

Modern public spaces in Canada A revaluation

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Abstract

Modern post-war built heritage, such as public spaces, gardens and campuses, is hardly considered worthy of conservation in Canada. Yet the history of built form and the projects of this era deserve attention because they reflect a period of profound change. This article focuses on post-war landscape architecture projects in Canada, especially those with surviving traces, to acknowledge them and, hopefully, help prevent their demolition. Two specific cases are used to shed light on the characteristics and the historical and architectural value of modern landscape architecture in the 1960s and 1970s: the University of Victoria campus and the rooftop garden at Hotel Bonaventure Montréal. At a time of growing awareness of the heritage of public spaces, this article seeks to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of projects created during this period, to help establish an idea of Canadian modern landscape architecture and underscore its value.

Keywords

Canada / modern landscape architecture / landscape heritage / public space / Montréal

Introduction

In Canadian cities, as in many major cities around the world, the post-war period was a time of rapid development, with the construction of modern environments reflecting the anticipated needs of a future society. Population growth, prosperity and experimentation in planning made the city an ideal laboratory for the planning professions. Many vast projects were created, for example, under government programmes launched to meet growing housing and education needs: existing neighbourhoods were replaced by megablocks and expressways; campuses, multihousing development, major parks and cultural facilities appeared hither and yon. At the same time, the planning professions expanded, and landscape architecture carved out a place in the creation of living spaces in the modern environment.¹

Although Canadian landscape architects produced many noteworthy works in these years, little has been written about them. Recent literature on the topic includes the section 'Birth of the Modern Landscape, from 1945 to the Present Day' in Ron Williams's book on the history of landscape architecture in Canada (2014), which presents cases that differ in scale and type, from significant residential gardens in Western Canada to Jacques Gréber's plan for the National Capital Region in Ottawa

and the Tricentennial Garden City in Montréal.² As literature on pioneers of this period also worth noting are Susan Herrington's book on Cornelia Hahn Oberlander (2013) and Mark Affum's Master's thesis on J. Austin Floyd (2014).³ Finally, collected works, academic journals and conference proceedings on modern architecture and landscape architecture present cases urging further documentation to ensure their survival.⁴ The existing recent literature has the merit of showcasing this heritage and marking the post-war period in Canada at a critical time in the history of the discipline, when major projects involving landscape architects were being built across Canada and landscape architecture programmes were being created in universities.⁵ It also reveals that many of the major projects are from the post-war period and that there were no projects with modern landscape features in Canada before that.⁶ According to Williams, however, the breath of modernism on the United States West Coast in the pre-war period influenced the design of residences in Western Canada and Ontario and set benchmarks for the modern features that would follow: functionalism and aesthetic renewal.⁷

Much remains to be done to shed light on what remains of these works, in order to assess their value and, if appropriate, establish protection measures. Many of them have been demolished or entirely transformed, such as Ontario Place, by Hough Stansbury and Associates, built in 1976, and Metro Plaza in Winnipeg, built in 1966 by Étienne de Gaboury and demolished in 1987 (Fig. 1). In Canada, there is no official register of designed landscapes from this period. The fact that we are arriving at a critical time, when these projects are nearing the end of their lifecycle and owners and managers need to make decisions about their future, heightens the importance of identifying projects from this period. This article expands the understanding of Canadian modern landscape architecture by presenting an inventory developed from a review of the literature, focusing particularly on two cases, the rooftop garden of Hotel Bonaventure in Montréal and the University of Victoria campus. Analysing and establishing the value of these representatives of public spaces that have retained significant traces of the era may support their conservation and serve as an example for the preservation of other projects.



Fig. 1

Metro Plaza, also called 'the bear pit', was built in 1966 by Étienne Gaboury and demolished in 1987. It shows modern expression in landscape architecture through the use of concrete material and geometrical forms, also typical to modern architecture.

Société historique de Saint-Boniface. ©Henry Kalen

Research objectives and methodology

Canadian modern landscape architecture has received little attention from designers and historians and is, consequently, underappreciated, not widely known and not preserved. Valuable testaments to the past—including modern landscape design—must be discussed and promoted if they are to be preserved. Modern landscape architecture is a new area of interest in the field of conservation, as even in countries where knowledge of modernism is expanding (in the United States, for example), it tends to be simply folded, invisibly, into the disciplines of architecture and urban design.⁸ The same is true in Canada, and our research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of this heritage.

To create a clear picture of what is left of the landscape architecture production of this era, with the intention of bringing this heritage to the attention of the public and experts for greater care and awareness, this research began with the creation of an inventory of modern public spaces, in two steps. First, a list of landscapes designed towards the end of the modern period (1945 to 1970) was established using documentary research from a literature review.⁹ All designed landscape production from that period was listed, regardless of type or quality. This first list presents a hundred cases, including parks, campuses, public spaces or plazas, housing developments, roof gardens, gardens and zoos, mostly designed in the 1960s and 1970s. From this first list, projects with surviving hallmarks of modern design were selected to create a second list. Specifically, we looked for designed landscapes that clearly test new ideas and reveal a new expression of form and materials, borrowed from art or architecture (Table 1).¹⁰ These projects exhibit modern design features, based on definitions and criteria found in key literature on modern landscape architecture.¹¹ The projects exhibit these features as well as others, based on definitions and criteria found in the literature on modern landscape architecture, including continuity between interior and exterior, functionalism (areas dedicated to specific functions), a vocabulary inspired by modern art, a rupture with the Beaux Arts, the establishment of a sense of place rather than an imitation of style, the social aspect sought by the designers and simple plant compositions, with less ornamentation and more naturalistic forms. The second list shows what remains of Canadian modern landscape architecture heritage. This surviving heritage was identified using documentation, websites, including Google Earth, visits and the network of landscape architects. Interviews were conducted for three of the projects, for a deeper analysis of their heritage value.¹²

Despite extensive production in Canada during the 1960s and 1970s, many projects have since been demolished and only a few have retained original components. The second, and final, list is comprised of thirty remaining sites with distinctive features, providing a good illustration of the range of Canadian projects in the modern period.

Modern landscape architecture in Canada

The Canadian modern landscape movement in garden design began before the Second World War and afterwards expanded more broadly to public projects, more or less following trends and influences from around the globe. Its spread was even more marked elsewhere in the world in garden art, especially in Europe, through the

international exhibitions in Paris in 1925 and 1937, through Tunnard's book *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* and through the International Association of Modernist Garden Architects.¹³ In the United States, it spread through the influence of teachings at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in the late 1930s with the arrival of Bauhaus director Walter Gropius. It was there that well-known Canadian landscape architects such as J. Austin Floyd, Jesse Vilhem Stensson and Macklin Hancock studied between the wars, later applying the principles of the modern philosophy to private and institutional gardens.¹⁴

After the Second World War, Canadian landscape architects expanded their field of practice to public projects and embraced the currents of modern design. Some of them cut their teeth alongside renowned landscape architects, as John Lantzius and Denis Wilkenson did with Lawrence Halprin and Oberlander did with James Rose and Dan Kiley. They contributed their knowledge to major projects such as Expo'67, the University of Winnipeg campus and Robson Square in Vancouver, marking a transition in terms of scale and, by extension, design issues. This transition can be seen in the special issues on landscape of two architecture journals, belonging to the rare writings on modern landscape at the time in Canada: the August issue of the *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* published in 1950 and the June, July and August issues of *Canadian Architect* from 1959.¹⁵ Thomas Church, Garrett Eckbo, Howard Dunington-Grubb, Stensson and Floyd, to name just a few, expound on their views of Canadian projects and the evolution of the modern project in general. The diversity of scale, setting, typology and production issues examined in these post-war journals sheds light on the emergence of modern Canadian landscape architecture. While the issue from 1950 focuses mainly on the design of small private gardens, it is clear from the three issues published in 1959 that designed landscapes also included large expressways, regional parks and multihousing development. The presented projects suggest that a new scope of practice for professionals emerged, made possible by urban expansion and the flourishing economy. Eckbo identified urban renewal as a new issue, epitomized in urban design for public housing, multihousing development, institutional and industrial planning and traffic ways. He presented large-scale landscape as an opportunity to unify the urban landscape and enhance the user's experience of the city and the surrounding landscape.¹⁶ The transition is explored through the themes assigned to each of the three issues of *Canadian Architect*, with cover illustrations by Canadian artist Michael Snow, showing more or less abstract images: an aerial view of an expressway (June theme: large-scale landscaping), a top view of a pool and a garden (July theme: small-scale landscaping) and Matisse-esque floral motifs (August theme: techniques of the landscape architect).

Modern landscape architecture is supported in these journals by the illustration and description of projects of different scales that are meant to reflect the modernization underway, but the movement is only briefly described in terms of style. The 'veterans' straddling the traditional and the modern struggled to define it, especially in the 1950 issue. As Eckbo puts it: 'Our field is the last of the arts to recognize the need for bringing its thinking up to date with the world around it.'¹⁷ Stensson states that 'fashion changes more slowly in gardening than architecture', welcoming the new geometric forms without going into much detail.¹⁸ Dunington-Grubb cautions against putting too much importance on the structure of the garden to the detriment of the horticulture, but at the same time supports the idea of continuity between the interior and exterior, one of the features of modern gardens in residential houses: 'The functions of the house have spilled out into the garden and must be provided for.'¹⁹ In that issue, there also seems to be an interest in demonstrating the

role of plants in the modern trend, a favourite topic of landscape architects. Helen Kippax advocates the use of indigenous plants, simple arrangements and ground covers to facilitate maintenance, a principle that reflects the modern tendency and moves away from the flower beds typical of Beaux-Arts arrangements.²⁰ The role of plants is also broached by Floyd in the July 1959 issue, asserting that there are many uses for plants that no architectural strategy can equal.²¹ The aesthetic effect of plants in the winter is achieved by the striking contrasts that surviving greenery, branches and plant forms can create with the snow. He adds that the snow clinging to the hard materials used in the garden design, as dictated by modernism, heightens the winter visuals. Floyd and Kippax's focus on plants in journals dedicated to architecture might speak to a desire to make landscape architecture part of the Modern Movement in architecture, which held sway in Canada at that time.²² A shared conception of the attributes of landscape architecture's 'modern' philosophy appears to be gradually emerging in these journals. The role of landscape architecture in large-scale projects is to create environments that enhance the living space; the role of plantings as an architectural design complement is to create aesthetic effects, with the use of native plants set in a simple composition.

Inventory of modern public spaces in Canada

To identify the Canadian heritage, a list of designed landscapes towards the end of the modern period (1945–1970) was established in two steps, as explained earlier. The preliminary list of one hundred cases, drawn from documentary research, provides details about modern projects in Canada, primarily typology, period of construction, distribution and designers.

The typology of the projects shows that two-thirds were public places, parks, campuses and multihousing developments. The high proportion of this type of project is directly attributable to the country's strong post-war economic and demographic growth. Many of these projects are associated with government programmes launched in the post-war context of a country undergoing substantial socioeconomic changes. Some are linked to Canada's Centennial Year celebrations in 1967 (the 100th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada), which generated a lot of projects such as civic facilities, parks, museums, cultural buildings, memorials, historic sites and fairs, including Expo'67, Place des Arts in Montréal and the Garden of the Provinces in Ottawa.²³ In the same period, multihousing developments across the country, such as Don Mills in Toronto, were developed to provide housing for a growing population, in the wake of the new National Housing Act in 1944 and the creation of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), which acted as a national planning agency.²⁴ Finally, the push to enter modernity through research, combined with the modernization of the education system, led universities to expand: master plans were developed, complete with designs for landscape and public spaces (Figs. 2 & 3).



Fig. 2

While the priority was planning spaces that linked buildings, the development of the Université de Montréal campus in the 1960s led to the creation of an important public space network. Construction details such as stairs and walls made of textured concrete, commonly used in the 1960s, are very present in the western sector of the campus. Photo 2017. ©Nicole Valois

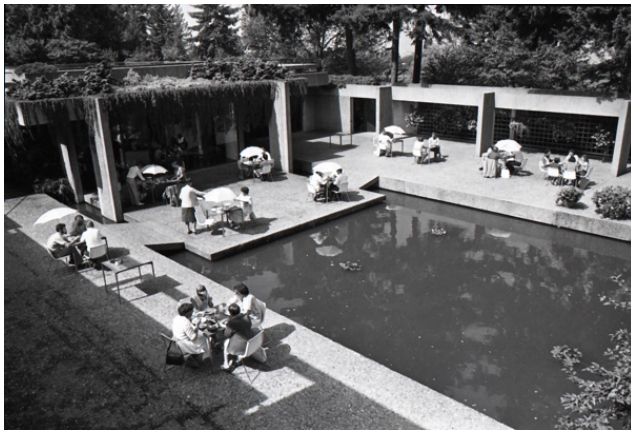


Fig. 3

The Leon and Thea Koerner University Centre (known earlier as the Faculty Club), in 1979 and in 2013. Built in c. 1959 by Frederic Lasserre with an addition in 1968 by Arthur Erickson, it has been well preserved. Surviving original features of the site are the reflecting pool, colonnades, floating platforms and edges in exposed aggregate concrete.

Left photo: ©Jim Banham, UBC Archives (UBC 41.1/676-1)

Right photo: ©Nicole Valois

The period of construction of most of the projects on the list is the 1960s. One of the reasons may be that Canadian modernity only really emerged in 1960, as described for Québec.²⁵ And as mentioned earlier, many projects were built in the flurry of activity leading up to Canada's Centennial Year. The majority of the projects was distributed in major cities.

Most of the project's designers were landscape architects, many of whom worked as part of a team, with architects, engineers, urban designers, industrial designers and artists. Because there were no university programmes for landscape architecture in Canada until the mid-1960s, many of the designers would have received their training in the United States at the end of the 1950s, when modernism was

influencing the schools of landscape architecture. Influential practitioners included Floyd, Hancock, Lantzius, Oberlander, Don Graham, Doug Harper, Clive Justice, Don Vaughan and Denis Wilkinson. All left their mark on the profession through the extent of their work and their involvement in the profession.

The exercise of identifying what remains of this heritage resulted in thirty sites that meet the target criterion: containing (remnants of) visible signs of modern design. Table 1 reveals a few constants in the first list in terms of typology, geographic distribution and year of construction. Most projects were built in the 1960s and designed by landscape architects in collaboration with architects, engineers, urban designers, designers and artists. The majority consists of public places in civic, cultural or corporate venues or campuses (Figs. 4, 5 & 6). The term 'public place' is understood here in the broad sense: it could be an urban garden or plaza or an integral part of architecture. Many campuses in Canada were built in the 1960s, but we have retained only those that still have public places with modern components. Finally, the two parks listed include visible signs of modern design, which is not the case for all parks built in that period

For this article two cases were selected, the University of Victoria campus and the rooftop garden of Hotel Bonaventure Montréal. They deserve attention because they are remarkable and not very well known. The University of Victoria campus is a clear example of modern design that features small public places within a building ensemble and Hotel Bonaventure is a good example of a modern design that has been maintained in good condition. The campus is an ideal case because firstly, the landscape aspects of the campus have not yet been deeply studied and secondly, the campus includes a work by Lawrence Halprin that is very likely his sole remaining project in Canada. The Hotel Bonaventure rooftop garden in Montréal was chosen for its heritage potential as being representative of the rooftop terraces built in North America at that time and one of the first in Canada.²⁶ It also is a very good example of the early projects of Hideo Sasaki, a world-renowned landscape architect who won two awards for this garden in 1970, from the American Society of Landscape Architects and the American Association of Nurserymen.²⁷



Fig. 4

Centennial Square as shown here in 2018 was renovated in the 2010s by Joe Daly Landscape Architecture and Pechet and Robb Studio Ltd. It is a major civic space in downtown Victoria, built in 1965 by a team of architects, landscape architects, artists and designers.

The central space is dominated by a sculpture fountain by Jack C. S. Wilkinson, set on a radial pattern floor designed by Clive Justice and surrounded by the City Hall and the McPherson Theatre, among others. Source: Wikimedia Commons. ©Michal Klajban



Fig. 5

The Garden of the Provinces and Territories, one of the first modern public spaces in Canada, is located in central Ottawa and surrounded by government buildings. It features two paved terraces linked by stairs to accommodate the site slope, planters of trees, two fountains and sculptures. Modern expressions are represented through the rhythmic language of planters and trees, the use of simple geometric forms and exposed concrete aggregates. The *Tree Fountain / Fontaine arborescente* (centre of the image) is the work of sculptor Norman Slater. Photo 2017. ©Nicole Valois



Fig. 6

Linden trees provide a dense canopy on the top level of the Garden of the Provinces and Territories in Ottawa, Ontario, built in 1961–1962 by Don Graham. Photo 2017. ©Nicole Valois

The landscape of the University of Victoria

After the war, changes in education and population growth spurred university institutions to pursue expansion and develop planning standards, including landscape planning. Many universities established master plans enhanced by landscape and public space designs that drew on environmental, social and functional dimensions, with landscape architects involved from the very first steps. This was the case for the University of Victoria's campus.²⁸

The University of Victoria is located in the Gordon Head area of Greater Victoria, a seaside neighbourhood in the municipality of Saanich. With a total area of 403 acres (163 ha), the campus straddles the border between the municipalities of Oak Bay and Saanich. Based on the initial master plan by architects Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons (WBE) from San Francisco (1961), the 600-m-diameter circle of the main road encircles the main teaching buildings near the centre, around a large green rectangle (the Quadrangle, Fig. 7), and sets off zones for other uses (administration, residences, etcetera). Archivist Jane Turner and campus manager Don Lovell consider the designed landscape one of the key successes in the development of the campus, intended to create a high-quality environment and enhance social activities, a task that was entrusted to the landscape architects in charge of the open spaces.²⁹ Since its

creation, they have continually worked on the development of the campus. In the initial phase, there was Lawrence Halprin, working with Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons. At the same time, Desmond Muirhead and Justice served as consultants, and from 1963 to 1969 John Lantzius was called in as the executive landscape consultant. Finally, Vaughan served as the executive landscape consultant from 1971 to 2008.³⁰ This continuity and disciplinary constancy had a significant impact on the maintenance and development of the landscape composition principles, which were summarized by Lantzius in 1968 when he stated that the landscape architect 'is instrumental in creating an environment conducive to intellectual as well as to social activities . . . The overall landscape concepts merging together buildings and sites, to provide a natural and sympathetic background to university life.'³¹ In 2013 Justice explained that plants were used to enhance the user's experience, create the greatest possible harmony between the architecture and the site and to link the buildings. Native plants were chosen purposefully to reflect the landscape of Vancouver Island.³²



Fig. 7
University of Victoria projected master plan by R. W. Siddal Associates Architects, Wurster Bernardi & Emmons Consulting Architects, May 1964
Facilities Management fonds. ©University of Victoria

Over fifty years later, the public spaces are closely woven into the buildings by vegetation that has flourished to the point that some buildings are completely camouflaged by plant life. The outdoor spaces offer variable compositions where horticultural plantings coexist with spontaneous growth and, in some places, meld into the forest. Buildings and gardens have been added over the years, including the University Gardens and Petch Fountain, always adhering to the principles of harmonious integration between the built environment and the plant composition, to offer a natural background and surround the buildings with native plants. The gardens, courtyards, thresholds and open places link the buildings, creating continuity between inside and outside, with fluid pedestrian paths and plantings that are both orderly and supple. The paths were laid gradually by observing where pedestrians went, as can be seen in the south section of the Quadrangle, where paths have been created through

a wooded area.³³ Around the Quadrangle, some places have retained their original shape and appearance, such as the Pyramid sector, a key element of the area.

On the western side of the Quadrangle, the Pyramid stands next to the MacLaurin Building, beside a route well-trodden by users moving from place to place on campus. It features a brick pyramid, encircled by a concrete surface and a band of bricks, with grassy, U-shaped banks on either side, supported by tiers of wooden beams. Mature trees shade the space, and benches line the edge of the brick surface.

Designed by Lawrence Halprin and built in 1965–1966, the Pyramid is an independent space with its own specific character.³⁴ The design was based on the master plan and construction drawings by Don Vaughan, who then worked for John Lantzius, the executive landscape consultant at the time.³⁵ The Pyramid was initially designed as a gathering place, a platform for parties and a stage where, for a while, the students received their diplomas (Fig. 8). Other events were also held there, such as the university's annual ceremony for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women (6 December), instituted in 1991 after the Polytechnique massacre in Montréal. The idea for the design was drawn from WBE's experience with California campuses, where public spaces supported student life, which was rooted in assemblies and demonstrations.³⁶ Our search for its historical counterparts led us to the Speaker's Mound at the University of California, Riverside. This seems to have been an archetypal space at that time, reflecting the desire to create spaces similar to agoras or for the symbolic aspect of the form. We can also find similar forms in the work of landscape architect Paul Friedberg, who used pyramids in Park Plaza in Manhattan (now demolished) and Loring Greenway in Minneapolis.³⁷



Fig. 8

The Pyramid sector in front of the MacLaurin Building at the University of Victoria was designed by Lawrence Halprin & Associates, consulting landscape architects. Based on the original design, the working drawings were prepared by Canadian landscape architect Don Vaughan working under

John Lantzius, the executive landscape architect for the university. Photo c. 1967
UVic Archives Historical Photograph Collection ©University of Victoria

Like the Pyramid, in the nearby MacLaurin courtyard bricks are used to create geometrical volumes and forms (Fig. 9), characteristic of the building style of the modern period and echoed in many other works from this period elsewhere on Canada's West Coast (Centennial Square in Victoria, BC), in the United States (Friedberg's and Halprin's work) and in Europe (Daniel Collin's Jardin Floral in Bois de Vincennes). Designed by Alan James Hodgson, the architect of the MacLaurin Building, with the support of Don Vaughan, the courtyard was envisaged as a place for social interactions with an outward-looking character, created to allow the students to gather and put their learning into practice (Fig. 10).

The use of vegetation to create unique atmospheres was as much a part of the conceptual plan for the University of Victoria campus as were the public spaces for socialization. The geometric shapes in the Pyramid area and the randomly arranged circles break with the traditional Beaux-Arts aesthetics of straight lines and symmetry, as does the use of new materials, such as concrete, and the wooden frames of the planting surfaces, diverging from the 'noble materials' in traditional gardens.³⁸ The Pyramid has been well preserved, but unfortunately, benches were added to its base in the 1980s to prevent skateboarding, detracting from its strong geometry and deviating from the original intention (Fig. 11). Nevertheless, the Pyramid's plateau is still used as a platform for student meetings.



Fig. 9
Planters in the courtyard of the MacLaurin Building on the University of Victoria campus mark out the space between the buildings. The repetition of the round geometrical shape of the raised planters and the use of red bricks reinforce the link with the Pyramid sector nearby. Photo 2013. ©Nicole Valois

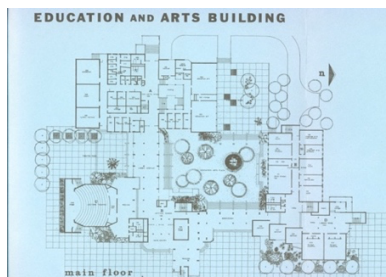


Fig. 10
Continuity between interior and exterior spaces is the concept at the core of the MacLaurin Building courtyard. The drawings of these spaces at the ground floor and at grade demonstrate the attention paid to harmonizing these spaces. Drawings c. 1967
Facilities Management fonds (AR136) ©University of Victoria



Fig. 11
Benches were added to the base of the Pyramid in the 1980s to protect the walls of the structure and block access to it by skateboarders. Photo 2013. ©Nicole Valois

The rooftop garden of Hotel Bonaventure Montréal

The Hotel Bonaventure rooftop garden is on the ninth floor of the seventeen-storey multifunctional building in downtown Montréal. Built in the 1960s, the hotel was constructed over train lines and an underground network of passageways linking the building to Montréal Central Station. As a multifunctional block that housed a huge exhibition hall, a shopping mall, a hotel and offices, it singlehandedly redefined central Montréal. The building is iconic in Montréal and its garden is one of the best-preserved modern gardens of this period in Québec (Figs. 12, 13 & 14).

Created from 1963 to 1967, the garden is the work of two landscape architects: Hideo Sasaki, of Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay Associates, and particularly Masao Kinoshita, who worked for him.³⁹ Measuring 10,100 m², it is encircled by the top three floors of the seventeen-floor building that are occupied by the hotel, and divided into four quadrants. The hotel rooms along the exterior perimeter look out over the garden. The garden occupies three of the four quadrants, connected by a path and a continuous waterway, around a central pavilion that houses the hotel lobby, a restaurant and an indoor pool, which is connected to an outdoor pool that occupies the fourth quadrant, separated from the other three. Water basins and planters made of textured concrete project above the path level, brimming with luxuriant mature vegetation and creating an environment protected from the hubbub of the city.



Fig. 12

Aerial view of the Hotel Bonaventure (c. 2018) showing the rooftop garden on the megastructure of Place Bonaventure building in Montréal, Québec.

©Hotel Bonaventure Montréal



Fig 13

The Hotel Bonaventure Garden on the top of the ninth floor of the building represents modern expression in landscape architecture through the use of simple geometric concrete planters and technical experimentations required to construct on the top of a building in a rough winter climate. Photo 2016–2018

©Hotel Bonaventure Montréal.



Fig 14

Winter view of the Hotel Bonaventure rooftop garden. Photo 2016–2018

©Hotel Bonaventure Montréal

The need for technical and design innovation stems in part from the climate. The challenge was met by the designers with the use of appropriate vegetation and construction techniques. Indigenous plants, including a wide variety of deciduous trees and conifers, were chosen to cut the winds and create natural surroundings. To accommodate very large plants, Sasaki and Kinoshita chose a substrate sufficient for the weight requirements and aligned it with the architectural structure of the concrete

slab. The structural loads were minutely calculated to ensure the slab could support the weight of the water, vegetation and snow. Due to the use of many new techniques for the project, the garden required close collaboration with architects, engineers and specialists from the National Research Council Division of Building Research.⁴⁰

The design is dominated by materials introduced and commonly used in the 1960s, such as exposed concrete, precast concrete planters, Japanese pebbles and a variety of stones used in the slabs, planters and low walls. The result perfectly embodies the know-how of that era. These materials appeared frequently in other public spaces listed in Table 1, including the Université de Montréal campus.

The goal was to create a garden that represents the essence of the Canadian Laurentian landscape, emphasized through the use of rocks, red pine and Douglas fir.⁴¹ The architects also wanted to give the visitors an experience of a 'very special sense of place' and 'a surprise element of arriving at the top of the building in such an unexpected environment', surrounded by greenery.⁴² Visitors are immediately entranced by the mature vegetation, the sound of the water and the calm emanating from the composition. The feeling of being completely away from the urban bustle is the principal asset this rooftop terrace offers, and one of its strongest design intentions. The entire building and garden eloquently express the terms of modernity in landscape design and post-war planning trends: the open collaboration among architects, engineers, designers and landscape architects; the blending of indoor and outdoor spaces; the importance of creating an experience of place and using simple plant compositions to lend a natural feel. The particular value of the design lies in the combination of new materials commonly used in architecture, such as exposed aggregate concrete and textured concrete, with the exploration of forms such as asymmetry and broken lines and the technical advances required by the climate and the construction of a garden at the top of a building. Winter itself was central to the development of the project: in fact, 'Winter Garden' is what it is called on the construction plans.

Time has been kind to the garden. The trees have grown so much that it is hard to believe the garden is so high off the ground. The original components, such as the waterways, waterfalls and planters, are still intact. Only the hedges and grasses were overhauled in 1996, along with the perimeter of the swimming pool. When this work was underway, painstaking inspections were conducted to check the condition of the membrane and the mechanical systems. The project engineers were amazed at the quality of the construction and determined that no restoration work was required.

Conclusion

With a few exceptions in garden and residential design, modern design entered Canada slowly after the war in the 1950s, picking up pace in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of the projects in the modernist stream of landscape architecture in Canada – and all those that have survived – were built in that period, a little later than in other countries, such as the United States and France, and a few years after the disciplines of architecture and visual arts laid claim to the 'modern' label in Canada.

As we have seen, interest in modern design started to grow at a time when the urban environment was evolving rapidly. The landscapes designed during this period in Canada, their different scales, typologies and settings, grew out of the economic resurgence sparked by the post-war period. The projects often reflect pragmatic needs related to population growth and social renewal (housing ensembles, recreation parks,

major infrastructure works, university campuses, and so forth) and showcase progress in technology and design, as exemplified by Expo'67 and the Hotel Bonaventure rooftop garden. Many of these projects were built under government initiatives or for the Centennial celebrations of Canada and individual cities. In some respects, all these projects represent 'modern' Canada and speak to an intention to demonstrate the country's modernity.

The two cases illustrate the importance of vegetation, used for the aesthetics of shape and colour but also for functionality and to identify with the Canadian landscape. In the two cases presented, plants enhance the experience, create balance with the architecture and evoke Canadian nature by using native plants. The Canadian landscape identity was a trademark for the landscape painters of the Group of Seven. Whether the designers were influenced by their landscapes, we cannot say for sure, but it is easy to imagine a connection with these artists from the 1920s, who claimed the status of 'authentic' Canadian art through their landscapes. The use of plants in art and landscape architecture to forge the Canadian identity would be another very rich research topic.

Ushered forward by new inventions, the projects in the modern period did not always produce happy outcomes. Another side of urban history in this period, articulated through the ideas of Jane Jacobs, reveals the damage caused by rolling out the modern city. The construction of expressways, campuses and megablocks like the Place Bonaventure building were predicated on the destruction of old neighbourhoods, like the one demolished for the construction of Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square in the 1960s. The involvement of landscape architects in these projects could be seen as paradoxical, because they perceived their actions as 'improving' these environments. In other words, it was a period of contrasts that left behind a double-edged heritage: scars caused by the demolitions and exemplary modern projects. In the face of such a divided heritage, it is not surprising that so little is made of the disappearance of some significant modern spaces.

In spite of this, there is a growing movement to raise awareness about the conservation of modern landscape architecture. Nowadays, knowledge of the movement is weak in Canada: there is no inventory and no assessment criteria have been established. These public spaces and gardens are rarely considered to be of heritage value. There are a few exceptions, however, such as Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square, designated in 1991, and the Queen's Park Complex in Toronto and the Garden of the Provinces and Territories in Ottawa, where the gardens themselves have enjoyed particular attention and restoration work. But there is more to be done. Modern sites with heritage potential urgently require identification, heritage assessment practises need to be established, managers must be made aware of the phenomenon, and adequate management tools have to be created. Recognition of the civic and social history and the architectural value of the landscapes designed during this period depends on it.

Our inventory reveals that there are few extant examples of Canadian modernist landscape architecture. As an inventory is more of a means than an end, it is never complete, and this one is no exception.⁴³ Other case studies could be added to the list and examined to determine their architectural and historical value. Each of these projects offers an illustration of design during an important period in the history of Canada, in the post-war socioeconomic context of a rapidly changing country. These spaces represent an important period when new practices, such as multidisciplinary, were coming to the fore in urban development, and that knowledge is critical as part of a broader collective movement that is still relevant today.

Table 1

Location	Name	Built	Designer	Type
Calgary, AB	Century Gardens	1975	J.H. Cook Architects & Engineers	Public place
Vancouver, BC	University of British Columbia: Plaza in front of the Thea Koerner House (Graduate Student Centre)	c.1961	Possibly Charles.Edward (Ned) Pratt and Peter Kattfa; Thompson, Berwick & Pratt, architects and Cornelia H. Oberlander, landscape architect; sculpture <i>Transcendence</i> (1961) by Jack Harman.	Campus
Vancouver, BC	University of British Columbia: Patio of Leon and Thea Koerner University Centre (formerly UBC Faculty Club)	c.1959 1964 c.1967	Possibly Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, landscape architect, c. 1959; John Lantzius & Associates, landscape architects 1964; Erickson Massey, architects, c. 1967	Campus
Vancouver, BC	Robson Square Provincial Government Courthouse Complex	1974- 1983	Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, landscape architect Arthur Erickson, architect Renovated in 2009	Public place
Vancouver, BC	Simon Fraser University Master plan, some public spaces	c.1968	Erickson/Massey, architects; John Lantzius & Associates and Don Vaughan landscape architects	Campus
Victoria, BC	Centennial Square	1962	Muirhead Justice & Webb, landscape architects (floorscape); John Craig Seaton Wilkinson (sculpture); The western section (Spirit Square) was renovated in the 2010s by Joe Daly Landscape Architecture and Pechet and Robb Studio Ltd.	Public place
Victoria, BC	University of Victoria master plan, some public spaces	c.1967	Lawrence Halprin, landscape architect with Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons, architects and RobertW. Siddall, architect Landscape concept: John Lantzius & associates and Justice & Webb, landscape architects	Campus
Victoria, BC	University of Victoria The Pyramid	c.1967	Lawrence Halprin and Don Vaughan, landscape architects	Campus
Victoria, BC	University of Victoria MacLaurin Building courtyard	1964- 1967	Alan James Hodgson, architects, 1964-67	Campus

Location	Name	Built	Designer	Type
Victoria, BC	University of Victoria Clearihue Building courtyard	c.1969	Don Vaughan and Kim Perry, landscape architects	Campus
Winnipeg, MB	University of Manitoba Master plan, some public spaces	1964	Denis R. Wilkinson, landscape architect	Campus
Winnipeg, MB	Roof Garden of the University Centre of the University of Manitoba	1969	Lombard North Ltd.	Campus
Winnipeg, MB	Memorial Park: Winnipeg Hydro Fountain	1962	Cameron R. J. Man, landscape architect	Park
Winnipeg, MB	Maitland Steinkopf Gardens	1967	Denis R. Wilkinson, landscape architect	Public place
Guelph, ON	University of Guelph master plan, some elements in public spaces	1964	Project Planning Associates (Macklin Hancock, landscape architect, director)	Campus
Ottawa, ON	Garden of the Provinces and Territories	1961- 1962	Don Graham, landscape architect Sculptures by Emil van der Meulen and Norman Slater. Restored 2002-2005	Public place
Peterborough, ON	University Court Trent University, Symons Campus	1968	Thompson, Berwick and Pratt, architects (Ronald J. Thom)	Campus
Toronto, ON	Queen's Park Complex	1964- 1971	Sasaki Strong and Associates, Ltd. (Hideo Sasaki, Masao Kinoshita, Richard Strong)	Public place (government buildings)
Toronto, ON	University Avenue	c.1950	<u>Howard Burlingham Dunnington-Grubb</u> and Jesse Vilhem Stensson. landscape architects. André Parmentier had previously conceived this boulevard with a central mall.	Public place
Toronto, ON	Toronto City Hall Nathan Phillips Square	1965	Viljo Revel, architect and Richard Strong, landscape architect, collaborator. Restored in 2007-2015 by Plant Architects with Perkins + Will, Shore Tilbe Irwin & Partners, architects	Public place (civic venue)
Toronto, ON	Waterfall Garden Sheraton Center Hotel	1972	James Austin Flyod, landscape architect Engineers : Ted Crossey, Roly Bergmann, Morden Yolles	Garden (corporate venue, courtyard)
Toronto, ON	Toronto Dominion Square	1963- 1967	Mies van der Rohe and Alfred Caldwell, architects	Public place (corporate venue)

Location	Name	Built	Designer	Type
Toronto, ON	McMurty Gardens of Justice	1966	Michael Hough, landscape architect	Public place
Charlottetown, PE	Confederation Centre of the Arts	1964	ARCOP, architects, with Norbert Schoenauer, architect-urban planner	Public place (cultural venue)
Montreal, QC	Roof gardens of Hôtel Bonaventure	1965- 1967	ARCOP, architects; Sasaki Dawson, DeMay, landscape architects; Masao Kinoshita, partner-in-charge and John Schreiber and Ron Williams, local landscape architects	Roof garden (corporate venue)
Montreal, QC	Expo 67 Master plan	1964- 1967	Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition and many teams of landscape architects	World fair
Montreal, QC	Université de Montréal Master plan, some public spaces	1963 ; 1968	Jean-Claude La Haye, urban planner	Campus
Quebec, QC	Place de la Francophonie	c. 1974	John Schreiber, architect	Park
Quebec, QC	Place du Grand Théâtre de Québec	1967- 1971	Victor Prus, architect	Public place (cultural venue)
Québec, Saint-André- d'Argenteuil	Monument aux héros du Long-Sault, Parc Carillon	1966	Jacques Folch-Ribas, architect and Jordi Bonet artist collaborator	Park

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Notes

1 Cecelia Paine, *Fifty Years of Landscape Architecture: The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, 1934–1984: Proceedings of the 1984 50th Jubilee Congress* (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1998).

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3 Mark Affum, 'Modernism in the Canadian Landscape: Modern Landscape Architecture in Canada, 1950–1970', Master's thesis (Guelph: University of Guelph, 2014); Susan Herrington, *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

4 For the Garden of Provinces and Territories and Nathan Phillips Square see: Susan Algie and James Ashby, *Conserving the Modern in Canada: Buildings, Ensembles, and Sites: 1945–2005*, Proceedings (Peterborough, Ontario: Trent University, 2005). For Queen's Park Complex: Michael McClelland, 'Designating Modern Cultural

Landscapes in Canada', in: Charles A. Birnbaum, Jane Brown Gillette and Nancy Slade (eds.), *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture I: Making Postwar Landscape Visible* (Washington, DC: Spacemaker Press, 2004), 88–95. For the Université de Montréal campus: Nicole Valois, 'L'architecture de paysage modern du campus de l'Université de Montréal', *Cahier de géographie du Québec* 56/158 (2015), 343–372 (English version at DOI: 10.7202/1014550ar).

5 In Canada, most landscape architecture programmes were founded in the 1960s and 1970s: University of Guelph and Toronto in 1964, University of British Columbia in 1979, Université de Montréal in 1968 and University of Manitoba in 1972.

6 Williams, *Landscape Architecture in Canada*, op. cit. (note 2), 392, 401; James R. Taylor and Cecelia Paine, 'Paysages Canadiens/Canadian Landscapes: 100 Years of Landscape Architecture in Canada, Expressed as Five Major Phases of Evolution', *Landscape Architecture* 91/9 (2001), 105–110; Affum, *Modernism in the Canadian Landscape*, op. cit. (note 3), 69.

7 Williams, *Landscape Architecture in Canada*, op. cit. (note 2), 401.

8 In reference to the title of Peter Walker and Melanie Simo's book, *Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

9 First based on Claude Bergeron's *Index des périodiques d'architecture canadienne, 1940–1980* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1986).

10 Highways, parkways, major parks and housing developments were excluded, as they respond primarily to planning intentions and not an exploration of style and materials (even though they express planning trends).

11 These works include: Williams, *Landscape Architecture in Canada*, op. cit. (note 2), 384, 393–394; Marc Treib (ed.), *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 50; Dorotheé Imbert, *The Modernist Garden in France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), xi.

12 See Claudine Déon and Nicole Valois, 'Whose Heritage? Determining Values of Modern Public Spaces in Canada', *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* 10/2 (2019), 189–206.

13 Dorotheé Imbert, 'The AIAJM: A Manifesto for Landscape Modernity', *Landscape Journal* 26/2 (2007), 219.

14 Affum, *Modernism in the Canadian Landscape*, op. cit. (note 3), 96. A prefiguration of modernism can also be seen in public projects between the wars, such as the clean lines of Frederick Todd's design for Beaver Lake in Mount Royal Park in Montréal and the Henri Teusher's Art Déco composition in the entryway garden of Montréal's Botanical Gardens.

15 *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* 27/8 (1950); *Canadian Architect* 4/6 (June 1959); *Canadian Architect* 4/7 (July 1959); *Canadian Architect* 4/8 (August 1959).

16 Garrett Eckbo, 'Design in the Landscape', *Canadian Architect* 4/6 (June 1959), 52–55.

17 Garrett Eckbo, 'What Do We Mean by Modern Landscape Architecture?', *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* 27/8 (1950), 269.

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- 18 J. Vilhelm Stensson, 'Approach to Planting', *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* 27/8 (1950), 266–267.
- 19 Howard Burlingham Dunington-Grubb, 'The Garden of Nineteen-Fifty', *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* 27/8 (1950), 247–248.
- 20 Helen M. Kippax, 'Ground Covers and Their Uses', *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* 27/8 (1950), 263.
- 21 J. Austin Floyd, 'Landscape for Winter', *Canadian Architect* 4/7 (1959), 54.
- 22 For a portrait of modern architecture in Canada: Elsa Lam and Graham Livesey, *Canadian Modern Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2019), 24–52.
- 23 For Centennial year projects and Expo'67 World Fair: Lam and Livesey, *Canadian Modern Architecture*, op. cit. (note 23), 24–52 and 'Centennial Projects', thecentennialproject.net, accessed 17 June 2020. For details about the participation of landscape architects in the Expo'67 World Fair: Nicole Valois and Jonathan Cha, 'L'architecture de paysage de l'Expo'67', *Journal de la société pour l'étude de l'architecture au Canada* 38/2 (2013), 55–70.
- 24 Architect Humphrey Carver was a key figure in housing projects, working for CMHC to establish a framework to guide suburban community development in a context of rapid growth. Humphrey Carver, *Compassionate Landscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).
- 25 Jean Philippe Warren, 'Petite typologie philologique du "moderne" au Québec (1850–1950): Moderne, modernisation, modernisme, modernité', *Recherches sociographiques* 463 (2005), 496.
- 26 Notable among the first rooftop gardens in America: Mellon Square in Pittsburgh, built in 1955 over a parking garage, was considered as the first modernist garden plaza; The Kaiser Centre rooftop garden in Oakland, built in 1960, was recognized as the first real rooftop garden. With water basins and mature trees, this one is similar to the Hotel Bonaventure rooftop garden. For both, see: 'The Cultural Landscape Foundation', tclf.org/landscapes/mellon-square? and tclf.org/landscapes/kaiser-center-roof-garden, accessed 17 June 2020.
- 27 Sasaki Associates, Inc., sasaki.com/practice/awards/, accessed 20 October 2020.
- 28 Landscape architect Dennis Wilkenson designed a master plan for the University of Manitoba, John Lantzius for Simon Fraser University, Muirhead & Justice and John Lantzius for the University of Victoria, Jean-Claude La Haye for the Université de Montréal and Project Planning Associates for the University of Guelph.
- 29 Jane Turner and Don Lovell, *The Changing Face of University of Victoria Campus Lands* (Victoria: University of Victoria Archives, 1999).
- 30 Martin Segger, *The Emergence of Architectural Modernism II: UVic and the Victoria Regional Aesthetic in the Late 1950s and 60s* (Victoria: University of Victoria Art Collections), 14.
- 31 John Lantzius, *Landscape Concept: University of Victoria* (University of Victoria, 1968), 1.
- 32 Interview with Clive Justice, July 2013 in Vancouver.
- 33 Interview with Don Lovell, July 2013 in Victoria.

34 Interview with Don Vaughan, July 2013 in Victoria.

35 The extent of Halprin's involvement is unclear. According to Don Vaughan, he received sketches from Halprin and had to draw them in detail before making up the plans and specifications. This was the case for the Pyramid, copied to the 1966 master plan and not signed. This drawing is still the most accurate plan for the Pyramid. Interview with Don Vaughan, op. cit. (note 34).

36 Don Vaughan, e-mail to the author, dated 22 May 2013.

37 'The Cultural Landscape Foundation', tclf.org/pioneer/m-paul-friedberg.

38 Wooden railway ties are a material landscape architect James Rose had a strong predilection for. For an analysis of the work of James Rose, see Dean Cardasis, *James Rose: A Voice Offstage* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2017), 120.

39 The credit for the design is assigned differently by various sources. It seems as though Kinoshita served as the senior designer, supported by John Shreiber and Ron Williams, who served as consultants in Montréal. The credit is also often given to the architects in charge of the building: Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold and Sise.

40 James A. Villoria, *Place Bonaventure: Process, Form, and Interpretation*, PhD dissertation (Montréal: Concordia University, 1999), 31.

41 A large part of eastern Canada is formed of bedrock from the pre-Cambrian era, eroded during the last ice age. This geological movement created a mountainous land with rounded peaks, covered with conifers, deciduous trees and rocky outcroppings known as Canadian or Laurentian Shield.

42 Raymond T. Affleck, unpublished letter to Jane Pugh, Public Relations, Hotel Bonaventure, 23 January 1970, cited by Villoria, *Place Bonaventure*, op. cit. (note 40), 28–29.

43 M. Elen Deming and Simon Swaffield, *Landscape Architectural Research: Inquiry, Strategy, Design* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2011).