigious Speaker's Apartment and it was far from the Senate Chamber on the occasion of the Opening of Parliament. Mary was a peripheral player in the theatre of the Parliament Buildings: "the true measure of peripherality [is] ... a measure of distance from the centre of power."[4] Typically, working-women's use of their place of work was restricted to their office, a specific lunching space for women and a separate ladies' entrance.[5] In other words, Mary's pattern of circulation would have been contained in specific areas. Mary's lack of access to many of the spaces in the building was a function of her sex, class and employee status.

The spatial hiearchies in the Parliament Buildings were evident in the various social events which took place in the buildings to which women of influence were a necessary element, but to which working-class women were effectively excluded. A variety of sources, photographs, newspaper articles, personal journals, shows that women used the Parliament Buildings in a number of different ways, but that women's access to and comfort in those spaces were closely tied to their position in the social hierarchy. This chapter is concerned with several themes not the least important of which is the inadequacy of official documents, in particular, architectural plans, in illuminating women's use of and agency within the Parliament Buildings. The chapter traces three women of different social standing - Mary O'Leary, Kit Coleman, popular and prolific parliamentary reporter and Lady Aberdeen, wife of the Governor General - to illustrate the complexity of women's experience and influence on specific spaces within the Parliament Buildings. Although by design the buildings created an exclusive masculine enclave, women transcended architectural prescription to transform spaces and the meanings attributed to those spaces, in a limited but significant way.

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[3]Women lived in a variety of domestic spaces other than the traditional single family dwelling, including boarding houses and apartments. See Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York Early Apartments* (Ithica and London: Cornell University Press, 1990). Non-conventional living arrangements created by and for women, including kitchenless houses and co-operative housing, is the core of Dolores Hayden's *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981).

[4]Sandra Wallman, introduction, *Social Anthropology of Work.* ed. Sandra Wallman. (London and New York: Academic Press, 1974) 1.

[5]Angel Kwolek-Folland, "The Domestic Office: Space, Status, and the Gendered Workplace," in *Engendering Business Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) 94-130.

The chapter first takes Fuller and Jones' plan to show how working women like Mary O'Leary were *not* anticipated or accommodated as users of the building. It then illustrates how the limited spaces created for women, the two Ladies' Galleries, fulfilled a dual purpose, yet remained a microcosm of the gender and class hierarchy constructed into the overall plan. The Ladies' Galleries put women on display as observers and objects of observation but they also provided women with a space in which to network amongst themselves. The formal plan constructed a peripheral status for women during regular House proceedings, yet when the Parliament Buildings were transformed into a ceremonial space, women moved to the centre. By illustrating how the building was transformed from a masculine place of business to a house - thus necessitating a balance between the masculine and feminine - this chapter suggests that women played an essential, highly gendered and highly visible role in the play of politics. The only difference was its public forum: they played house politics in the House.

The Mary O'Leary photograph is a crucial source because it places a woman in a Parliament Hill office.[6] Her posture and that of the men in the photograph suggest that all three are working and that her presence in the room is not unusual. The two men are talking to each other, both with pen in hand. She is holding papers which she has either received from or is delivering to the men. Beside her is a desk on which is placed a typewriter and a basket of papers of the kind she is holding. Her costume suggests that she is not merely visiting, but that she is an employee. She wears a separate shirtwaist with mutton sleeves, long creme skirt, belt, no hat; this was typical working girl attire.[7] (fig.4.2)

From Fuller and Jones' plan of the Parliament Building, one could conclude that women neither lived nor worked in the building. There were no women's quarters, no ladies' lavatories, lunchrooms or lounges. The plans for the ground and first floor published in *The Handbook to the Parliamentary and Departmental Buildings, Canada* (1868) show that the buildings lacked any special provisions for women, regardless of their status. (fig.4.3, 4.4) All ladies' spaces are specified as such: the Ladies' Door (to the galleries), Ladies' Staircase, Ladies' Gallery. These were spaces designed for visitors, not employees. There were members', reporters' and clerks' w.c.'s and lavatories, but none designated for ladies. Had there been a Ladies' Lavatory, it would likely have been situated near their gallery, but none can be seen. This is not to say that women did not

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[6]The photograph, for which there is no definitive date, is used in this context to speculate on women's actual use of the building.

[7]Barbara Clark Smith and Kathy Peiss, *Men and Women: A History of Costume, Gender and Power* (Washington: National Museum of American History, 1989); Lou Taylor and Elizabeth Wilson, *Through the Looking Glass: A History of Dress from 1860 to the Present Day* (London: BBC Books, 1989).

fig. 4.2
Close Up of "Mary O'Leary"
PA 143667

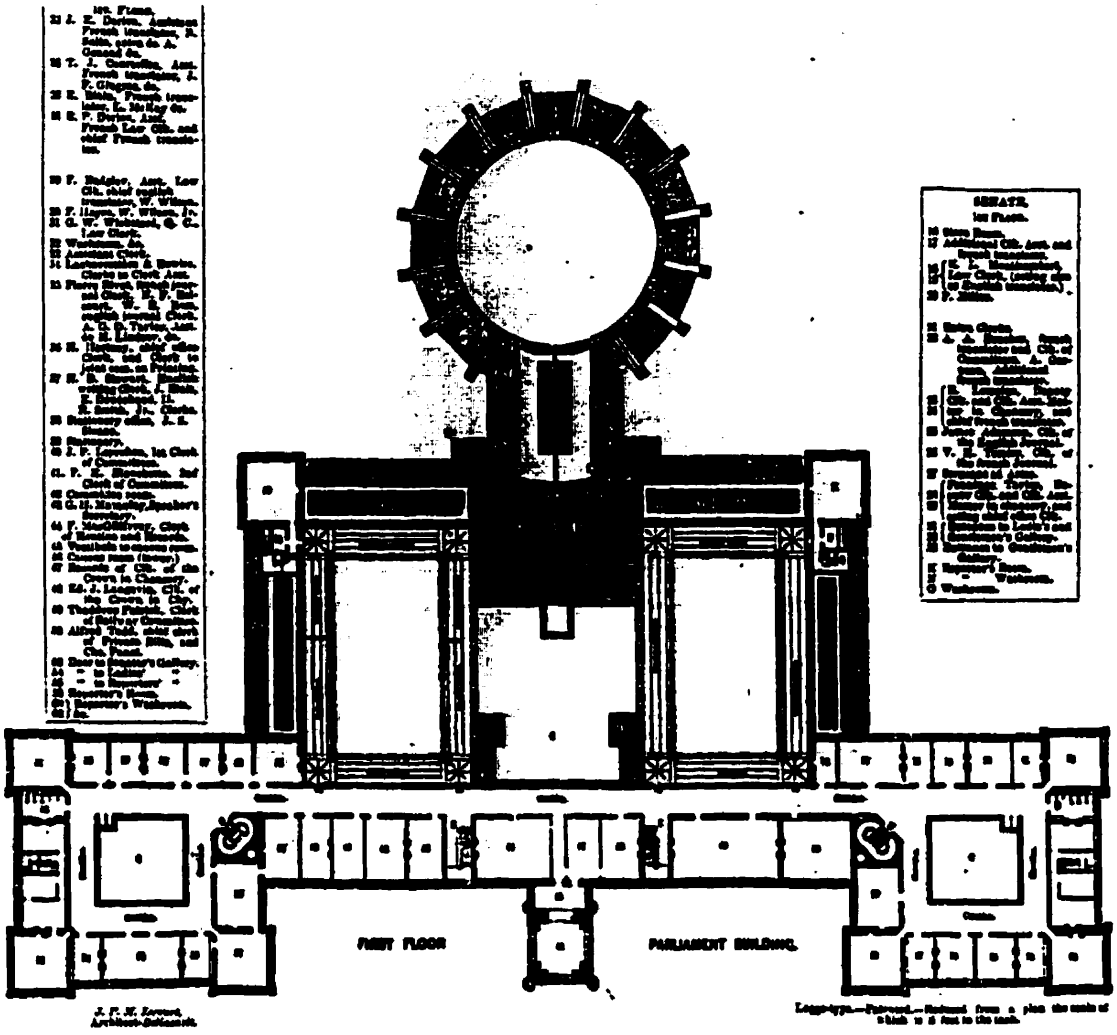

fig. 4.3
Ground Floor plan, Parliament Buildings,
Handbook to the Parliamentary and Departmental Buildings, 1868

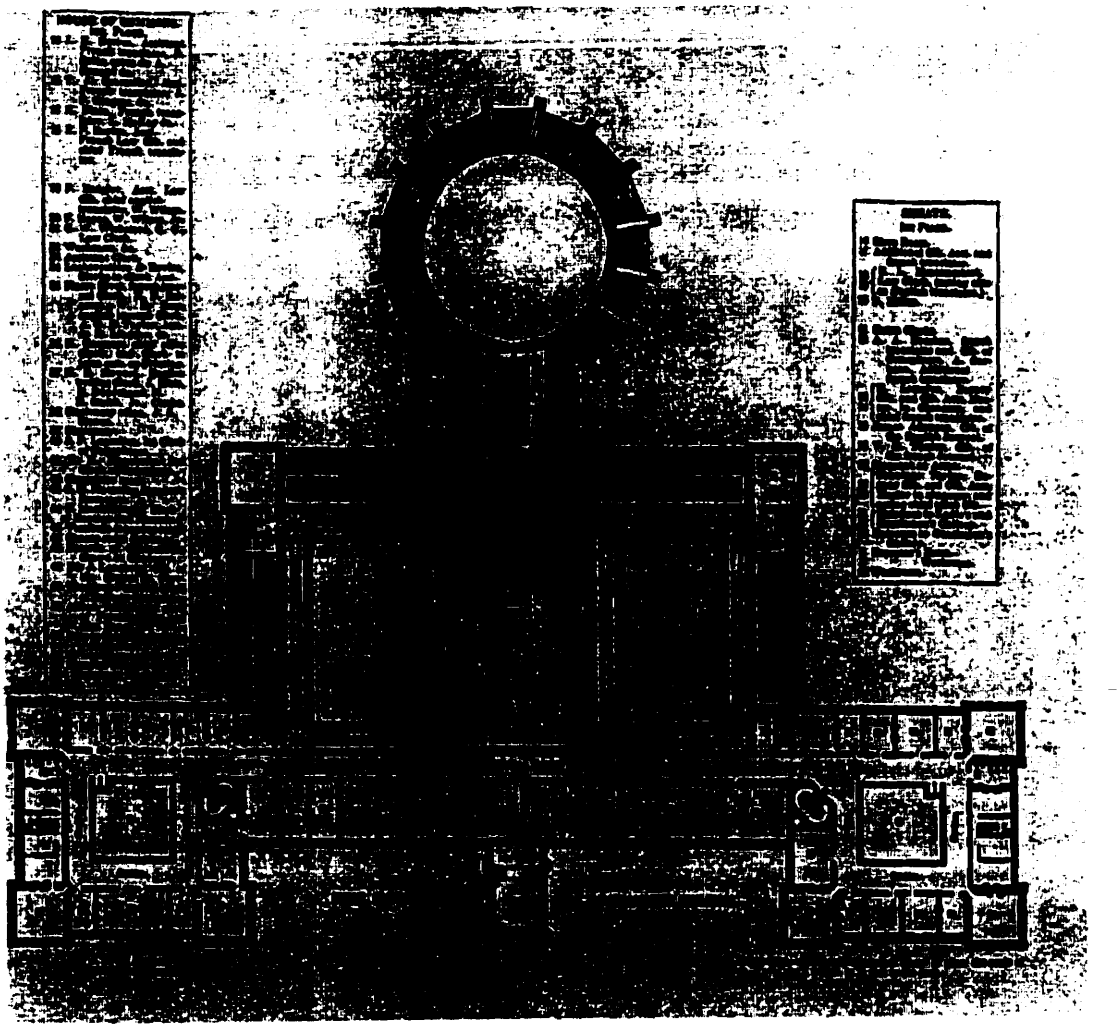

fig. 4.4
First Floor plan
Handbook to the Parliamentary and Departmental Buildings, 1868

have special rooms designated for their use, as we will see, but that from the lack of provisions designed for women in the Parliament Buildings, women were not expected to stay in the building for more than a brief visit. Other than the gallery spaces, women's spaces are ignored and invisible in the buildings' official documents.

As Angel Kwolek-Folland argues, women were recognized as users of and employees in public office buildings, as can be inferred by the buildings' design. In *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930,* she illustrates clearly that women were specifically addressed in the design of new office buildings in an attempt to minimize sexual attraction between members of the opposite sex and to enforce segregation in job categories.[8] She asserts that the ideology of separate spheres was very much at work in the turn-of-the-century business world:

> [Separate spheres] reinforced women's essential domesticity while encompassing domestic havens in all-male executive suites, and it dictated physical and organizational distance between men and women but incorporated the notion that corporate workers were 'family.'[9]

Office design addressed women's entry as employees in office buildings with architectural gradations of gender and status in the placement of restrooms and clerical offices.[10] Women's restrooms were typically down a long corridor, far from public view and on alternate floors from the men's restroom. Women worked on different floors than men, or, if they shared workspace, women's desks were in open space, easily monitored and surveilled by men. In other words, architects made a conscious attempt to address gender difference in the design of office buildings. The plan of the Parliament Buildings shows no such delineations or concessions for female employees suggesting that women had not been considered potential employees in the buildings.

The location and layout of the servants' sleeping quarters, in the basement of the Parliament Buildings, also suggest that these spaces were intended only for its male employees. No special demarcations indicate the sex of the intended user. (fig.4.5) Work and sleeping spaces were integrated both in the basement for servants as well as on upper floors for members of parliament, the Speaker and other male employees. Had women been meant to sleep in the building, separate women's quarters would be apparent in the design. Female domestic servants' sleeping quarters in the home and those of female students or nurses in dormitories and residences were *markedly* separate from those of their

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[8]Kwolek-Folland 107-115.
[9]Kwolek-Folland 11.
[10]Kwolek-Folland 121.

L= larder DR= dining room
C= cellar SA= saloon
K= kitchen SR= sitting room
APT= apartment

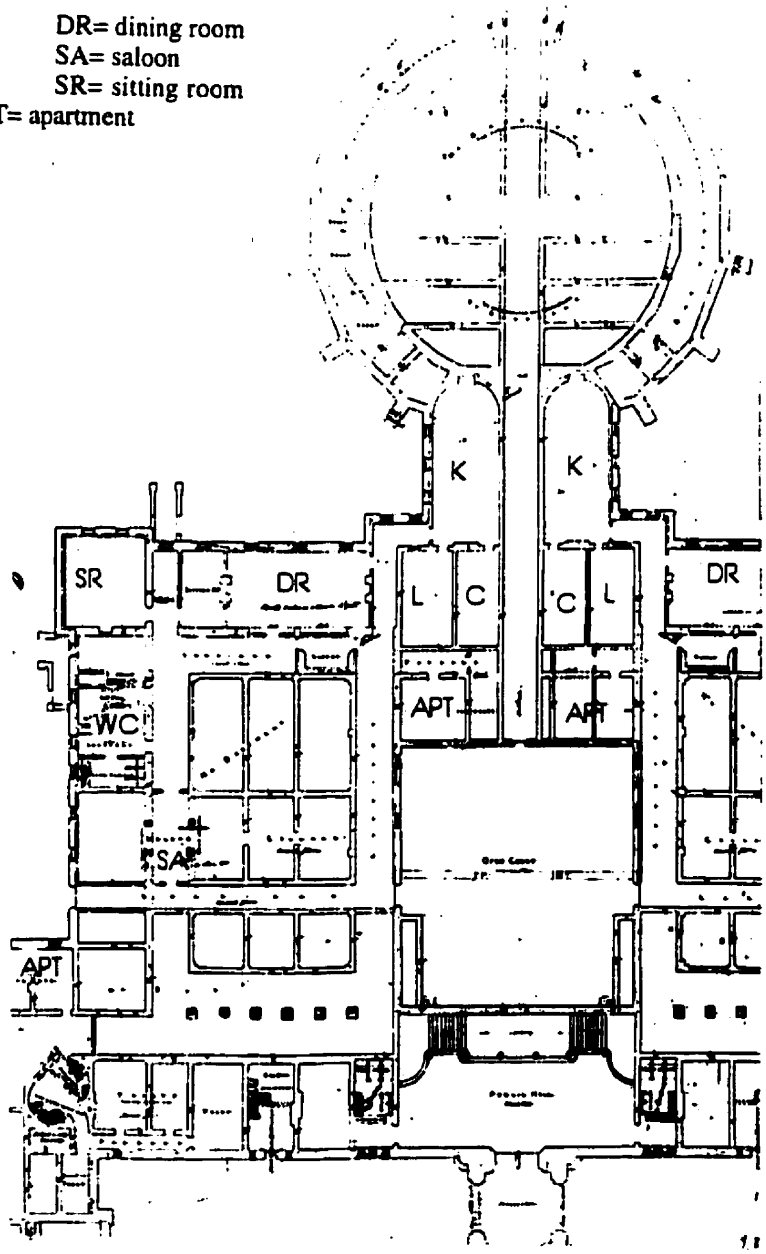

fig. 4.5
Basement Plan: Servants' Quarters
NMC 19001

The plan shows that the servants' apartments were adjacent to the larder and cellar. The design suggests that women may not have been expected as users of the basement; the lavatory and w.c. open on to each other while the water closets beside the Public Hall have urinals in them. It is not known whether women used the *Saloon*, but according to the society columns, they joined members in "delightful little supper parties" in the basement *Dining Room.*

male counterparts. In the domestic sphere, male and female servants nearly always inhabited separate wings or floors.[11] In universities and professionals' residences, women inhabited different buildings altogether which were located on the periphery of the campus or property.[12] The overriding concern of social reformers and guardians was with proper supervision and the "protection" of female virtue; the solution was physical separation. Because of the consistency of the parliamentary basement accommodations and the highly gendered, fraternity-like atmosphere of the Parliament Buildings, it is unlikely that female employees resided in the servants' accommodations, or even that they resided in the buildings at all.

But we know from the Mary O'Leary photograph that women were employees in the building. The designers of the building didn't anticipate the presence of the working girl - where was she to eat or tidy herself? The Victorians were preoccupied with separating the sexes, particularly the young and unmarried. How was Mary O'Leary supervised? How was her virtue kept intact? These questions remain unanswered without Mary's input. Perhaps there was a room, unmarked on the plan, set aside for women employees or perhaps Mary discreetly roamed the halls, but there is no evidence either from Mary's point of view or from official documents.[13] There is little in the design of the building to indicate that women were a growing constituency of its users. The design effectively renders women employees invisible; it is not an adequate index for the social phenomena of the ninteenth-century working girl.

Other women did, however, leave first-hand accounts of their experience of the buildings and from these we are able to decipher how they moved within the walls of the Parliament Buildings. Kit Coleman was one of these women. Coleman's professional status gave her access to a wide variety of people and places; she reported political news and gossip from the Ladies' Gallery and she was invited to the grand parliamentary social

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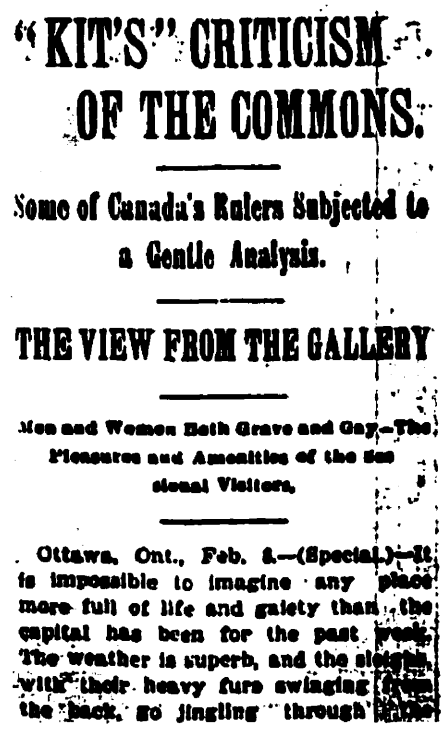
[11]In some cases, a separate wing was designated to bachelors to ensure the separation of single men and women. Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (London: Yale University Press, 1978) 286.

[12]Annmarie Adams points out that the domestic imagery inside and outside these residences and the protective nature of their surroundings was probably intended to smooth the transition from home to paid work . To the same effect, "[t]he class conscious profession of nursing may also have presumed that the association of the residence with upper-middle-class houses would attract young women from wealthier families.... the new building may have been intended to impose middle-class values on working-class women." Adams, "Rooms of their Own: The Nurses' Residence at Montreal's Royal Victoria College," *Material History Review* 40 (Fall 1994): 33.

[13]Carolyn Torma distinguishes between the formal and restricted codes of the work place to show that official documents and statements are countered or complemented by unwritten rules. The formal code determines space allocation, shape, size, location and expressed use of spaces while the informal code is how space is modified or actually used. Torma, "The Spatial Order of Work," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture VII* eds. Annmarie Adams and Sally McMurray (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press): 188.



"KIT'S" CRITICISM OF THE COMMONS.

Some of Canada's Rulers Subjected to a Gentle Analysis.

THE VIEW FROM THE GALLERY

Men and Women Both Grave and Gay—The Pleasures and Amenities of the Sessional Visitors.

Ottawa, Ont., Feb. 8.—(Special.)—It is impossible to imagine any place more full of life and gaiety than the capital has been for the past week. The weather is superb, and the sleighs, with their heavy furs swinging from the back, go jingling through the

fig. 4.6
"'Kit's' Criticism of the Commons."
Toronto Mail, February 9. 1898.

events in the Senate Chamber. (fig.4.6) She also took liberties in exploring the building. She wrote her thoughts down and had her views and observations published. Coleman, like Mary O'Leary, was a working woman, but one with a public profile. As such, her persona was rife with contradictions. To be accepted as a woman, she had to be "feminine." To make a living as a reporter, she had to be aggressive. These tensions are apparent in her use of space and in her commentaries.

"Some women," wrote Kit Coleman in her February 9, 1898 column, "chat with deathless zeal all through the speeches, and all about you, you hear the small matters of homely life - that daily intoxicant of the commonplace woman - discussed eagerly. Servants, rents, gas; Johnnie's shoes, what they had or are going to have for dinner; her latest blouse or hat, or scandal." In her writing, Coleman makes distinctions between types of women and observes that those sitting in the House of Commons Ladies Gallery, "barring the wives of politicians, I suppose- ...come out on the principle of 'going to things.'"[14]

The women with whom Kit sits to watch the parliamentary debates, their gloved hands and pretty dresses on display - "now and again a dashing creature in sequins or fish scales or some kind of armour flashes up in the gallery"[15] - range from the unnamed middle-class ladies with time to spare to the women whose social standing and name derive from their association with men in the House: Lady Thompson, Lady Laurier, or "the wife of a Cabinet Minister". Women's supposed preoccupations, servants, rents, dinner, and the improprieties of certain members of parliament, are contrasted by Coleman with the seriousness and importance of the place in which these topics are being discussed: the "great House on the hill."[16] Unmentioned in her text are the working-class women who remain invisible in the buildings and in Coleman's reports because their place in society and within the Parliament Buildings is not qualified with the adjective "lady."[17]

Kit Coleman's perspective is drawn from the House of Commons Ladies' Gallery, a sexually segregated and socially sanctioned public space for women. Figure 4.7 shows that it was the south gallery and overlooked the Common's floor. It was the only space specifically allotted to women in the plan of the building: "two-fifths of the east, and the

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[14] Kit Coleman, "Kit's Criticism of the Commons. Some of Canada's Rulers Subjected to a Gentle Analysis. The View from the Gallery. Men and Women Both Grave and Gay - The Pleasures and Amenities of the Sessional Visitors," *Mail and Empire* 9 February 1898: n.p. Lady Aberdeen's scrapbook, National Archives, MG IB5 Volume 28, 12.

[15] Coleman n.p.

[16] Coleman n.p.

[17] A lady connotes an inheritance and an acquired status, and could even include some who earned their living. C. Willett Cunnington, *English Women's Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1934) 1.

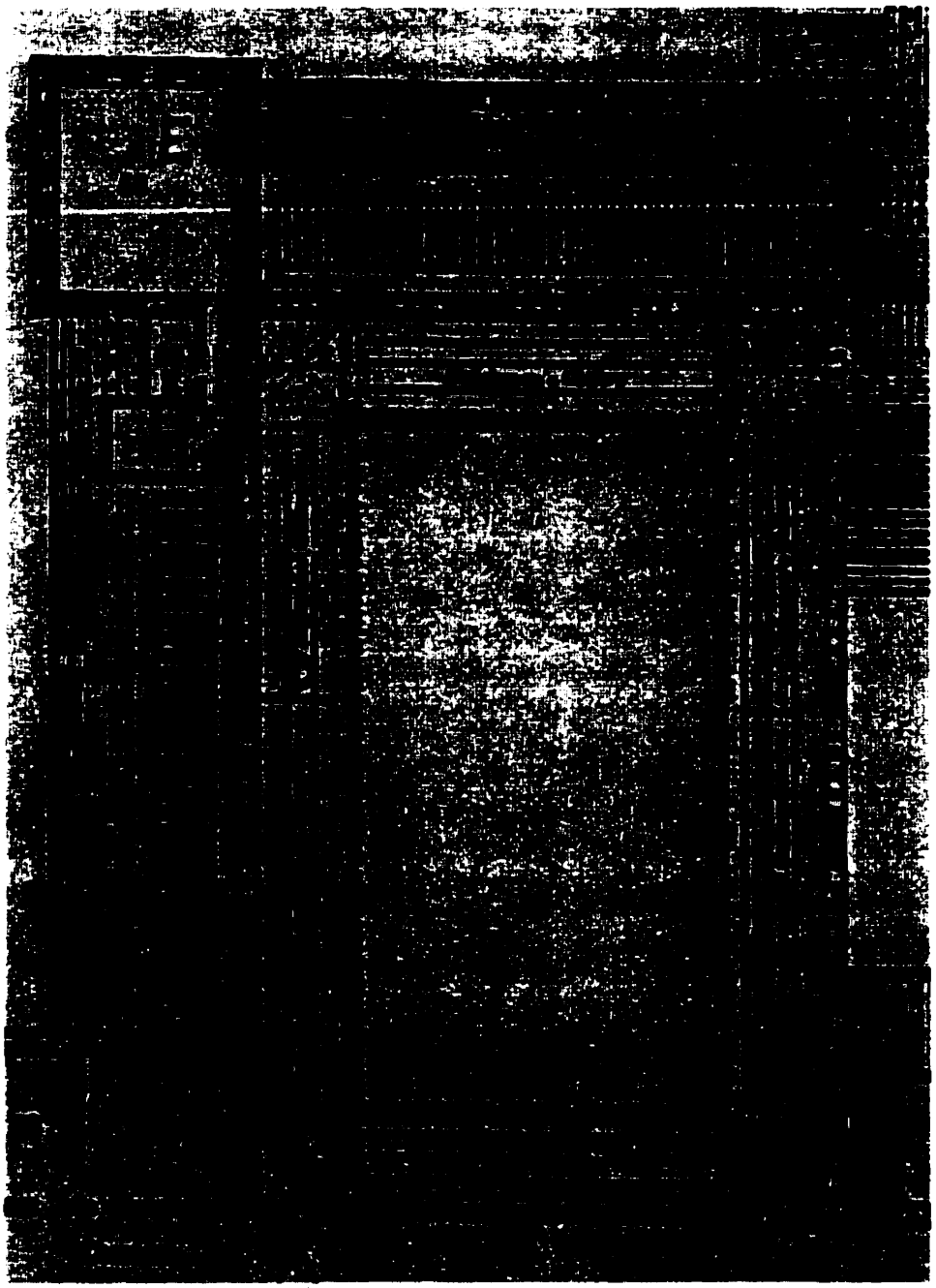

fig. 4.7
Drawing of the House of Commons Galleries

This diagram shows the alloted space for ladies, members of the public, Senators and reporters. "Ladies" are differentiated from "members of the public."

A= ladies' door
B= ladies' stair
C= ladies' gallery
D= reporters' gallery
E= reporters' room

whole of the north gallery is for the public, ... [t]he south gallery is for the ladies, and the southern part of the west gallery is for persons admitted by the Speaker."[18] The gallery's design divided space according to the sex or function performed by its users. There were the Ladies' or Gentlemen's, Senators' or Reporters' Galleries, each accessible by a different staircase. Ladies used the southwest staircase, Senators the south-east and Reporters the north-west.

Kit Coleman's observations and her omissions in regards to women's presence in the building give insight into women's socio-spatial relationship with the Parliament Building. "Place" implies physical location as well as a position in a social hierarchy; "a woman's place" has spatial as well as political implications.[19] While the design and function of the building constructs the primacy of masculinity, Coleman writes a social history of the building from a woman's point of view, with women as her focus. In so doing, she paints a picture of social and political life in the Parliament Buildings and, in her introduction of domestic concerns at parliamentary debates, unwittingly provides a context in which to examine the inherent contradictions between conventional public/private gender divisions and the reality of actual experience. She introduces us to the complexities of women's relationship with the public sphere through women's use of space. She in fact provides us with a context of overlapping spheres by documenting a women's sphere in public and making connections between this sphere and that of the masculine House of Commons. She reveals that these two are not mutually exclusive, but rather interdependent.

The Ladies' Gallery could be understood to do one of two things. In constructing a small, contained and separate woman's space, the gallery marginalized women and put them on display. Or, by providing women with a separate space in public, the gallery gave women the opportunity to formulate the beginnings of a female public ideology.[20] And indeed, women went to be seen in the Ladies' Gallery for reasons both social and political. The women whose social position was of note sat in prominent positions in the gallery for the precise purpose of being seen: "The front row was occupied by Madame Laurier, Mrs. Edgar, Mrs. McCarthy, Mrs. Wood (Hamilton) and Mrs. Gibson."[21] Being on display

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[18]John Page, *Report on the Public Buildings at Ottawa: Sessional Papers No.8, Appendix No. 28,* (Ottawa, 1867) 212.

[19] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995) 16. Hayden also points out that "[i]n the nineteenth century and earlier, place also carried a sense of the right of a person to own a piece of land, or to be part of a social world, and in this older sense of place contains more political history."

[20]Abigail Van Slyck, "The Lady and the Library Loafer: Gender and Public Space in Victorian America," *Winterthur Portfolio* 31.4 (Winter 1996): 221-242.

[21]These women were the wives of the Prime Minister (Laurier) and other Members of Parliament. *Toronto Globe* 25 August 1896: n.p.

had several consequences, the foremost of which was the affirmation of social status. Furthermore, while the "wife of a Cabinet minister" was mentioned by Kit Coleman in the newspaper, the Mary O'Learies were ignored. Coleman re-affirmed a hierarchy of social position by naming those worth naming, a hierarchy which was manifested spatially. Mary O'Leary may not have dared sit beside an eminent lady nor would she have had a seat reserved for her use. She remained "invisible" in the eyes of professional observers like Kit Coleman.

There was another aspect to the display of women in the gallery: flirtation and the possibility of courtship. Kit Coleman established in her journalism relationships between the men's sphere of politics on the floor and the women's sphere of the gallery. She notes that "[t]he members...,[cast] sly glances up at the Speaker's gallery, where beauty sits in her best hat and feathers" and "[t]he old boys open their desks and bring out sheets, whereon they write little nothings to sweet somebodys, and the Parliamentary messengers fly abroad and about like decorously-clothed cupids."[22]

Women provided a lighthearted distraction from the dull moments in the House. The physical setting of courtship in the Victorian era was determined by the neutrality of spaces and the degree of monitoring.[23] The distance between the man on the floor and woman in the gallery was a safe one, and no threat to a woman's respectability. An 1898 photograph of the interior of the House of Commons shows the view of the south gallery, that designated for ladies. Interestingly, the sightline from the government side of the Commons' floor is directly to the Ladies' Gallery. A reward for the political "winners" was the best view in the House. (fig.4.8, 4.9)

The Gallery, as an accepted woman's space in the public sphere, was much like other public viewing galleries such as those at theatres and racetracks in which the act of looking was an essential element.[24] Looking was a sanctioned public act, popularized in art, but made possible through design. Mary Cassatt's *At the Opera* and Edgar Degas' racetrack paintings illustrate the sexual politics and the spatial constructions of nineteenth-century public observation.[25] (fig.4.10) The use of public galleries was significant: "women could enter and represent selected locations in the public sphere - those of entertainment and display."[26] Like House of Commons' galleries, the racetrack reserved

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[22]Coleman, "Kit's Criticism of the Commons," *Mail and Empire* 9 February 1898: n.p.

[23]Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montreal and Kingsont: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990) 65.

[24]I am grateful to Alison Matthews for pointing me in this direction.

[25]As feminist art historian Griselda Pollock argues, the type of looking permitted to men and women in the nineteenth century differed because they occupied different social spaces. Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988).

[26]Pollock 79.

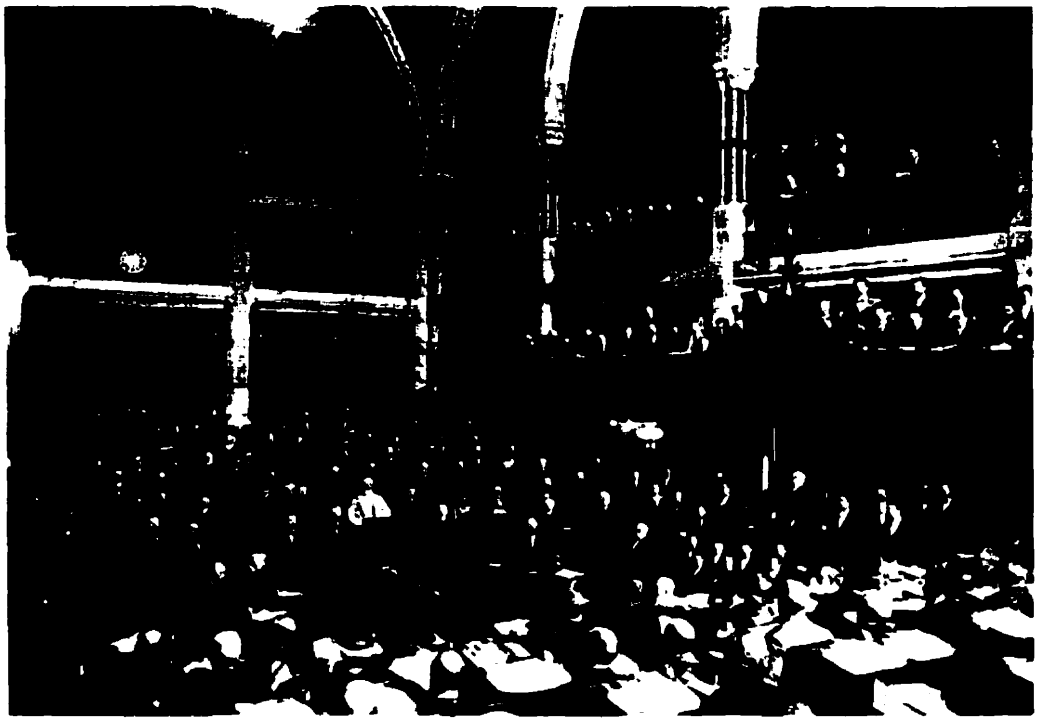

fig. 4.8
Full House, 1897
C1986

This photograph was also taken from the north gallery. It shows a full Reporters' Gallery, but also a somewhat empty Ladies' Gallery. Two women sit in the front row and seven men stand behind them.

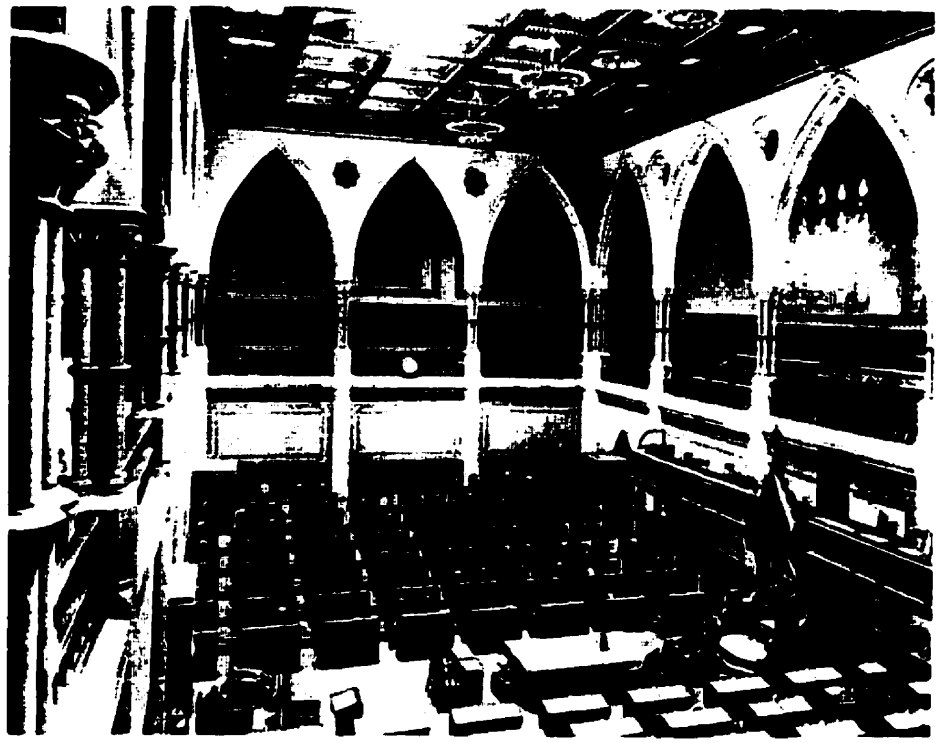

fig. 4.9
Interior View of the House of Commons Chamber, 1898
CA 1441

This photograph of an empty Commons Chamber was taken from the north gallery and is a view of the Ladies' Gallery.

fig. 4
Mary

specific seats for prominent public servants like Ministers, members of the most exclusive clubs and also a "special compartment for ladies."[27] Called the *salon des courses*, the racetrack divided spectators according to sex and class and created a hierarchical social space in the form of an outdoor parlour:

> The chairs are placed between the stands and the track: this narrow strip is like an immense salon... The women condemn themselves to this torture. They are conscious of being looked at, they know and feel themselves being admired.[28]

Both men and women had binoculars. The track became a sexualized space in which the interplay between the sexes was an important component to its attraction and where it was permissible to look at both the spectacle and at the spectators.[29]

The racetrack comparison furthers the idea that a *salon* in the public sphere was one in which men and women each had their places, and each was a necessary participant for the social dynamics to proceed. It also furthers the idea that women's presence and participation at the track, or in the parliamentary galleries, introduced an element of the private sphere to a public space and activity. The theatre analogy also provides another perspective on the spatial construction of observation. Mary Cassatt's painting *At the Opera* shows that there were different levels and varieties of looking which took place. The woman at the foreground is actively looking, through her binoculars, in the direction of the stage while a man in the background, on the same balcony level as her, is, without her knowledge, actively looking at her. The opera galleries, like those in the House of Commons, offered a variety of perspectives for observation, but what is significant about the Cassatt painting is the acknowledgment of women's active gaze. Rather than depicting women as passively observed, her painting suggests that women, like men, had agency; that from their space in the gallery they both looked and were looked at.

Kit Coleman, although a reporter, was expected to practice her craft from the Ladies' Gallery, not the Reporter's Gallery. She was spatially separated from her male peers who occupied the small gallery above the Speaker's Throne in the House of Commons. Male reporters had a separate staircase, two rooms in the Speaker's Tower, and a private entrance on the north-east side of the buildings. They held a prestigious place

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[27]Deborah Bershad, "Looking, Power and Sexuality: Degas' *Woman With a Lorgnette,*" in *Dealing with Degas: Representations of Women and the Politics of Vision.* eds. Richard Kendall and Griselda Pollock, (New York: Universe, 1992) 97.

[28]A. de Saint Albin, *Les courses de chevaux en France* (Paris: Bibliotheque du Sport, 1890) 320.

[29]The language of the racetracks was extremely sexual as well: *monter* was a reference to intercourse and *courtines* which means racetrack was interchangeable with courting. Bershad 99.

in the building, out of reach to Kit on account of her sex. An 1872 drawing from the *Canadian Illustrated News* depicts the men in the Reporter's Gallery as busy, scribbling on their notepads and reading their notes. (fig.4.11) Some have desks and chairs. A parliamentary page and a reporter exchange an envelope while the men behind them listen intently or discuss amongst themselves.

Conversely, the view for women reporters from the Ladies' Gallery was more obscured and far less accommodating, as part-time reporter Madge MacBeth duly noted on her first assignment:

> From my eyrie in a narrow balcony next to the section reserved for Ministers' wives, I could look down on several hundred odd heads.... I could even recognize a few. There were shaggy heads and neat heads...bald heads, crisscrossed by curious furrows and covered with blotches... I may have learned [which seat belonged to who], but what [the members] looked like in the *face*, I hadn't the remotest idea![30] (fig.4.12)

Her comments are extremely revealing both in their spatial implications and her use of language. From her eyrie or perch, she observes the floor with an eagle's eye. The reference to an eyrie, an eagle's nest, would not have been lost on her readers, as the Victorians were familiar with naturalists' terminology. The nest is a domestic space, and like the *salon des courses* and the public ladies' parlours which were constructed within a larger space like racetrack or department store, birds' nests are "homes" which depend upon an existing, larger structure such as a barn or a tree. The nest's purpose is to provide privacy and protection but its panopticon view allows a space from which to prey. As MacBeth looked down from her eyrie to the field of men of no distinguishing features, she sees most of the floor below and all the other galleries on her level. Only half of the men on the floor, the government members facing her, can see her in return. The vertical remove of the Ladies' Gallery by one floor could be interpreted as providing an empowering view, as the panopticon was a disciplinary apparatus which allowed a single, central observer to see everything as a means of control.[31] It could also be seen as separating different publics into a distinct hierarchy: those public persons with a say in the political system share the central floor and those relegated to role of observers share the periphery.

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[30]Madge MacBeth, *Over My Shoulder* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1953) 62.

[31]Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan M. Sheridan. (London: Penguin, 1977).

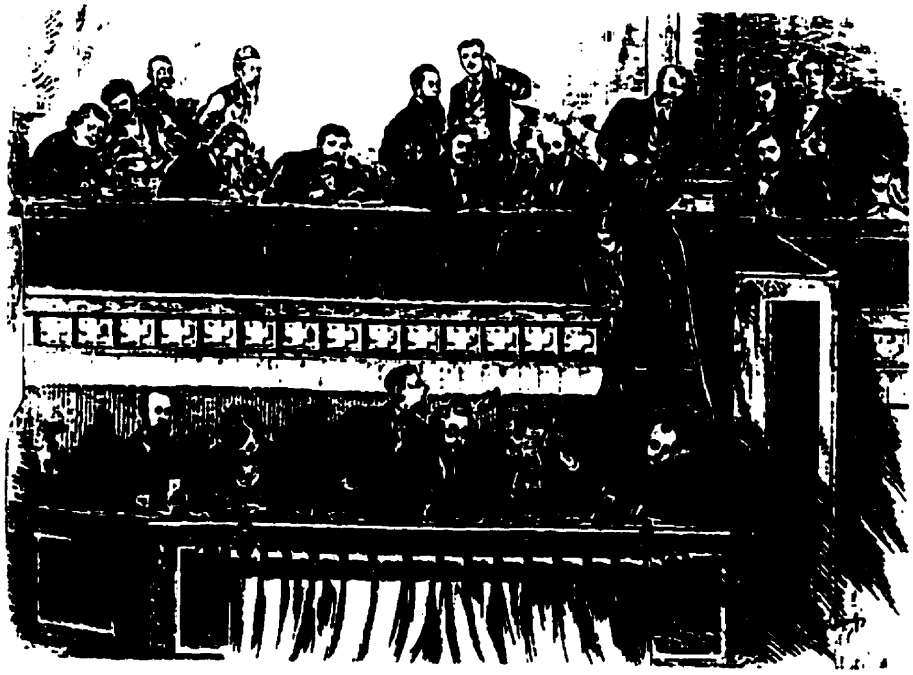

fig. 4.11
The Reporters' Gallery, *The Canadian Illustrated News*, June 1, 1872
Drawn by E. Jump

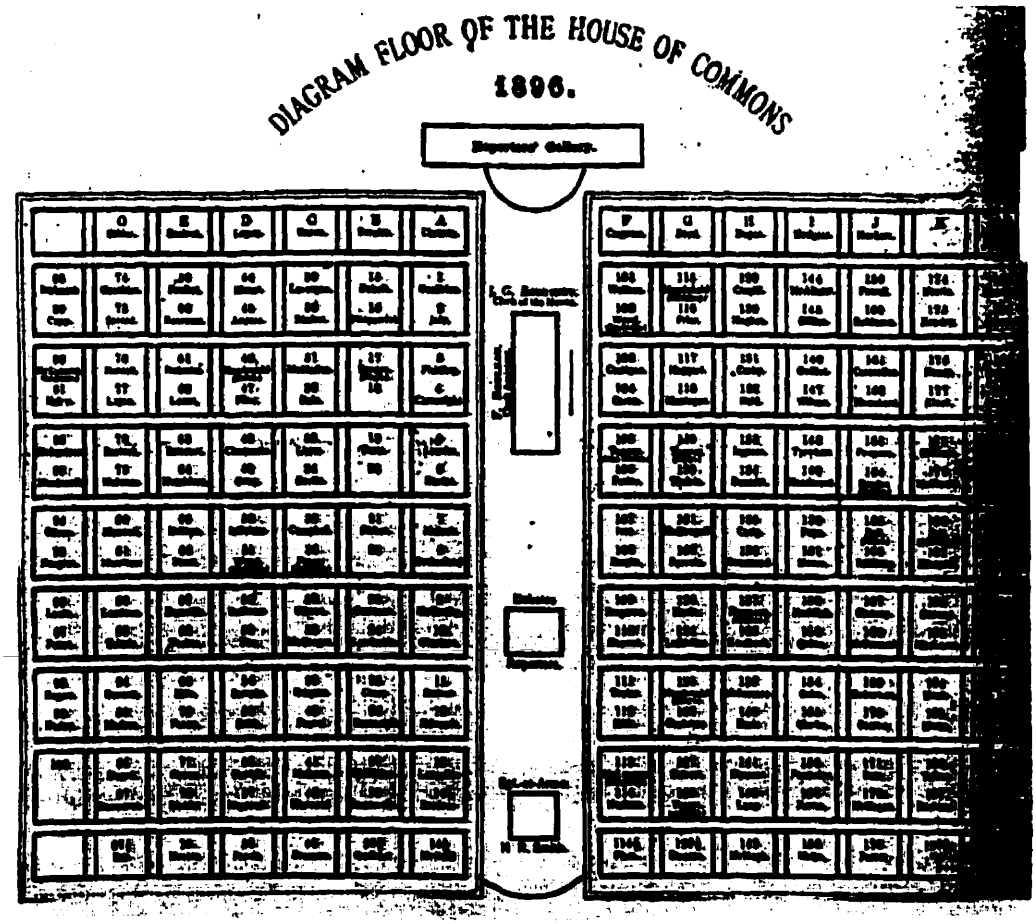

fig. 4.12
Diagram of Floor of House of Commons, 1896

Madge MacBeth wrote in her memoirs that although she was given a diagram of members and their seats, she could only see the tops of their heads.

Madge MacBeth's analogy coincides nicely with the second use of the Ladies' Gallery as a space which allowed women to form a public presence and a female public ideology. Surrounded by a brood of women, Madge MacBeth is in the only home available to her in the House of Commons, the Ladies' Gallery. But the "nest" of women who discuss domestic concerns in a public space are, to extend the metaphor, also a flock waiting to soar. The pre-occupation with the seemingly trivial aspects of women's sojourn in the Gallery by Kit Coleman and other women reporters belies a greater consequence to their congregation in public. Kit Coleman's description of those who "tried to look interested," who whispered about the dignitaries below and talked about the small matters of "homely" life, masks the complexity of women' relationship with the Parliament Buildings and its politics. Yes, that the Ladies knew, in such detail, about the personal and political lives of the men on the floor, is "shocking", yet indicative of the degree to which women were involved in the private nature of public affairs. Women's presence at the debates was considered to have a refining influence on the tone of public life.[32] Many of these same women, however, used this "cleansing" rhetoric to gain access to public power.[33] As we saw in Chapter 1, the ladies beside whom MacBeth sat and those mentioned in Coleman's "Kit in Parliament" were part of an active group of elite women involved in the National Council of Women, who travelled Ottawa's "at home" circuit and who met for tea and gossip at the Russell Hotel. Women's sphere of influence was thus felt far beyond the boundaries of the Ladies' Gallery.

And yet women reporters were low on the hierarchy of privileged personnel in the House of Commons, their sightlines significantly more obscured than those of their male colleagues. Kit Coleman did not publicly lament this discrimination, but rather upheld it through reverence to her male colleagues. As a woman reporter and a reporter for women, Coleman made distinctions between herself and her male colleagues, reinforcing her spatial, professional and gender difference. She wrote from across the Chamber,

> There's not a weakness in any of the great men down below that is not known to the hard-working denizens of that narrow little gallery that lies above the Speaker's chair, where the busy pencils pick out the points from the speeches, and, casting away the husks, give what little grain remains to supply you with metal pabulum (sic) at your breakfast table in the morning.[34]

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[32]Jean Blewett, "Speaker's Gallery. How its Occupants Hear the Debates. The Sex and Politics. Lady Aberdeen's Interest in the Proceedings," *Toronto Globe* 25 August 1896: n.p.

[33]This is explored in Chapter One.

[34]Kit Coleman, "Kit's Criticism of the Commons," *Mail and Empire* 9 February1898: n.p.

She finishes by writing that "... notes fly from downstairs to the press gallery and the reporters are the wisest men in the House." Although tongue in cheek, Kit Coleman did not include herself in this elite group. She defined herself and the design defined her spatially and professionally as "other."

Kit Coleman's curiosity as a reporter, however, took her well beyond the confines of the women's gallery into a wider array of spaces in the Parliament Buildings. These moves were fraught with both glee and trepidation, as evidenced in her writing. Coleman's relationship with the public sphere was complicated; she took a public role by merging feminine ideals with political commentary. Fiercely against woman's suffrage, yet a proponent of equal wages for work of equal value, Coleman declared: "I am not a stickler for woman's rights but I am for women's pluck and independence."[35] Outspoken and brash, adventurous and independent, Coleman was a mother of two earning a living in a man's profession.[36] Coleman simultaneously broke barriers for women's participation in the public sphere, while using a feminine, domestic rhetoric to justify her actions and philosophies:

> Do not, dear girls, in the glare of Women's Rights; or the suffrage, the emancipation of the sex, or any other of these advanced (?) movements, lose sight of the exquisite home virtues, the self-sacrifice, gentleness and wonderful moral courage which is as far above the physical attribute as the stars are above the earth.[37]

And yet she transgressed the spaces which the parliamentary design prescribed for her. When she ventured into the empty Commons Chamber and sat in the Prime Minister's seat, it was an outright affront to the spatial demarcations of privilege in the House of Commons. Although she couched her act in deference and awe, Coleman stepped beyond the boundaries set for women in the Houses of Parliament. The entire scenario, from her tryst on the Commons' floor to the subsequent report in the newspaper, illustrates the tensions inherent in women's emergence as active agents in the public sphere, and in this case, in the Parliament Buildings: a bold action softened by feminine deference.

Coleman and other female reporters such as Jean Blewett managed to move down from the Ladies' Gallery to promenade the halls of the Parliament Buildings, but only at specific times, as we will see. Blewett, who wrote for the *Toronto Globe,* documents a

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[35]Ted Ferguson, *Queen of Hearts: Kit Coleman, Canada's Pioneer Woman Journalist* (Markham, Ontario: PaperJacks Ltd., 1979) 80.

[36]In 1891, 35 of 756 journalists in Canada were women. *Census of Canada, 1891,* Vol II (Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1893) 189.

[37]Coleman's question mark. *Daily Mail* 5 July 1890: 5.

visit to the Library of Parliament indicating that although there was no special ladies' reading room, women used the space. Lady Aberdeen waited in the Library reading room after debates and Blewett and her friend Polly stayed awhile in the Library where they "[left] the living great men, and linger[ed] awhile with great men long since turned to dust."[38] Libraries were not emphatically masculine spaces. In public libraries, separate ladies' reading rooms were constructed, albeit to protect women's virtue against the threat of a "library loafer".[39] In the domestic sphere, the library was considered the complement to the feminine drawing room, but open to the family.[40] Unlike the sexual segregation of the galleries, the library offered a shared space for men and women - although it is possible that only women comfortable or knowledgeable about the etiquette of the building knew this space was open to them. Women's use of the Library of Parliament, then, was liberating in the sense that it provided women with a destination on the ground floor, increasing their path of circulation within in the halls of Parliament.

Like Coleman, Blewett's report of her excursion is full of conflicting messages and self-deprecation. She states that "[w]omen rarely shine in the discussion of politics, and yet women will persist in talking them down here [in Ottawa]." A subtitle of her article is "the female mind struggling with politics."[41] In the final section of her story, although she claims not to understand "anything," she gives a voice to the suffrage movement. The suffragette Blewett whom meets on the parliamentary grounds: "the idea of a woman writing for the papers ... and not knowing all about [suffrage]! Ignorance is sinful. ...Well, you know that woman ought to have a vote; that she yet will have a vote, in spite of the meanness of man. At least, if you don't know it you ought to."[42] Significantly, this exchange takes place on the parliamentary lawn, outside the space of legislative debate.[43] Why is this incident significant? It reveals an important aspect of women's experience - or at least the representation - of the Parliament Buildings. Women used the Library where they visited the "dead men" who were "good company" but the discussion of politics and women took place outside the building, between women. While the *Canadian Illustrated*

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[38]Jean Blewett, "In a Woman's Eyes," *Toronto Globe* 21 August 1896: n.p.

[39]Abigail Van Slyck. "The Lady and the Library Loafer: Gender and Public Space in Victorian America," *Winterthur Portfolio* 31.4 (Winter 1996): 221-242.

[40]Jill Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House and its Plan, 1835-1914* (London: Routeledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

[41]Blewett "In a Woman's Eyes" n.p.

[42]Blewett n.p.

[43]It is interesting to note that the suffrage legislation was passed outside the walls of Parliament, in the Victoria Museum, because the Parliament Buildings were in the process of being reconstructed after the fire of 1916.

News depicted male reporters working in the physical space of the political arena, women wrote about their politics which took place outside this arena, on the lawn.

The woman reporters enjoyed a degree of comfort and *visibility* in the Parliament Buildings unknown to the working Mary O'Learies. Their higher visibility and comfort was facilitated by the diverse activities to which they were invited to attend in the buildings: the Opening of Parliament, the Speech from the Throne and grand affairs like the Vice-Regal Drawing-Room and the Historic Ball of 1896. (fig.4.13) The Parliament Buildings filled with women of all ages, from debutantes to society reporters, from Her Excellency, the Governess General to maids. On these prestigious occasions, the rules of the House changed. Both Jean Blewett and Kit Coleman's adventures in the buildings occurred during one of these events which provided women with roles and notoriety unavailable to them during regular House hours and proceedings. The spaces, and the meanings associated with them, were transformed. Women had specific rooms allotted for their use, they shared common space with men, they followed a familiar "calling" protocol, contributed to the glitter and glamour with underlying implications. Their presence or absence had partisan implications.

The first vice-regal state drawing room[44] of Lord and Lady Aberdeen's tenure took place on April 29, 1894. The Aberdeens sat on the dais of the vice-regal throne in court uniform. A journalist with the *Montreal Herald* wrote,

> For a little more than two hours the stream of ladies who passed the throne making their bows to Lord and Lady Aberdeen did not stop moving except once, when upon Lord Aberdeen's suggestion that Her Excellency might be fatigued, the presentation ceased for a quarter of an hour.[45]

Afterwards, the *Herald* writes, the Aberdeens visited the apartments of the Speaker of the Senate and House of Commons for receptions. The *Montreal Star* report goes into more detail. The official announcement for this occasion had merely stated that His Excellency would be holding a drawing room Saturday evening. This resulted in "speculations and good deal of grumbling" because "a drawing room without a lady to receive was not half so interesting, although there were a few who were rather pleased because it meant only one curtsey."[46] In the end, not only was Lady Aberdeen present, but with seven hundred guests, it was one of the grandest, largest drawing rooms ever held in the Senate Chamber.

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[44]Vice-Regal Drawing Rooms were held by their Excellencies (the Governor General and his wife) on the night of the first Saturday after the Opening of Parliament.

[45]"State Drawing Room. A Scene of Unusual Brilliance at the Capital," *Montreal Herald* 30 April 1894: n.p.

[46]"The Drawing Room" n.p.

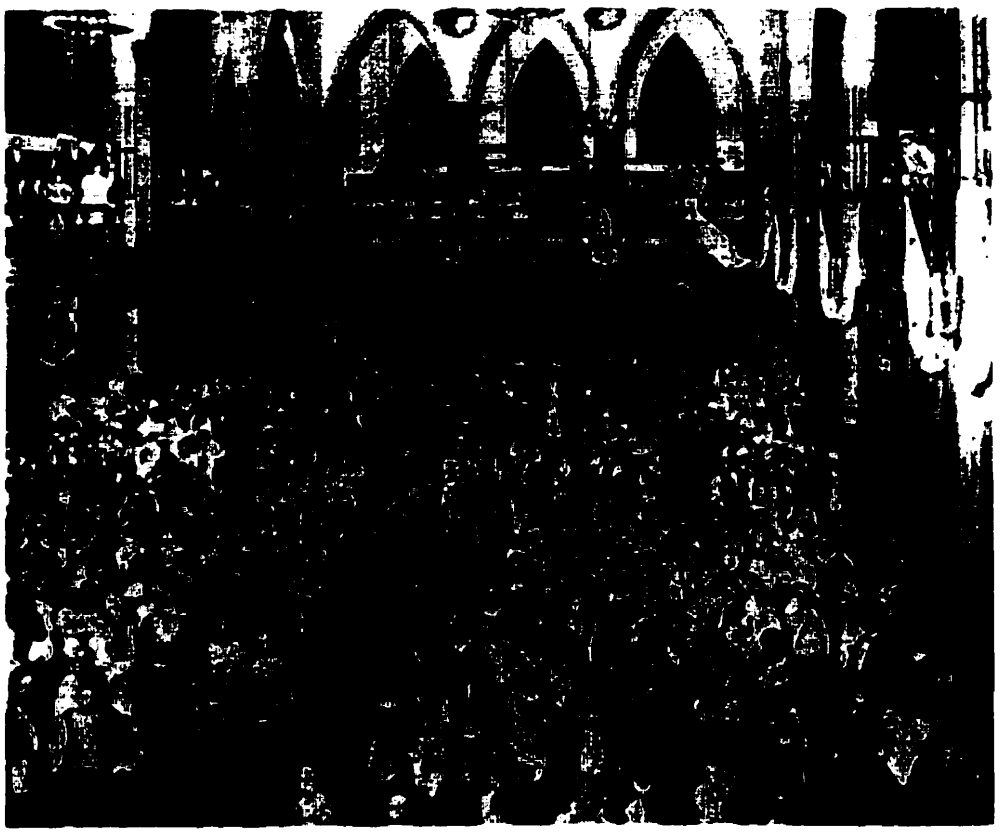

fig. 4.13
The Senate Chamber at the Historic Ball, 1896
C 10108

In fact, there was such large attendance that there were "more dressing rooms than usual, good-sized rooms, and the maids were intelligent and helpful."[47]

These brief glimpses into the Aberdeen's first official drawing room are extremely revealing. They illustrate that popular opinion reinforced the ceremonial importance of the "Lady of the House," that there was a great emphasis on women's carriage and bearing (and successful curtsey) and that additional spaces were created for women in the form of dressing rooms which necessitated women's employment as maids. As the newspaper accounts delve deeper into the details of people and place, it becomes clear that these "brilliant gatherings" were dependent on those aspects of society closely identified with women's culture: costume, romance, proper comportment, social graces and etiquette. These behaviours and details were not central to the regular events and happenings in the Senate Chamber; it was only in its transformation into a feminized drawing room that women's presence and "culture" were introduced and deemed crucial to an event's overall success. This spatial metamorphosis from masculine workspace to drawing room offered women the opportunity to practice their brand of politics and partake in the subtle permutations and interchanges of politics and society. Feminized, the Senate rooms became a space more closely aligned with the domestic drawing room.

The *Montreal Herald* relayed little of the excitement which pervaded the Parliament Buildings and the surrounding area on the occasion of the Aberdeen's first drawing room. It does, however, give indications as to how the Senate Chamber was transformed into the social space of a drawing room and how the room worked differently than usual. The Aberdeens sat on two thrones at the north end of the gold and crimson chamber. Elevated, they were the focal centres of the room. Their thrones represented royalty. To honour them, a steady "stream of ladies" passed through the Chamber, a floor on which women were unused to being the centre of attention as they were normally relegated to the upper floor gallery. They left their calling cards at the door and walked the circuit to the thrones to make their curtsey. On this occasion, a woman (Lady Aberdeen) and women in general were very much the centre of attention, their curtseys closely scrutinized, their costume and their every movement and posture in full view of curious onlookers and critical society reporters.

Women's enthusiastic use of the Parliament Buildings for ceremonial events prompted the creation of rooms unforeseen in the original plan of the Parliament Buildings: "in the ladies' parlour - that dear room into which passing Senators and "Commons" and other gentlemen cast interested glances - there are smart things in the way of frocks."[48]

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[47]"The Drawing Room" n.p.
[48]Ferguson 51.

The Ladies' Parlour was likely located close to the Senate Chamber, as newspaper reports indicate that women were able to peer down the hall to see if the doors had yet been opened. A photograph of the parlour shows that it was a comfortable, modest room, carpeted with armchairs, round and rectangular tables, table cloths, large portraits in gilded frames and a variety of plants. (fig.4.13.1) This room also allowed easy observation by passers-by.[49] It is unclear, though, if the parlour was also a retiring room for women during regular house hours, if it was a wives' waiting room or a social room like those of the exclusive ladies' clubs.[50] It does not appear on any extant plan of the building.

Similarly, the ladies' dressing rooms, although not identified as such on the plan, were mentioned by woman reporters who also congregated there before an event. They sometimes noted a "tedious wait in the dressing room, a tall room, with little dressing tables, mirrors and a comb and brush."[51] Journalists go on to say that some dressing rooms had attendants and others were crowded and small, lined with benches. From a plan of the ground floor, it may have been that rooms like the Reception Room or one of the small committee rooms which were close to the Senate Chamber were transformed for the purposes of accommodating women on these occasions. Like the interstitial spaces that Mary O'Leary may have used, these women's rooms remain invisible in official documents. They only live through the detailed documentation of women users like Kit Coleman.

New spaces were created for women's use at these occasional events and the usually all-male space of the Senate Chamber floor became an integrated one. At the Aberdeen's first drawing room, among the seven hundred guests were the Premier and his Cabinet, Privy Councilors, their wives, sons and daughters, debutantes and their families and elegant out of towners like the "girl who had just come in from New York."[52] Men

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[49]Like the women in hotel parlours who sat by the windows and looked out on to the city, these ladies were simultaneously looking out at and on display for passing Members and Senators.

[50]When the Parliament Buildings were re-constructed (1916-1921), a Ladies Lounge was created on the sixth floor adjacent to the Parliamentary Dining Room. It has since taken on a variety of identities as the Ladies' Powder Room, the parliamentary wives' association and now the parliamentary spouses association. Its decor constructs a highly "feminine" atmosphere. A 1965 photograph shows carpeted room with large floral print armchairs and sofas, a large mirror at one end. It has no bookshelves or writing tables. Its location, unlike the ladies' sitting room of the first buildings which was in Senators' and MPs' path of circulation, is physically removed from the activities of parliament, but close to the social space of the dining room. In analyzing its location, one could argue that the new lounge disempowers the role of the political "wife" by placing her away from the spaces associated with power and political debate or, as it is a very private space, the lounge is in a privileged location. I would argue that the role of the political wife with the advent of the new buildings and the acquisition of universal suffrage was diminished and women's influence in the inner circles of power was quietly obliterated.

[51]Kit Coleman, "Kit in Parliament. What She Saw and Heard in the Senate Chamber," *Mail and Empire* 23 August 1896: n.p. MG IB5 Vol. 22, 7.

[52]"The Drawing Room. Held By Their Excellencies on Saturday," *Montreal Star* 30 April 1894: n.p.

fig. 4.13.1
The Ladies' Sitting Room
PA 8999

and women of all ages queued together outside the doors where there were "several promising flirtations" and they all shared the floor upon entry to the Chamber. An 1867 *Harper's Weekly* drawing shows Governor General Monck addressing a splendid crowd from his throne at the Opening of Parliament. (fig.4.14) Men and women crowded the galleries and sat in chairs on the floor of the Senate Chamber. An 1896 photograph shows Lord and Lady Aberdeen amidst a throng of guests dressed in period costume for the historic ball. Crowded on the floor and in the galleries, men and women danced and socialized. While the Ladies' Gallery during regular proceedings gave men and women the opportunity to observe each other and send flirtatious notes from separate floors, the events in the Senate Chamber provided possibilities for men and women to mingle, under the surveillance of peers and guardians.

Much like the culture of theatre-going, the Senate Chamber drawing rooms (and balls) emphasized both performance and the rituals of seeing and being seen. With the doors at one end and the Governor General's thrones at the other, guests made the circuit of the room. Observation and display, however, took place beyond the heterosexual matrix which was considered the norm. Looking, in the form of admiration, envy, disdain, curiosity, also took place between men and between women. The first point of observation was between women and took place in the small waiting/dressing rooms where women evaluated and compared each other's costumes. Men and women then met in the line to the Chamber, and finally, the processional space of the Chamber where the walk to and curtsey (or bow) at the throne invited critical observation of the guests from all fronts. The spectacle was nevertheless concentrated on the stage; at the Speech from the Throne and Opening of Parliament, the Governor General literally took the stage and addressed his audience. (fig.4.15) All eyes were on him during his speech, and all eyes on His and Her Excellency during their formidable entrance and exit.

The glorious costumes and the theatrical atmosphere were one of the main attractions of these events of "the season." The court dress of His Excellency and his footmen and the women's costumes added an important sheen and glamour to the overall atmosphere. The Opening of Parliament on March 16, 1894 at three o'clock in the afternoon, was "a pageant of notable magnificence" with the "endless charming variety of all the beautiful gowns and the loveliness of their wearers, the gold embroidered uniforms, and the constantly shifting brightness and animation of the whole scene."[53] Not surprisingly, ladies' costumes are described in great detail in the accounts written by female reporters. Ladies worthy of note are listed, and their dresses described, reflecting their

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[53]"From the Capital. Parliament Opened with Pomp and Ceremony," *Empire* 15 March 1894: n.p. MG 27 IB5 Vol. 16, 8.

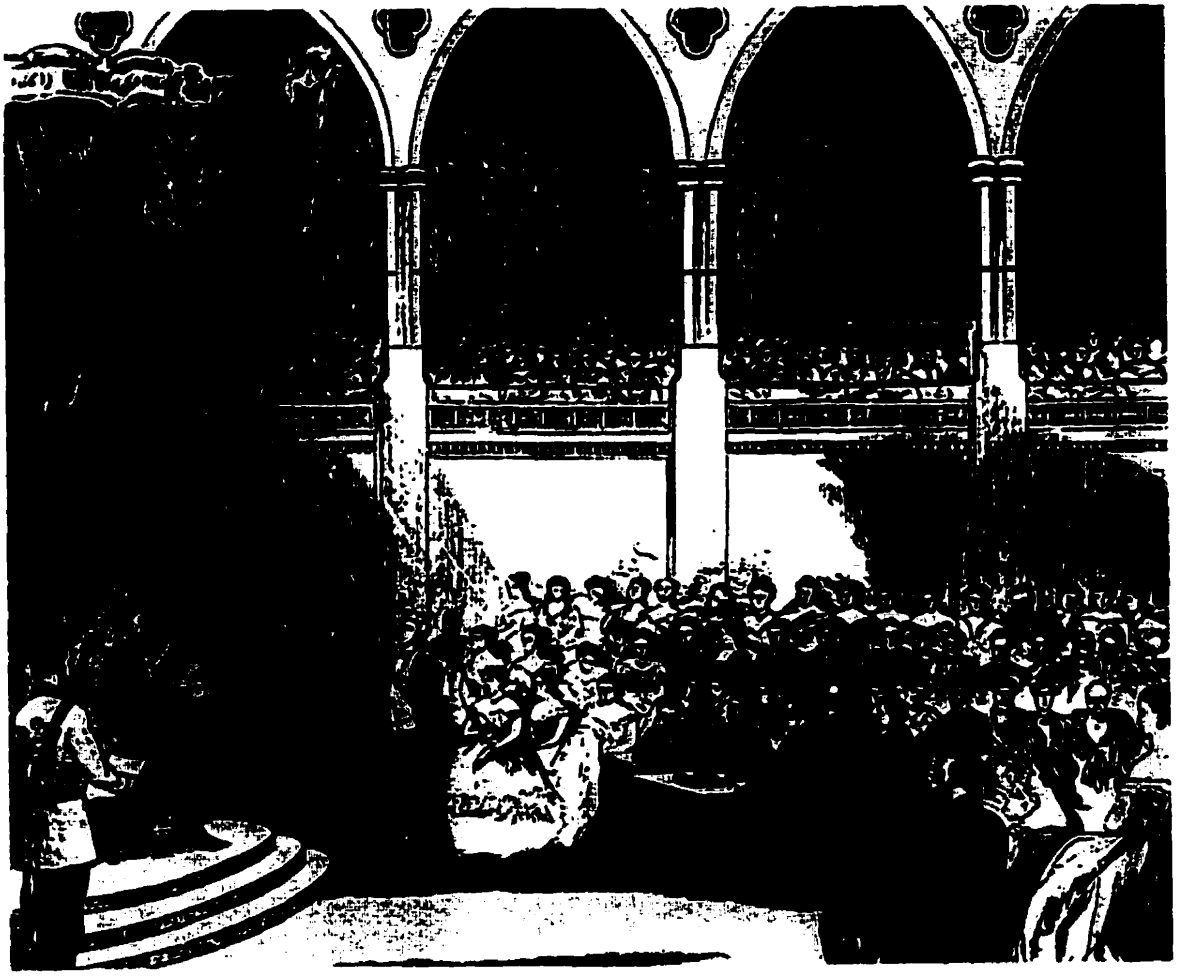

fig. 4.14
Lord Monck addresses the Senate Chamber
Harpers Weekly, November 30, 1867
Sketched by Alfred Jones

order of importance; Lady Thompson, wife of the Prime Minister, in her " dress" followed by the wives of government Ministers and Members, followed by Opposition Members' wives. Part of the theatrics was deciphering the semiotics of dress and maneuvering the complicated play of etiquette.

The possibility of romance was also integral to the excitement of these occasions. This was also a spatially constructed activity. A debutante's introduction to society was both a nerve shattering and glorious event for young women. It gave them the opportunity to distinguish themselves at an important event, to be noticed and mentioned in the newspapers as well as by presiding bachelors and their families,

> Among the debutantes Miss Patterson was one of the prettiest. Her dress was white with big sleeves, and any amount of daisies - real daisies - in her hair on her dress and her bouquet was all daisies. ... Miss Church, another debutante, wore brocaded satin with a very long train, and a court veil.[54]

Another debutantes' "coming out" at the May 5, 1894 Vice-Regal Drawing Room was less successful:

> One of the debutantes ... caused quite a flutter of excitement afterwards in one of the corridors by fainting. Whether it was the dazzling brilliancy of so much honor and glory, or whether it was the extreme length of her court train, has not yet been ascertained.[55]

A debutante was judged on her comportment and the appropriateness of her costume. More to the point, her introduction into "society" was an introduction to members of the same class, to political or socially prominent families. Part of "the season" was to "get one's daughter off" and her success at an event was considered a success for the whole family.[56]

This finery of costume was only one element in the "elaborate code of behaviour devised by the Victorian upper classes [as a] partly ... defensive sieve or initiatory rite,

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[54] *Montreal Star* 30 April 1894: n.p.

[55] "The Gay Capital. The Vice-Regal Drawing-Room Described and Compared," *Montreal Star* 5 May 1894: n.p.

[56] Jill Franklin notes that one of the main agendas for entertaining in a country house was "to get one's daughter off", 41. An interesting note is that Emilie Lavergne's daughter, Gabrielle, made her debut in society in Ottawa at the Aberdeen's fancy dress ball, on February 17, 1896. See Chapter One for more on Emilie Lavergne and Ottawa Society.

fig. 4.15
Drawing of Lord and Lady Aberdeen in the Senate Chamber, July 23 1898
MG 27 IB5 Volume 28, 138.

designed to keep out the wrong sort of people."[57] The tasteful dress for afternoon or evening events, the proper form of curtsey, and the ritual of calling and calling cards were essential elements in this code. These were closely associated with women's culture. Although there were etiquette books for the new families entering the social scene, and discussions published in the papers, there were plenty of unwritten rules and "traps for the uninitiated."[58] While women made and changed these rules, they were only discussed by those with the influence to implement these. In Ottawa, for example, changes in the calling card ritual were initiated by Lady Aberdeen, whose recommendations could only be accepted *if* the rest of the Ottawa ladies agreed.[59]

These rituals when played out in the Senate Chamber changed the original function of the space from a legislative space to a ceremonial drawing room. The ritual of calling was essential to women's networking. It was an activity which took place in the domestic drawing room at specific times of the day, one which changed the way spaces in the home, in particular, the drawing room, were perceived and used. In the Victorian period, the drawing room "acquired two new functions .... as a result of the inane ceremony of morning calls and the more genial celebration of afternoon tea."[60] "Calling" on the Governor and Governess General in the state drawing room was much like the "inane" ritual of calling among society hostesses. A quick curtsey in front of the Governor General's throne replaced the fifteen minute visit with the hostess.

The Parliament Buildings served as much more than a converted space for elaborate social and political events. They were, of course, the appropriate setting for quasi-political events such as the Opening of Parliament and the Speech from the Throne since these were clearly associated with the space and function of the buildings. When this space was transformed into a grand hall and drawing room, the Gothic Parliament Buildings became a illustrious gentleman's country house into which a host and hostess invited members of society to observe the rituals of "the season." This was an appropriate transformation. Their Neo-Gothic style was one which had "triumphed" by the 1860s in country house design, and it was a symbol of good cheer and good principles.[61]

Its interior paralleled that of the gentleman's country house where architecture and use of space was a way of asserting or affirming a family's image and an essential part of a country house's image was domesticity.[62] The image conjured at the Senate Chamber was

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[57]Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* 268.
[58]Girouard 268.
[59]"The Burdens of Social Life," *Ottawa Journal* 28 May 1898: n.p. MG 27 IB5 Volume 28, 93.
[60]Girouard 294.
[61]Girouard 273.
[62]Girouard 278.

one which mixed the regal and domestic, the throne and the drawing room. The splendid Senate Chamber, transformed from a place of work to a grand hall and host to hundreds of guests was "spacious ... with its crimson carpets, its gleam of polished brass and shining marble, and it decorated wall, really deserves the epithet palatial."[63] While the rest of the Parliament Buildings catered to a masculine clientele and constructed strict hierarchies of gender and class, the Senate Chamber became the grand meeting place for both sexes, of an elite class.[64] And while Rideau Hall under the Aberdeens attempted to democratize social gatherings, the Parliament Buildings practiced full fledged elitism, with the requisite rituals and codes of behaviour.

The Senate Chamber, like the ladies' parlours, *salon des courses* and public galleries, became, on these occasions, a public parlour in which the politics of "place" were negotiated between men and women. Its incarnation as a drawing room introduced elements of the domestic sphere into the public; its transformation brought that which was strongly associated with femininity - dress, romance, calling - into a space of masculinity. In this space and for the purposes of these events, women and men each had their designated role, equal but different. The introduction of the feminine, in body and in ritual, changed the way the space was used and as a result, the Senate Chamber's constructed masculinity was refurbished to become an adumbrated space between the masculine and feminine. But was the space transformed because of women's presence or was women's presence necessary for its transformation? And what does the metamorphosis of the Senate Chamber actually tell us about women's public identity?

Women were an essential element to the social expression of politics. The affairs would not have been so grand, or nearly as successful, without the glitter and glamour contributed by women's appearance, and as it was said, "a drawing-room without a lady to receive was not half so interesting."[65] At a deeper level, their presence also parlayed partisan politics. The women guests at these events were not merely "frocks" on the arms of their husbands. Many were the women noted by Kit Coleman as attendees in the Ladies' Gallery and those appointed to positions on the National Council of Women. Their presence at official functions had political impact. The Opening of Parliament on August 23, 1896 was "unusually brilliant... This was unexpected, as rumours had been flying that the Conservative ladies would not gather to honour a Liberal House."[66] The women of the

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[63]Girouard 273.

[64]The grand hall in gentlemen's country houses used for balls and dinners, and eventually all year round as living rooms. They were an important space for entertaining and a useful common meeting-place especially when other parts of the house became stratified into areas for men and women.

[65]"The Drawing Room," *Montreal Star* 30 April 1894: n.p.

[66]Kit Coleman, "Kit in Parliament," *Mail and Empire* 23 August 1896: n.p.

social-political elite, although not members of parliament or even voters, played a public role with political significance, their mere presence or absence at official gatherings reflected the current political climate and partisan ideology. The women we saw in Chapter One, the Emilie Lavergnes and Lady Aberdeens who were comfortable being in the public eye, were both part of a woman's network and a partisan political network.[67]

The temporary alteration of the Senate Chamber into a more familiar space, a drawing room, gave women access to and influence in a space previously off limits to them. Where women were prescribed by the design to a peripheral position on the outskirts of the main floor and to the upper galleries, at the vice-regal drawing room, they filled the room on all levels. Some women even managed to escape and explore other parts of the building, unsurveilled.[68] But most importantly, the Senate Chamber events epitomized women's involvement in politics by making visible those women who were part of an inner circle of politics and whose influence was related to the man she came with (or was perhaps going to meet). Like the political hostesses in Chapter One, the women to whom the parliamentary space was accessible were of a specific class and privilege, many of whose names were qualified by the adjective "lady." While Kit Coleman was not a "lady" but an invited observer, she was also expected to observe the rules of society. Certainly, she could comment on the décolleté of an older, unnamed, woman's dress, but she was loath to criticize Lady Aberdeen or the wife of the Prime Minister. Coleman was invited to participate in the event, but she had her place.

And certainly, the omnipresence of Lady Aberdeen, the hostess of the gatherings and the organizer of the successful historic ball of 1896 was significant. Her use of the Parliament Buildings was by far the most radical, visible and privileged of all women in Canada. But how accurate an index of women's changing status in the public sphere was her experience of the Parliament Buildings? She was the centre of attention at official events where she and her husband sat on thrones, but she also distinguished herself as extraordinary on regular days. While women sat with women in the Ladies' Gallery, Lady Aberdeen sat with the men: "The Countess of Aberdeen makes her first appearance of the session in her accustomed place on a chair at the Speaker's right."[69] Here, in this space, she was part of the formal and informal discussions in parliament; she, unlike other women, was not vertically removed from legislative activity. She could hold discussions with passing members of parliament. Without a doubt, Lady Aberdeen transgressed the

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[67]Both Aberdeen and Lavergne were sympathetic to the Liberal Party, even though the Governor General was supposed to be impartial.

[68]Notably Kit Coleman and Jean Blewett.

[69]*Toronto Globe* 25 August 1896: n.p.

gendered spatial delineations of the Parliament Buildings. If the true measure of peripherality is a measure of the distance from the centre of power, Lady Aberdeen was comfortably at its centre. Few other women shared her exceptional combination of personality and social position; few had access to the people and places that she did.

The feminization of the House - the introduction of women and feminine culture to the Parliament Buildings - took place in limited spaces and on rare occasions. It was significant, though, as it was part of the congealing of a public identity for women. Women were invited to participate in these events by playing a role with which they were familiar and which lay within the acceptable definition of "femininity" - hostess, debutante, political wife. The difference was that these were played in a previously exclusive space. In so doing, they reconfigured the meanings associated with those spaces: the social paralleled the political, the feminine balanced the masculine. Women moved from the domestic drawing rooms where they yielded influence to the most prominent public drawing room where they, arguably, yielded a similar influence; their presence or absence affected the mood or made a political statement. Women were able to transgress the physical and ideological separation of spheres and participate in an integrated space in the public was when they played their traditional role. But the fact that a mass of women on semi-regular and well-known occasions infiltrated the parliamentary drawing rooms indicates that women's presence in this public space was celebrated, not condemned, necessary, not superfluous. These occasions allowed women a freedom of movement in the building which transgressed architectural boundaries. They intiated the creation of new spaces for women and invited a proliferation of written accounts from a women's point of view - in other words, the construction of a female consciousness of the building and the formulation of a female ideology of the public sphere.

Conclusion

Parliamentary Parlours and *Parleurs*

The parlours of parliament in late-nineteenth-century Canada existed beyond the physical boundaries of its celebrated Houses of Parliament. They included the private and semi-private spaces of the urban landscape; the popular Russell Hotel where politicians' careers were made and broken, Rideau Hall where official and unofficial meetings and parties brought influential people together, and finally, the many private parlours in the homes and clubs of the privileged class. Nineteenth-century women of the middle- and upper-classes enjoyed a vibrant parlour culture which allowed them to create a large network of both sexes, outside the space of their home. The Russell Hotel and Rideau Hall were public, residential spaces which gave women the opportunity to practice their roles as political hostess in a more public forum; Emilie Lavergne held drawing rooms at the Russell, in the public eye, and Lady Aberdeen hosted social events at Rideau Hall which made the local papers and established her Ottawa's premiere hostess.

Parlours expanded outside the space of the home and into public buildings such as banks, photographers' studios, department stores and hotels. The result was a confusion of the strict lines delineated by the doctrine of separate spheres as women's parlour culture expressed itself in a new category: separate women's spaces in the public sphere. As politics and society came together in a wider variety of parlours around town, women's presence and role became increasingly visible. Furthermore, as the world of politics embodied by *Parliament* and the world of women embodied by *parlours* met both in and outside the official space of Parliament Hill, women became more "political." The definitions of masculine and feminine were forced to adjust.

Although the overall design of the Parliament Buildings promulgated an exclusively masculine culture in which the feminine, both in spatial and corporeal terms, was unnecessary, women made themselves "at home" in the Parliament Buildings with varying degrees of comfort and confidence. A few rooms were created to accommodate the women who participated in the parliamentary events, a sitting room here, a dressing room there. Although not on any official plan of the building, these rooms existed in accounts written by women. Their influx into the buildings for official events was well documented in the society pages, a re-affirmation of the *who's who* of Canadian Society. Significantly, these Official Drawing Rooms became a merging of the masculine and feminine, in essence, of

male and female parlour culture. Where male "parlours" such as the Speakers' parlour or the smoking room were a retiring place in which men could talk about the business of the day, women's parlours were also a place for personal and political gossip. The Vice-Regal Drawing Rooms brought these worlds together, each depending on the gendered culture of the other for its overall meaning.

Public and private, masculine and feminine intersected on many levels in the space of Parliament. Their encounter re-configured the meanings associated with specific spaces such as the Senate Chamber/Vice Regal Drawing Room. As a result, the definitions of masculine and feminine were challenged. The women in the galleries and at Senate balls were "ladies," but when those same women challenged laws and demanded the franchise, their status as "ladies" became precarious. The women who shopped at the department stores were consumers, consummate women, yet the working-women who made this consumerism possible, shopgirls and seamstresses, were a "problem." Definitions were in transition - "the spaces of femininity are those from which femininity as a positionality in discourse and social practice [are contested]" - and, as women used a larger variety of public spaces and participated in public affairs, the spaces and characteristics associated with femininity changed.[1]

The Parliament Buildings, a masculine enclave in architecture and in practice, were voraciously consumed, so to speak, by certain women. Parliamentary *parleurs* like Kit Coleman, Jean Blewett, Madge MacBeth and Lady Aberdeen left a rich historiography of the buildings from women's point of view. They visited and talked in a variety of parlours around the city including the Parliament Buildings - the unofficial spaces of political gossip and negotiation - and they left written records of their thoughts and experiences. These women rivaled the infamous *flaneurs*, men who "lived on the boulevards, and made the streets and cafes ... [their] drawing room."[2] The *flaneur* developed an urban consciousness by strolling the streets and documenting his observations. He enjoyed a freedom of observation and wrote about the trivial, fragmented details of the city, the "unofficial" elements of the city such as brothels and the underground economy: "[t]he flaneur symbolizes the privilege or freedom to move about the public arenas of the city observing but never interacting, consuming the sites through a controlling but rarely acknowledged gaze, directed as much at other people as at the goods for sale."[3] His

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[1]Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routeledge, 1988) 66.

[2]Elizabeth Wilson, *Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 54.

[3]Griselda Pollock, "Women with Binoculars - A Question of Difference," in *Vision and Difference*, 67.

consciousness was distinctly male; this mobility was essentially a gendered one. Where *flaneur* was a male prerogative, *parleur* and parlours were women's.

Even as "nineteenth-century consumer capitalism generated new urban forms and spaces in which socially sanctioned voyeurism became the privilege of bourgeois men as 'flaneurs'," women in the Parliament Buildings constructed their own consciousness of the space.[4] Women consumed with the gaze; they looked at each other and they looked at men. Mary O'Leary looked directly at the camera. Kit Coleman roamed the halls of Parliament, observed the scene at the balls and wrote her stories in the newspaper. Her reports are especially relevant in their perspective of the events from a woman's point of view, a view of Parliament filtered through a gendered lens. The conversations she overheard or missed were a function of her access to certain spaces: the ladies' sitting room, the dressing rooms, her seat in the gallery. From this perspective, she unveils women's subtle role in the theatre of the political arena and she created a women's consciousness of the building. Distinct from the official reporting of her male colleagues, Kit Coleman wrote a social history of the building from a gendered, spatially select point of view. Her comments are more than social commentary, they direct us through the corridors of Canada's Parliament Buildings, they hint at discrimination and reveal a discomfort and pleasure in crossing the boundaries.

And what of the eminent, ubiquitous personage of Lady Aberdeen whose prolific accounts reveal a comfort and privilege unattainable by the majority of women in Canada? Lady Aberdeen not only held "at homes" in the Parliament Buildings, she made herself at home:

> Now the first lady of Canada takes her place regularly on the floor of the House and listens to the speeches with unconcealed eagerness. There are a few who grumble because Lady Aberdeen does not keep to the gallery, but looking at her as she sits at the right hand of the Speaker, I arrive at the conclusion that she is the proper person in the proper place."[5]

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[4]See Lisa Tolbert, "Commercial Blocks and Female Colleges: The Small-Town Business of Educating Ladies," in *Shaping Communities: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, VI.* ed. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997): 205-215. Kate Carney, the central character in Tolbert's analysis, is an example of a woman *flaneur /parleur.* Her walks affirmed her status as a "Lady" by showing that she was free from household chores and by promenading in respectable locales. Her description of the town square is incongruous with official documentation which show the square as a masculine region.

[5]Jean Blewett, "The Speaker's Gallery," 25 August 1896: n.p.

Lady Aberdeen's open display of power, her overt interest in politics, her insider's influence and perspective were significant indicators of women's emerging role as public persons. Middle- and upper-class women had influence. As wives and hostesses, they were essential parts of the social and political expressions of power and they exerted their power from the most public and private parlours. The last two decades of the nineteenth century was a period when women's visibility and their power was on the rise. The momentum incurred by their participation in public affairs suggests that their networks were vast and critical to the accomplishment of their goals such as the franchise and access to higher education. The wives of influential men had access both to the male spheres of influence *and* to their separate women's spheres, their power arguably exceeding that of the first women members of parliament whose lack of networks and support left them isolated in the exclusive men's club called Parliament.[6]

The Parliament Buildings, then, were and are a dynamic space in which the negotiation of power is in constant flux. Women's power and influence has risen and fallen in politics and in the Parliament Buildings, reaching its zenith at a time when women practiced politics and used their influence "obliquely,"[7] when the political hostess cast her vote and swayed public opinion with an invitation (or lack thereof) and when women infiltrated the Parliament Buildings on specific occasions with verve, to contribute their part in the activity of politics. It has perhaps only reached an equivalent high in recent elections, a century later, when women with their vastly diverse agendas and partisan affiliations have reached 20% of elected members. Although not yet a critical mass or even near representational of the population, their presence in the Parliament Buildings is steady and their role is directly legislative. As we head into the next millennium, women continue to negotiate their place in politics and public affairs, no longer only in the role as "wife of" but as "the member from."

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[6]Agnes MacPhail was extremely isolated both by the men's network and by women's groups. She was a single woman living alone, working in a "man's world" and a member of a third, marginalized political party. For reasons of propriety, she could not dine or socialize with her male colleagues, and was chastised by women journalists for not being feminine or for wearing the same navy frock. Her office was on the 6th floor, near the Ladies' Powder Room for women visitors. No such retiring room existed for women members nor did she have women colleagues or women's caucuses with whom to socialize, network or relax. The same isolation was felt by later women members who commented on the "men's club" atmosphere in which women were never invited to participate. In particular, see Audrey McLaughlin with Rick Archbold, *A Woman's Place: My Life and Politics* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1992) and Judy LaMarsh, *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1968).

[7]Heather Roberston uses "obliquely" in *More than a Rose: Prime Ministers, Wives and Other Women* (Toronto: McClelland-Bantam Inc., 1991) xiii.

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Sites and Resources

EXHIBITIONS
"Portraits of our Past: A History of Photography in Ottawa"
The Bytown Museum, Ottawa, April - November, 1997.
Bytown Museum, Ottawa Locks, Rideau Canal, 613-234-4846.

TOURS
Parliament Buildings, tour with Audrey Dube, curator of the Parliament Buildings, October, 1997.

Parliament Buildings, guided tours, Ottawa, April, 1996, September, 1996, March 1997.
East Block Tours, 613-0896.
http://www.parl.gc.ca/PIO/english/intro.html
Discover the Hill, 1-800-461-8020.
Public Information Office, 613-992-4793.
National Capital Commission, 613-239-5000.

Ottawa Haunted Walks, June, 1997.
Ottawa Haunted Walks 613-730-0575.

Laurier House guided tour, Ottawa, May, 1997.
Laurier House, 613-992-8142.

Spadina House, tour with curator, Gabriella Karadi, Toronto, October, 1996.
Toronto Historical Board, 416-392-6910.
Ontario Heritage, 416-325-5000.

Heritage Montreal, Dorchester Square guided tour, May, 1997.
Heritage Montreal, 514-875-2985.

Rideau Hall
613-998-7113
1-800-465-6890

Ottawa Walks 613-692-3571

Rideau Hall
613-998-7113
1-800-465-6890

LIBRARIES & ARCHIVES
McCord Museum, William Notam Photographic Archives, Montreal, Quebec.
Ottawa City Archives
City of Toronto Archives
Ontario Archives
National Archives
Canadian Centre for Architecture
Canadian Architecture Collection, Blackader Laudermann Library, McGill University
www.blackader.library.mcgill.ca/cac/
Baldwin Room, Metro Toronto Reference Library.