The Obscured Legacy of Canada’s First Landscape Architect: Frederick G. Todd

Introduction
For four years, Frederick G. Todd (1876-1948) worked, learned and was profoundly influenced by the Olmsted Brothers. The firm was the seminal landscape architecture and town planning practice of the period, sustained by the pioneering design principles of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and his two sons, John Charles and Frederick Law Jr. It was there that Todd studied and practised their concepts of city building, that included ambitious plans for parks, park systems, urban design and suburban development. The firm not only did work in the United States but also in Canada, where Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. designed and oversaw the development of Montreal’s iconic Mount Royal Park. In 1900, when Todd was 24 he left the firm and the United States to establish the first landscape architecture and town planning office in Canada. Throughout his long career Todd was deeply influenced by the Olmsted’s ideas. However, given the variety, volume and visibility of his projects, Todd’s work arguably had more direct impact on Canadian city development than that of his mentors.

Perhaps surprisingly, more Todd projects were completed than those undertaken by the Olmsted firm in Canada. Todd left an enduring mark on a broad sweep of communities. Many of his projects survive today as treasured open spaces, sought-after residential enclaves, and distinctive urban places. He gained influence not only through his Olmsted-inspired designs but also from his extensive writings, and professional service. As the earliest and one of the most successful Canadian practitioners, he modelled how landscape architects and town planners can lead in city building and thus urban reform. This analysis of Todd’s impressive career suggests, that in Canada, in spite of the significance of his contributions, he remains overshadowed by the legacy of the Olmsteds.

Learning the Craft
Frederick Gage Todd (see Figure One) began his preparation for the field of landscape architecture at the Massachusetts Agricultural College at Amherst in 1893. After an initial two-year course of study, he took a
graduate student residency which he completed in 1897\(^1\). In the Massachusetts Agricultural College’s 1897 prospectus a course in engineering notes that it is not intended to qualify students as civil engineers but, “it is believed that a good foundation is laid for the future study of that science, and that a working knowledge of the branches of the subject essential to the landscape architect is acquired by the student”.\(^2\)

Todd worked for the Olmsted practice from 1896 through 1900, meaning he was employed while completing studies at the Agricultural College, as a Resident Graduate.\(^3\) This type of part-time study was also done by another apprentice, the Canadian, Rickson Outhet, while employed at the Olmsted firm\(^4\). Todd was known as a ‘plants man’ by the Olmsted\(^5\) but it is clear that his responsibilities were greater than that. By the end of his four years with the firm he was assigned by the Olmsteds to oversee the continuing work on Montreal’s Mount Royal Park\(^6\) – a project originally conceived in 1876 by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.\(^7\), the same year that Todd was born. It is important to note that a generation later, when Todd joined the firm as a 20-year-old, the senior Olmsted’s involvement with the Firm was limited given his deteriorating health. However, the Olmsted’s approach to landscape architecture and town planning was well-honed by this time and as a consequence it was the Olmsted brothers who had the most direct influence on Todd.

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\(^1\) Massachusetts Agricultural College *Annual Reports* 1893 through 1897, volumes 31 through 35 contain class lists with Todd enrolled. And the Massachusetts Agricultural College, *Aggie Life* volumes’ “College Notes” detail Todd’s active student life.

\(^2\) Massachusetts Agricultural College, 1897. Amherst, Massachusetts: Press of Carpenter & Morehouse, p. 17

\(^3\) Todd listed in *A General Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, 1867-1897*. Amherst, MA: Press of Carpenter and Morehouse. 1897. In the class of 1895 for the School of Agriculture, one finds, “Todd, Frederick G. Todd. Landscape Gardener, Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot. Resides 5 Davis Ave., Brookline.” (p.69). And two listings of Todd as ‘Resident Graduate’ are found in the 1896-97 *Annual Reports* (Vol 33, p.52) and 1897-98 (Vol. 34, p.35).


\(^5\) E.g., Olmsted Associates Records, Microfilm Series. Washington, DC. Library of Congress (Series B 22-3. 1896-1914 & 1931. Job #185, G.T. Fulford. “We beg to inform you that Mr. Frederick G. Todd, former a planting assistant in our office, has left us and set up an office for himself in Montreal…” (January 27th, 1900).


Todd’s permanent move to Montreal may seem curious for an American who could have stayed with a well-established and leading North American landscape architecture and town planning practice. It may have been love that attracted him to Montreal. In 1901 he married Canadian, Beatrice Evelyn Pinkerton. Alternatively, it might have been a pragmatic business decision with Todd seeing significant opportunity in the then-biggest metropolitan centre in Canada. At the time Montreal was equivalent in size to such U.S. metropolises as New Orleans, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Washington, DC. Furthermore, Montreal was a growing market during the early 1900’s with the construction of new banks, corporate headquarters, public facilities and institutions. In addition, it was conveniently linked by train to emerging urban centres in Western Canada, and established communities in Eastern Canada and along the American eastern seaboard.

The Lovell Montreal City Directory for 1900-01 shows that Todd was the first practitioner to be listed as a Landscape Architect in Montreal. The other Montreal-based Olmsted-connected designer was Canadian, Rickson Outhet, who is listed in the 1898-99 through 1900-01 Directories, self-identifies as an Architect. During this period, both Todd and Outhet kept in contact with the Olmsted’s even though they had both left the firm. The Olmsted’s continued an association with Montreal’s influential moneyed classes and the city’s municipal government for more than two decades. Taking care of Olmsted business as a local overseer would have been a useful professional arrangement for Todd but it appears he wanted his autonomy.

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8 Married (The (Montreal) Gazette, December 12, 1901 p. 3). Beatrice Evelyn Pinkerton (father Robert E. Pinkerton) married Todd December 11, 1901.
14 Todd was noted in many Montreal-based Olmsted jobs such as Kemp, Ross, Angus (as per Olmsted Associates Records, Microfilm Series. Washington, DC. Library of Congress (Series B). Also see, N. Pollock-Ellwand, ‘The Olmsted Firm in Canada: A Correction of the Record’. Planning Perspectives, 21 (July 2006): 277-310.
Todd quickly secured his own clients and within his first 10 years of practice won key projects across Canada and Newfoundland. They included designing the grounds that would surround the new provincial legislative buildings in Regina and Winnipeg; major urban parks for Quebec City, Winnipeg and St John’s, Newfoundland; as well as community development in Vancouver, and for the suburban Montreal communities of Pointe Claire and the Town of Mount Royal. Todd also prepared a master plan for Canada’s capital, Ottawa, as well as for the emerging communities of Edmonton and nearby Strathcona, in the western province of Alberta.

Todd’s legacy has been muted – his grave unmarked in his wife’s family plot located in Montreal’s Mount Royal Cemetery. Many of the official records linked to his work for the City of Montreal were lost in a fire that engulfed Montreal City Hall in the winter of 1922, and an apparent loss of personal papers that could have been sourced from the family. An editorial written in The Municipal Review upon his death observed,

“Frederick Todd was a very modest man; and it is only since his death that people are beginning to learn what he has done for the country of his adoption.”

This modesty, and a sparse archival record may have resulted in a certain underplaying of Todd’s contribution to Canadian landscape development – a contribution which in fact is larger and more significant than any other practitioner working in Canada at that time, including the Olmsteds.

Todd was also a dominant force among Canadian practitioners because of the way he modelled the fledgling professions of landscape architecture and town planning. Early in his career, he defined the parameters of the disciplines, as his practice’s promotional material from 1900 illustrates:

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15 Newfoundland did not join Canadian Confederation until March 31, 1949.

16 P. Jacobs, ‘Frederick G. Todd and the Creation of Canada’s Urban Landscape’. APT, 15, no. 4, 1983

17 City Hall Prey to Fire Early this Morning (The (Montreal) Gazette, March 4, 1922, p 1).

18 As per a conversation, October, 2012, with Vincent Asselin, President and Fellow, Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (2016-2018) October, 2012

“My business is the supplying of advice with respect to the arrangement of land for use and the accompanying landscape for pleasure, to the owners of country and suburban estates, park commissions, hotel proprietors and persons or corporations desiring to layout suburban neighbourhoods or summer resorts. I consult with owners, architects, engineers and gardeners respecting the pacing of buildings, the laying out of roads, the grading of surfaces, the treatment of existing woods and shrubbery and the placing and arrangement of new plantations.”  

His professional advocacy came through many avenues including a busy practice; writings; participating in numerous community organizations; and, involvement in early professional bodies. He eventually became a Fellow of three different national organizations including the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the Institute of Landscape Architects of Great Britain. In addition, he was invested into the Town Planning Institute of Canada with the same honour. Later in his career, from age 64 until his final illness, he served as a member of the Montreal City Council (1940 to 1948) representing the Civic Improvement League. As a city councillor he had the broadest influence on building the better city he helped design, advocate for, and imagine.

It is important to note, like the Olmsted firm, a significant proportion of Todd’s clients were private estate owners. For the most part they were wealthy and influential people in both Canada and the United States. Here we see the confluence of public and private interests in the practices of

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20 Todd’s 1900 “Circular as to the Professional Methods and Charges” as found in V. Asselin. Frederick G. Todd architecte paysagiste: une pratique de l’aménagement ancrée dans son époque, 1900-1948, Montréal, Faculté de l’Aménagement, Université de Montréal, 1995 (Annex C).
21 In Montreal he variously served as the Director of Parks and Playgrounds Association and Community Garden League; Montreal City Improvement League, Vice President; President, Quebec Horticultural Federation; and a member of the Montreal Town Planning Commission, Montreal Art Association, Arts Club, Rotary Club of Montreal; and the Engineer’s Club and Municipal Services Bureau (see, Peter Jacobs. Historica. The Canadian Encyclopedia. “Todd, Frederick Gage”.
23 City Councillor F.G. Todd Dies in 72nd Year. (The Montreal Daily Star, February 16, 1948. (p. 15)).
24 Ibid. Todd represented the Civic Improvement League to the City Council, from the inception of that 99-man council.
early design professionals based in Montreal including Todd, the Olmsteds\textsuperscript{25}, Rickson Outhet\textsuperscript{26} and the architectural firm, the Maxwell Brothers\textsuperscript{27}. By association therefore, both the Olmsteds and Todd became familiar with people of great influence and power in the cities where they designed significant public landscapes\textsuperscript{28}.

The impact on the fabric of the city of these private commissions was not significant. However, the business introductions that undoubtedly were made, and the cachet these residential clients brought to separate firms would have been useful. Consider a Todd client of many years, the prosperous and well-connected Senator George Taylor Fulford and later his son, George Taylor Fulford Jr., both of Brockville, Ontario. The Fulford family began its association with the Olmsteds in 1896, and Todd assisted with work on the family’s property which overlooks the St Lawrence River, in 1900, 1914 and later in 1931\textsuperscript{29}. Among the family’s friends was William Lyon Mackenzie King\textsuperscript{30}. In 1931 King visited the family mansion in Brockville and over breakfast in the sunroom he admired the view. King later confided in his diary that the mansion’s garden which would have been a combined

\textsuperscript{28} The Olmsted private estate designs included much of Montreal’s elite. e.g., Hugh Andrew Allan, Stanley St. 1895; Sir Edward Clouston, Peel St. 1894 and Bois-Briant (with Olmsted 1899 and Todd 1910)
Clouston’s large country house near Senneville, PQ; H.V. Meredith, Pine Ave.; Hartland MacDonald, Dorval, PQ. (as per Olmsted Associates Records, Microfilm Series. Washington, DC. Library of Congress (Series B)). The Canadian-based practices of Todd and Outhet also took on numerous projects e.g., Todd concentrated on many Maxwell-designed houses such as the Hosmer House on Drummond St. (1905); L.J. Forget, Senneville (1908); Vincent Meredith (General Manager and later President and Chairman of Bank of Montreal); and J.K.L. Ross House on Peel St. (1909); as well as the 1906 Mount Royal Park Lookout by Maxwell, Marchand and Haskell. Rickson Outhet worked with the Maxwell’s on the D. McNicholl residence on Côte-Saint-Antoine Road (1905); E.T. Galt on Simpson Street (1909); Percy Cowans, Ontario Avenue (which is now Ave. du Musée), 1910; and the Shirred house, Ontario Avenue (1911). (N. Pollock-Ellwand, ‘The Olmsted Firm in Canada: A Correction of the Record’. Planning Perspectives, 21 (July 2006): Table 1- pp. 279-284).
design by the Olmsteds and Todd, was “as beautiful as it could possibly be.”

It was landscape architecture at a city scale however, where Todd had most impact with his Olmsted-inspired perspective on park, urban and community design. As The Municipal Review of Canada noted in 1938,

“…this gifted pupil of the famous American town-planner, F.L. Olmstead [sic] has gone far in his chosen profession and it would not be too much to say that through his park and town-planning developments in many urban centres, no man has done more than Frederick Todd to implant amongst the people of Canada a realization of the practical values of planned beautification.”

This article rather effusively lauds Todd’s legacy, citing the diverse social, health and economic benefits of his landscape and town planning work. It concludes that Canadians are indebted to Todd, “…because of the large part he played in the aesthetic development of the country…”

When tracing the lineage of any designer it is clear that many influences come to bear – either subconsciously or overtly. In Todd’s prodigious body of work, 19th and 20th century thinking on urban reform is reflected in such projects as his playgrounds, open space systems, housing developments and city spaces. Given the intellectual ferment of the period it would be a mistake to identify a single source for his design and planning ideas. However, clearly the Olmsteds had a profound effect on Todd during his years as a student and also as a novice practitioner in their influential firm.

It is interesting to contemplate the popular assumption that the Olmsteds, the premiere landscape architectural firm in North America, would inevitably have had the greatest influence on landscape architecture and town planning in Canada. Admittedly, influence cannot be measured purely in the number of completed projects. The Olmsted firm and Todd undertook about the same number of projects in Canada. As Table One

33 Ibid., p.13
indicates Todd undertook 106 commissions\textsuperscript{34}, and the Olmsted\textsuperscript{95}. In addition, the split between private residential (1/3) and public realm (2/3) was similar.

But there were some major differences, that would suggest the disciple in some ways eclipsed his masters. Todd’s practice was more modest than the Olmsted firm, but in Canadian communities his impact was profound. More of Todd’s public realm projects were either fully or partially realized. Also his projects were more widely distributed across more communities in Canada and Newfoundland. Todd’s public realm projects span the range of the profession including urban parks, city planning and community design. These types of landscapes establish the infrastructure of a city: its open spaces; its street patterns; its land uses; and its residential enclaves. It is through these realized projects that Todd fundamentally influenced the underlying urban fabric of many cities across Canada—many more than the Olmsteds.

\textbf{Lungs of the City- Urban Parks}\textsuperscript{36}

In 1874, Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. began creating the exceptional Mount Royal Park in Montreal\textsuperscript{37}. He saw in the project the opportunity of combining the sublime natural setting of the city’s mountain with the beautiful lines of his landscape design, all in close proximity to a dense urban population\textsuperscript{38}. In his 1881 report on Mount Royal, Olmsted wrote:

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\textsuperscript{35} N. Pollock-Ellwand, ‘The Olmsted Firm in Canada: A Correction of the Record’. Planning Perspectives, 21 (July 2006): Table 1- pp. 279-284. See, Table 1 and Figures 1-3.

\textsuperscript{36} Olmsted speaks of the various benefits of urban parks that include benefits to the health of the city population, in the seminal address to the American Social Science Association, “A Consideration of the Justifying Value of a Public Park” (published in, Journal of Social Science. 12, December, 1880: pp. 147-164).


“The site and the general purpose seemed to me to offer the best opportunity for the exercise of original judgment and of refined and delicate taste applied to novel conditions that had ever been presented to my profession.”

While enormously significant this was the only major park development the firm undertook in Canada. It was to this landscape that Todd came; then an employee of the Olmsted firm, to oversee ongoing work in the Park. It was through the Olmsted that he was initiated into the Canadian design and planning scene, where he evidently saw opportunity. The risk of leaving the security of the largest landscape architecture and planning practice in North America proved worthwhile as Todd went on to dominate the Canadian professions. Over several decades his work included Battlefield Park in Quebec City (1909-1912), Winnipeg’s Assiniboine Park (1904-1906), Bowring Park in St. John’s, Newfoundland (1912-1914), St. Helen’s Island Park in Montreal (1929-1938), various city parks in the southwest Ontario cities such as present-day Cambridge and Stratford (1904-1905), and the legislative grounds in Regina and Edmonton (1907-1910). This body of work represents more realized urban park projects, situated more broadly across Canada than the Olmsteds.

To these numerous park designs, Todd brought his training honed by the leaders in the field during his four years at the Olmsted firm. Both his built projects and written work reflect shared design principles with the Olmsteds that include a commitment to preserving a sense of place and a preference for the naturalistic; creating dynamic and intentional sequences of experiences as one moves through the landscape; and, believing in the power of scenery to uplift and inspire.

In 1905, five years into his practice in Canada, Todd delivered an address to the American Society of Municipal Improvements in which his

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42 It was the Director of the School of Architecture, at McGill University, John Bland who wrote in 1949 (“A Great Landscape Architect”. *The Municipal Review of Canada*. 45 (4):12) about the power of Olmsted Sr.’s designs as it was manifest in Montreal’s Mount Royal Park. “All who know this park well, can testify to the genius of Olmsted. Superficially it may seem that his task was easy, there being nothing to it. The ground was so happily formed that it was only necessary to buy some benches and a few carloads of crushed stone for the roads....”
presentation, “Character in Park Design”, demonstrated a dedication to Olmstedian design principles in the creation of urban parks. Here Todd defined a naturalistic design approach as being one where “everything [is] done in such a way that one would suppose that nature herself was responsible.” This approach embodies what Olmsted called “the genius of the place” and Todd, ‘Individual Character’ of a site. Todd advocates striving for a specific sense of place, “whose expression is varied and yet harmonious”. It is this character that will be the dominant determinant in a design where everything is “subordinated to it, and made to accentuate it, making it more impressive and pleasing”; while bringing, “sound judgment to bear”.

It is also in this seminal paper that Todd reveals his deep admiration for Olmsted Sr. seeing Central Park as, “the finest, city park in America”. He refers to the mastery of design shown in Senior’s Mount Royal Park work with its well-planned road system that takes best advantage of the views without intruding on the beauty of the landscape. This Picturesque approach characterizes parklands laid out by the Olmsted firm over numerous projects and diverse geographies in the United States, in its over one hundred years of practice. In spite of this common design palette, every Olmsted landscape was distinct because the firm was focused on the unique sense of place for each property. The layouts are seemingly naturally occurring although great skill and effort was used to give this effect. The topographic manipulations enhanced the natural features of a site yet never seemed imposed. These site-specific design principles also marked Todd’s body of park work in Canada.

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47 Ibid.
48 Ibid. “; now they [the roads] were laid out by the late Mr. Olmsted to take advantage of every view and finally culminate in that grand and impressive view to be had from the look-out,” p.321
In the same American Society of Municipal Improvements address, demonstrating his guiding park design principles, Todd used his own project examples, citing his work on two riverside parks – one in Stratford, Ontario, and the other in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In the speech, his emphasis on the visual is apparent as he talks about the importance of water and its interplay with vegetation in terms of framing vistas and creating reflections.

His mastery of the visual is seen with the contrasts Todd sought in Winnipeg’s Assiniboine Park design. Here he accentuates the open prairie of this site against the formal entry courtyard to the Park. The terrain is not overly modified and only a few trees are used thus affording longer views from the courtyard. He gives these examples to illustrate the importance of working harmoniously with nature to produce landscapes that are, “interesting for their own sake and not because they are similar to some others,”49.

Todd’s design themes had longevity as his 1920’s pamphlet on Esthetic Forestry" reveals. Todd wrote about the unique aspects of individual landscape character. In the publication’s Introduction he talks about forested landscapes, “…for almost every wood possesses a separate character of its own, and, more- a single tract of woodland may include several different woods, each with its own distinct character.”51 This sense of place was sought in all Todd’s park designs no matter how diverse the landscape context -- from the open prairie setting of Assiniboine Park in Winnipeg, Manitoba52, to the densely forested setting of Bowring Park, in St. John’s Newfoundland53.

49 Ibid., p.322
51 Ibid. p.5.
It becomes apparent moving through these landscapes, on foot or in a vehicle, that one’s visual experience has been consciously planned. Attention to road layout was a constant consideration of Olmsted Sr. from his first design for carriageways in New York’s Central Park, to his final project at Biltmore Estate where he meticulously designed view lines along entry driveways. Todd also believed the experience of the landscape along routes of movement were highly important, writing in the same 1920’s pamphlet on Esthetic Forestry, “… On general principles the drives should be laid out so as to make a circuit of the property in such a manner that they will never be conspicuously in sight one from the other.”

Todd expressed these park design principles eloquently but it was not until nearly a decade after his arrival in Canada that he got his first major urban park commission and a chance to see this significant landscape fully built out, employing many of the urban design principles first learned from the Olmsteds. His great opportunity was the National Battlefields Park (parc des Champs-de-Bataille) on the Plains of Abraham, Quebec City. It was the scene in 1759 of the final battle between the French and the British for possession of the St Lawrence River Valley and ultimately Canada. The battle loomed large in the mythologies of French and English Canada and was a challenging site both culturally and topographically. Todd’s planning needed, “…to insure the restoration and permanent preservation of its impressive grandeur and historic interest and at the same time make it available for public use and enjoyment.”

Olmstedian design influences are seen in the broad range of treatments to this historic landscape, ranging from formally laid out spaces such as the

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54 In a letter to George Vanderbilt, in late 1894, Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. wrote of the intended visual effect as one travelled the entry roads to the vast estate in carriages: “...while overlooking the ground and with reference to various circumstances of the background, to distant prospects and to all circumstances of the topography, which will affect the scenery as it will be ultimately presented to those passing on the road in a carriage.” Olmsted Associate Records (A19:815, OAR/LC) cited in, D. Schuyler and G. Kaliss (eds.). Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. 2015, p. 842.


56 Todd did see this as an opportunity but also a great responsibility writing to the Chairman of the National Battlefields Commission and Mayor of Quebec City, Sir George Garneau, in 1909, “no other place can we find such grandeur of proportion, such sublime views combined with such a wealth of historical associations,” (F.G. Todd. Quebec Battlefields Park Report. The National Battlefields Commission. Quebec, PQ. November 15, 1909- pp.1-2) Library and Archives Canada. Ref# MG 30E35, COP.CA.NB.1

57 Ibid., p.1
plazas around monuments to the wilder escarpments planted with native materials. As with Olmsted Sr.’s Central and Prospect Parks in the New York area, formal ceremonial entrances were created. Todd earlier lamented that, “This matter of a proper entrance to a public park is not given the attention in this country that it should”\(^58\). Todd wrote in the Park’s Summary Description in 1912 that the entrances, “...should be of harmonious design and of such proportions and construction as will lend dignity to the park itself.”\(^59\) Once entered, the park’s walks and drives – much in the Olmsted style - serve as the infrastructure upon which the landscape unfolds for the visitor in a serial manner. Todd revealed that he made great efforts,

“...to place them so that they do not break the pleasing continuity of the park, and disfigure it as little as possible; to make them conform as far as practicable to the natural contour of the ground, so that there will be no bad grades or disfiguring cuts and fills; and to locate them in such a way that a person is brought by the most pleasing and convenient route to the finest viewpoints, and to the places of greatest historical interest.”\(^60\)

At these entry points and along the boundaries of this Quebec City park Todd, unlike Olmsted Sr. who clearly delineated the edges of Central and Prospect Parks, did not see the Plains of Abraham as an isolated urban oasis.\(^61\) Rather they became a key landscape that knit into the fabric of a city and by doing so enhanced the quality of adjacent streets and neighbourhoods. Above all, the Plains of Abraham represents a masterful manipulation of the ground plain. Todd acknowledged the challenge with the Battlefield project was that the topographical and natural elements of the landscape could not be obscured. To do this he identified five parts to the site, each with distinctive natural qualities and cultural associations\(^62\). Along the way the unfolding journey through the Quebec Battlefields parklands would be punctuated in the tradition of all Olmsted’s great parks with architectural interventions such as shelters, monuments and terraces.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., p. 6
\(^{59}\) Ibid.
\(^{60}\) Ibid., p.9.
\(^{61}\) As seen in P. Jacobs, ‘Frederick G. Todd and the Creation of Canada’s Urban Landscape’. APT, 15, no. 4, 1983, p.28. Also noting in that article that Todd did the same kind of knitting of park edges with the Wascana Park plan in 1907 for Saskatchewan’s new parliamentary buildings in Regina.
\(^{62}\) F.G. Todd. Quebec Battlefields Park Report. The National Battlefields Commission. Quebec, PQ. November 15, 1909- pp.1-2. (Library and Archives Canada. Ref# MG 30E35, COP.CA.NB.1.) With the, “...desire to retain the features of the topography as historically correct as possible.” (p.16)
that were designed in a naturalistic manner. Todd felt that this stylistic expression harmonized best with the environment through the structures’ materials and massing.

Park design remained a major preoccupation of Todd throughout his career. Twenty years later in the middle of the Depression, he undertook the design of Montreal’s St. Helen’s Island Park (1931-1937). Unlike the Plains of Abraham however, these parklands have been significantly altered as the site of Canada’s 1967 World’s Fair, Expo 67, and subsequent recreational projects located in that area of Montreal. The impact of Todd’s work and the social agenda its construction served, for hundreds of Depression-ravaged Montreal citizens, is found in historical records and the remaining vestiges of that landscape along Montreal’s much transformed St. Lawrence River waterfront. The impact of the St. Helen’s Island Park site also resides in the fact that this area is still reserved for recreational use in the City (see Figure Two).

The story of St. Helen’s development is a testament to a designer at his peak, taking on a very complex natural and cultural landscape, on a strategically located urban site. Todd was charged with creating new recreational facilities on land that had been designated as a park since 1874. Revival of interest in this site came about in the 1930’s when the City was planning the construction of a new link across the St. Lawrence, the Jacques Cartier Bridge, which rose above the site. Todd’s work included the creation of a bathing beach; restoring historic buildings, which dated from the time of Champlain; and, producing new buildings which included a lookout tower, bath house and sports pavilion. This Montreal park site was an ambitious plan that tripled in size with landfill from the bridge construction.

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64 E.g., St Helen’s Lagoon Nears Completion, (The (Montreal) Gazette, May 6, 1937 p 15). “The work which has been carried out by relief labor in accordance with plans prepared by Frederick G. Todd was described...as an excellent illustration...of utilizing man’s labor in public works."
65 Quebec Hopes For Ottawa Aid To Continue Relief Work in 1937, (The (Montreal) Gazette, Jan 4, 1937 p 13). “Work of St Helen’s Island will continue during the winter months, employing some 400 men....”
For the citizens of Montreal the Park was seen by Todd, as “the very front door of the city – a constant mark of welcome to those who come in ships along the mighty St. Lawrence and to those who come by land via the magnificent Jacques Cartier Bridge.”68 This urban front door also provided something that Todd recognized as sorely lacking in downtown Montreal at the time,

“a great park, playground and bathing beach within a short distance of the most densely populated area of Montreal69, an area where the inhabitants are very limited in their resources to obtain outdoor pleasures. This alone will pay large social dividends on every dollar expended.” 70

This theme of playground and open space provision in the city repeats throughout Todd’s career dating from his earliest city plans for Ottawa in 1903, to his involvement decades later with Montreal’s Parks and Playground Association.71 In his report for the Ottawa plan he wrote, “…and upon the foundation laid in youth, for future health and strength, depends to a great extent the future of the nation.” 72

This was also a project with a profoundly important social agenda73, employing thousands of out-of-work citizens through the Depression; and upon completion providing much needed recreational space for the

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69 “St. Helen’s Island Park”. McGill News, Summer 1938. Todd noting in this report that the Park was within walking distance of 100,000 people, many of which were underprivileged and in great need of such rest and recreation that such lands would present.
73 St. Helen’s Island Park and the engagement of unemployed people on that project is described by Todd, “as the greatest feature of the relief at present being carried out...” (St. Helen’s Island Work is Outlined. The Gazette, Montreal, March 2nd, 1938, p.17)
urban population of Montreal\textsuperscript{74}. By 1936 a significant relief workforce had been assembled. “...over a thousand men were on the job, building roads, repairing the fortifications, constructing a bathing pool and beach, building a bath-house and observation tower and other work.”\textsuperscript{75} For the socially-minded Todd this work gave him great satisfaction. He stated, “In thirty-eight years of experience in planning parks, the writer never had the pleasure of designing and supervising quite such a soul-satisfying work as the St. Helen’s Island Park project.”\textsuperscript{76} Like Olmsted, during the construction of Central Park, Todd was providing work to men who were “‘finding’ themselves again through honest toil.”\textsuperscript{77}

In the final evaluation of Todd’s urban park design work it is the ongoing social benefits created by these public open spaces that still resonate. These open spaces, now well-embedded within the urban fabric of many Canadian cities—still provide needed relief from dense urban existence. Although the language Todd used back in 1905 is dated, the value of these open spaces are undeniable and the Olmstedian legacy clear:

“People whose lives are lived among the bustle and strife of a large city require some place where they can rest after the day’s exertion; mothers with little ones, whose life in the narrow tenements is ill-suited to fit them for life’s battle; to all these what a boon are the public parks, where the air at least is more pure than on the street, and the children can romp on the grass or roam through the woods.” \textsuperscript{78}

It is important to note that the genius of Todd is not centred in the mindless translation of Olmsted principles\textsuperscript{79} to his Canadian projects. Rather it is a reading, like the Olmsteds, of the unique aspects of a particular landscape. It is in the treatment of these site specifics that Todd’s independence of thought is manifest showing that he was not slavishly imitating the Olmsteds.

\textsuperscript{74} Editorial showing that this was not an isolated case with the description of Todd’s depression era work for the industrial community of Valleyfield and its Sauvé Park. (“Utilizing Relief Funds for Parks and Playgrounds. Admirable Example in Small Quebec Industrial Community”. The Municipal Review of Canada. November, 1937. Vol.33, No.10, pp.21-22)

\textsuperscript{75} F.G. Todd. “St. Helen’s Island Park”. McGill News, Summer 1938. p.3

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.


This was a natural outcome from a prodigious practitioner who saw the separate potential of each urban park he designed. This was not a modernistic universal approach of design but instead, unique place-specific creations.

**A Comprehensive Scheme- City Planning**

The Olmsted Associates Records show that more than park design enquiries were being made from Canada to the Boston-based firm. Ambitious Canadian municipalities wanting the top North American urban planners to do their city plans were also making enquiries. Of those Olmsted jobs, one was delivered to a remote industrial town in northern Quebec, Shawinigan Falls; and the other two to Montreal and Toronto respectively, with Olmsted Jr’s involvement. However, in both cases of the larger metropolitan centres the plans were never realized.

Unlike the Olmsted’s city planning work in Canada, Todd’s rather modest report to the Ottawa Improvement Commission continues to resonate even though this succinct 39-page report was not implemented. It became the touchstone for all subsequent planning exercises in Canada’s national capital region. Todd’s legacy is enshrined in features that make the modern capital region distinctive. These include the city-wide park and parkway system; the protection of major natural zones in close vicinity to the urban centre; and, a Picturesque design approach for the central Parliamentary Precinct. These elements were part of the substance of later planning efforts: from Holt and Bennett (1915); through Jacques

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82 The correspondence from the Olmsted Associates Records, Microfilm Series. Washington, DC. Library of Congress, Series B280, Job #5000, shows that Todd approached the Olmsteds to consider partnering on a future city-wide planning process... “it is the feeling of the Commission [Montreal Metropolitan Park Commission] that they should have a Landscape Architect of reputation outside of Montreal who would associate with a local Landscape Architect,” (Todd to F.L. Olmsted Jr., August 22, 1910, p.1)

83 Ibid. Job No. 5680.


Gréber’s influential 1950 plan for Ottawa’s Federal District⁸⁶; to the present day 50-year plan for the capital region⁸⁷.

As with Todd’s public park design, the planning he proposed for the capital region was informed by the naturalistic. In his seminal report on Ottawa’s planning, Todd wrote,

“... that crowded population, if they live in health and happiness, must have space for the enjoyment of that peaceful beauty of nature which, because it is opposite of all that is sordid and artificial in our city life, is so wonderfully refreshing to the tired souls of towns-people.” ⁸⁸

From these natural assets come the concomitant power of the view and the sense of place he also sought in his park design work. Therefore, it is not unexpected that the provision of parks and parkways run central to Todd’s scheme for Ottawa, his first city planning exercise in Canada. Todd had undoubtedly been schooled in the necessity of public urban open space when working with the Olmsted firm. This was a well-articulated conviction of Olmsted Sr.’s, from his admiration of Birkenhead Park, near Liverpool, as the Wayfarer⁸⁹; to his advocacy for the protection of the landscapes of Yosemite. Inspired by that majestic mountainous landscape, Olmsted wrote:

“It is a scientific fact that the occasional contemplation of natural scenes of an impressive character, particularly if this contemplation occurs in connection with relief from ordinary cares, change of air and change of

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⁸⁸ Ibid., P.4.

habits, is favorable to the health and vigor of men and especially to the health and vigor of their intellect beyond any other conditions which can be offered them, that it not only gives pleasure for the time being but increases the subsequent capacity for happiness and the means of securing happiness”.  

In Todd’s view, the open space system should also have a particular bucolic expression, reflecting again his strong alignment with Olmsted. In this case it was the use of the pastoral in service to a greater social agenda. For example, Todd writes of Ottawa’s Experimental Farmlands describing them as particularly important to the city as, “...a piece of real country, with country views and scenes preserved for the public and made adaptable to their use and enjoyment.” With another key open space, Hull Park, Todd explains that it will provide needed parkland for the working class to recreate, “... people working in the various factories, who, perhaps more than any others, will need a place for rest and recreation, when the city absorbs its present park-like surroundings.”

To realize these ambitions Todd adopts a regional approach to the planning of Canada’s capital. In this way Todd is facilitating a more holistic perspective where the unique character of Ottawa should prevail.

“Considerable has been said recently about Ottawa being made the ‘Washington of the North’. Many of the beauties of Washington are certainly worthy of imitation, but it would be a mistake to copy too closely, even if it were possible, the plans which have proved so successful there, for the location of the two cities is so absolutely different, that what has made the beauty of one, might mar the beauty of the other.”

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92 Ibid., p. 15.
93 In his planning document, Todd admits that he is giving little attention to arbitrary city boundaries as the solution to Ottawa’s urban design problems may not follow these arbitrary lines. (Ibid., p.1) Also see, David L.A. Gordon. 2002. “William Lyon Mackenzie King, Planning Advocate. Planning Perspectives: An International Journal of History, Planning and the Environment. 17 (2): 97-122, who writes that “Although the OIC’s [Ottawa Improvement Commission’s] mandate only covered Ottawa, Todd took a regional landscape view in the best of Olmstedian tradition.” (p.102)
This comparison was natural given the high profile 1902 McMillan Plan which provided a regional planning perspective for Washington DC. Todd would have been familiar with this particularly given the fact that one of his former bosses, Olmsted Jr., was directing the effort. Todd however, cites specific differences between the two cities: Ottawa located on a promontory, with active river water rushing by; and, Washington being flat, the Potomac being a broad slow moving meandering river, with a colonial tradition in the architecture. Wisely Todd did not try to mimic his influential former employers. He was self-possessed enough to say,

“Thus it is absolutely impossible to treat these two cities in the same manner, for a plan which would be ideal for Washington would be ill adapted for Ottawa, whose picturesque situation must absolutely form the foundation and key-note of any proposed plan for the future.”

However, Todd does plead for two aspects of the MacMillan Report. One, that the plan for Ottawa be carried out with the same vigour as Washington’s; and, secondly, that Ottawa embrace a comprehensive and rational process of planning.

“In no other way can an extensive work, extending over a number of years, be carried on without a waste of time and money, and a sacrifice of that breadth, and unity which should characterize a comprehensive scheme.”

Todd is best known for his seminal Ottawa plan but he had a broader geographical influence in Canada. In the Albertan capital region, he also brought his open space planning concepts to bear. In twin planning exercises Todd was commissioned through 1907 to consider both the City of Edmonton on the north banks of Alberta’s North Saskatchewan River, and the City of Strathcona to the south. Like the Olmsteds in Boston and

99 In an address by Edmonton’s Mayor, William Short, to the annual convention of Canadian Municipalities, spoke about the need for parkland in city planning, saying, “There should be parks and breathing grounds for rest or recreation, scattered throughout the townsite. All places of scenic beauty,
the Emerald Necklace Park system\textsuperscript{100}, in Alberta, Todd was afforded the opportunity to envision a more expansive urban park that used a river as a major recreational and aesthetic asset\textsuperscript{101}.

As with Ottawa, Todd urged the city administrators of the Western cities to get on with their plans with some urgency before affordable land was taken up by speculators, thus making an open space system for the city more difficult to create. Todd gave practical advice to the City Council of Edmonton, in 1907:

“\textit{In evolving a comprehensive scheme for parks and boulevards for Edmonton, every advantage should be taken of the great natural beauty of the situation, and also attention to the economic interest of the city, by withdrawing for park purposes, property which is of least value for building if it is equally valuable for park purposes. Indeed it often happens that the land most unsuitable for building is the best for park purposes, such as the sides of steep ravines and hillsides.}”\textsuperscript{102}

Todd particularly saw the opportunities in western Canadian cities:

“\textit{... Western cities are to be congratulated it is their enterprise and their ability to look ahead, and plan for the future; ... and provide for future generations in a way which is not possible with older cities of the world.... To realize that the future of the city depends in a great measure on the ability and power of the present generation to look ahead and to grasp the needs and requirements of the coming generations.”}\textsuperscript{103}


\textsuperscript{101}“I am of the opinion that future generations would consider these woods (in area ravines) one of the most valuable natural assets of the city.” (F.G. Todd, Letter to City Clerk, Edmonton, AB, April 5\textsuperscript{th}, 1907, p. 5. City of Edmonton Archives).

\textsuperscript{102}Ibid., p.3.

\textsuperscript{103}F.G. Todd, Letter to Mayor of Strathcona, W.D. Mills, May 6th, 1907, City of Edmonton Archives, p.2.
He established his practice at the beginning of the 20th century when opportunities in Canada seemed to abound. And this was particularly the case in Western Canada. He encouraged an alignment of the ambitions of the city administrators, with the promising times their cities were enjoying: growing populations; expanding infrastructure; and industry. Sue Donaldson104 raised doubts however, whether this eastern Landscape Architect really understood the new emerging west—however the longevity of the concept to have a riverside park in the Edmonton region stood the test of time105—with Edmonton’s Capital City Recreation Park finally being established in the mid-1970’s and the Mayor boasting in 2013 that it was North America’s largest urban parkland106. Like his preliminary plans for Ottawa, Todd’s initial ideas for Edmonton’s river valley set a foundation for the future.

**Going Home- Community Design**

In response to the perceived moral and environmental deterioration of 19th century cities, Olmsted Sr. and his partner on Central Park, Calvert Vaux, developed another seminal project, this time on the edge of Chicago. This suburban community designed in 1868-1869, called Riverside, was connected to Chicago by a short rail trip and became one of the major prototypes for subsequent suburban developments. It embodies an influential design genre of suburban community development in North America: upper middle class enclaves; centred on a transit node providing a convenient commute to the city; and designed to emulate bucolic ease in the countryside107. The signature circuitous suburban layouts that Olmsted Sr. first employed in Chicago were later to be translated in

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105 Lyle Dick also notes that at the time of the plan although not fully adopted did effect the installation of a wide range of plant material in the valley. ("the Greening of the West: The Horticulture on the Canadian Prairies, 1870-1930". *Manitoba History*. No. 31, Spring 1996).

106 “We’re so proud to showcase our river and river valley, the largest river valley park in North America,... It provides incredible and enviable quality of life along with unique economic and social benefits to our citizens... and create opportunities in Edmonton for generations.” News release from City of Edmonton, announcing that, *North America’s Largest Urban Parkland Receives $72.9-Million Investment*, January 23, 2013 [https://www.edmonton.ca/documents/PDF/RVAParkland.pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/documents/PDF/RVAParkland.pdf) (accessed August 26th, 2016)

Canada by John Charles Olmsted with community designs (1909-1911) in Calgary’s Sunalta, and Uplands in Victoria\textsuperscript{108}.

When the legacy of the Olmsteds in Canadian community design is examined, it is significant that all the completed residential projects were in quickly expanding western Canada. Todd on the other hand realized an impressive portfolio of suburban projects and the geographic range of these developments was broader, extending from coast to coast.

Almost 50 years after Olmsted’s work on Riverside (see Figure Four), Todd was given an opportunity to design a similarly sized project with an equally short train ride to the city. It had flat terrain much like the Chicago project and a similar objective, to house the affluent middle class. The expression however, was a big departure from the pastoral landscape of Olmsted’s work in Chicago. Todd’s approach to the planning of the Town of Mount Royal\textsuperscript{109} (see Figure Five) represented more contemporary town planning thought.

Community design work of Todd reflected the picturesque suburban ideal but it also revealed an overlay of other influences. Todd was at the centre of a profession that was engaged in a lively exchange of ideas around city design. The catalyst in Canada was the Commission of Conservation (1910-1921) and its Town Planning Branch, led by its first chair, noted British planner, Thomas Adams. The Garden City and Garden Suburbs movements had particular currency in Canada especially given the strong influence of Adams who had served in his native England as the secretary to the Garden City Association, and the first manager of Letchworth Garden City.\textsuperscript{110}

The mixture of these influences is evident in the various community planning exercises Todd completed pre-World War I. He was particularly productive


\textsuperscript{109} Ville Mont-Royal/Town of Mount Royal, Livret souvenir 75e anniversaire/75th Anniversary Souvenir Booklet, Montreal: Ville Mont-Royal/Town of Mount Royal, 1987.

during this period doing three different plans in the same year, 1912, in various locations across Canada for the Canadian Northern Railway\(^{111}\). The object for the company was of course reaping a sizable return on the investments in rail infrastructure by moving people and goods, and to develop strategic land holdings that provided homes for a burgeoning population.

“Between 1901 and 1911, as foreign newcomers, migrants, and others took up residence in both rural and urban areas, Canada’s population climbed to just over 7.2 million, a decadal increase of some 1.8 million people, or 34%. At least two-thirds of this increase was urban, much of which was concentrated in the newly-forming towns and cities of the western and northern peripheries, but also, of course, in the older but again rapidly expanding Industrial Heartland cities in Ontario and Quebec”\(^{112}\)

The company however, had a very specific kind of resident in mind within the suburban enclaves that Todd was developing in Toronto (Leaside, see Figure Seven), Vancouver (Port Mann\(^{113}\), see Figure Eight) and in Montreal with the Town of Mount Royal. A contemporary article of the time which appeared in The Dominion, May 1912, noted that,

“The Anglo-Saxon has been the world’s greatest colonizer... Millions of money [sic], and the best gray brain matter are combining to see that the choicest class of immigrant is secured for Western Canada... the best possible settlers from Great Britain, The United States and the North countries of Europe to make their homes in Canada and add to its wealth.” \(^{114}\)

Regardless of the intellectual ferment in the early 20\(^{th}\) century surrounding town planning\(^{115}\), suburban community design in Canada remained firmly

\(^{111}\) “…the Canadian Northern Railway, the second of the transcontinental lines, has a record of one mile a day for the past fifteen years”, and creation of urban centres along the way. “The Miracle of Modern Colonization in Canada”. *The Dominion*. Pp. 165.. Archives of Manitoba. Also see, T.D. Regehr, for view of railways and railroad companies in early Canadian expansion. *The Canadian Northern Railway- Pioneer Road of the Northern Prairies, 1895-1918*. Toronto: MacMillan, 1976.


entrenched in the middle class ideal, articulated by Olmsted Sr. in Riverside. This service to the privileged classes reaches back to the writings of Jackson Downing\textsuperscript{116}, who was a major influence on Olmsted.\textsuperscript{117} Todd is also in service to this ideal of genteel living on the fringes of the city as illustrated by promotional material for the Town of Mount Royal: “The appeal of this property will be to people of taste and discrimination, of education and refinement.”\textsuperscript{118}

The Mount Royal project involved one of the most ambitious planning proposals of the time, driving a tunnel through the mountain in Montreal to access the farmlands the Canadian Northern Railway had secured for a new suburban community\textsuperscript{119}. As The Dominion reported, “The city of Montreal lies somewhat crowded between the river and the mountain, while behind the mountain are splendid open spaces that look as if designed for the suburbs of a great city.”\textsuperscript{120} And it was Todd that was commissioned to provide the planning for this suburb.

In addition to the 1912 community developments for the Canadian Northern Railway, Todd also did Garden City plans in numerous Canadian communities including Point Grey (1907-1912) in Vancouver, BC; Bowling Green located in Pointe Claire, PQ (1905-1913); and Coldbrook (1913) in St. John, New Brunswick. All these projects however were stalled or only partially realized because of the vagaries of politics, or the marketplace. In the Town of Mount Royal (1912-1918) though, Todd had the opportunity to have his own contemporary thoughts on community development more fully implemented.

It is interesting to note, that four years earlier in 1908, Todd wrote a report for the Public Works Engineer in Victoria, B.C., in which he explains the

\textsuperscript{116} Serving as the Editor of the influential magazines, \textit{The Horticulturist}, and \textit{Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste}, through the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century.

\textsuperscript{117} R. Carson. \textit{A Genius for Place: American Landscapes of the Country Place Era}. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press. 2007.


\textsuperscript{119} The remarkable story of how these lands were strategically secured can be found in a popular history written by the former editor-in-chief of The Montreal Gazette, E.A. Collard (\textit{Montreal Yesterdays}. Toronto, ON: Longmans Canada, 1963, p.315). Also see, N. Patterson. “Growing through a Mountain. With a Personal Account of an Idea, a Tunnel and a Suburb”. \textit{Canadian Courier}. Vol. XI (22) April, 27\textsuperscript{th}, 1912. p. 15; and, \textit{La Patrie}, February 16, 1912.

\textsuperscript{120} “The Miracle of Modern Colonization in Canada”. \textit{The Dominion}. p. 167. Archives of Manitoba.
rational for the configuration of streets he was proposing for Point Grey, B.C. In it he does acknowledge that the curvilinear layout of streets for residential areas is the preferred approach, writing that they,

"... are more suitable for residential property than are straight streets, and that when well and conveniently arranged, the property on such curving streets brings a much higher price than if divided into regular blocks by straight streets."\(^{121}\)

Yet one wonders why the plan for Mount Royal does not more strongly resemble picturesque Riverside, the prototypical Olmsted-designed suburb, given Todd’s frequent alignment with their thinking in other genres of design. In the same Point Grey report, Todd gives the answer, writing that other forces need to be accommodated in a plan and they have a different geometric imperative.

"In designing the arrangement of the streets and boulevards for Point Grey it has been of first importance to decide on a municipal centre, for especially with curving streets it is necessary to have the design systematic and convenient, else there is a constant confusion and waste of energy.... From the municipal centre indicated by the ‘Village Green’, radial streets extend in all directions giving convenient communication with all parts of the Community, with Vancouver, and with the outlying country".\(^{122}\)

This then explains Todd’s reasoning in the use of radials; and the use of an intersecting grid of streets, he explains them as giving access to other surrounding attractions such as the beach and parks. The root of this geometric fusion comes from an eclectic array of different urban design approaches. In this mixed palette\(^{123}\) one can see influences as wide ranging as the City Beautiful layouts of Americans, Daniel Burnham and Edward H. Bennet\(^{124}\); to the English utopian model town, Victoria, by James Buckingham\(^{125}\).


\(^{122}\) Ibid., 148.

\(^{123}\) See, A. Corboz. "Ville Mont-Royal, cite-jardin viturvienne. 2000 JSSAC/JSEAC 25(2,3,4): 3-16.


When comparing (see Figures 5, 7 and 8) the layouts of Todd’s three 1912 so-called Model Cities (Leaside, Port Mann and the Town of Mount Royal), one is struck by the similarities of radiating avenues from a central transit node, the focus on lower density development, and the mixing of geometries. Of the three, Leaside appears (although not fully built out) more cohesive. This impression may come from the fact that the layout of Leaside appears to respond to the local topography and its merges more successfully with adjacent streets.

Todd’s geometric layout for the Town of Mount Royal (see Figure Six) however also reveals that his objective was not only exclusivity, but also efficiency. The grids and radiating forms give preference to efficient vehicular movement with bigger arterials being treated as parkways. The centrality of the rail station to those radiating avenues makes for easier pedestrian access from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Todd tries to marry these functional lines with sweeping boulevards punctuated by small neighbourhood parks. The result seems a rather clumsy combination of design elements, but the mixture of these elements represents a departure for Todd from traditional Olmstedian community design principles.

This departure may also have been spurred by demands from the Canadian Northern Railway. There is no question the CNoR was taking a huge gamble on building an expensive tunnel under Mont Royal and creating a new community. There is some evidence that the railway bosses had specific requirements about how they wanted the new community to look.

One of the reasons for Todd’s evolving thinking therefore may have been pressure from a very big client. As a consequence, he may have delivered exactly what the client wanted in these projects. As journalist, Norman Patterson, wrote confidently but unsourced in the Canadian Courier, in 1912,

“To him they [the CNoR] said, “Plan us a model town, with diagonal streets, circular driveways, gardens and parks, public buildings, and street car services. Make it the best model town in the world.””

126 Growing through a Mountain. April 27th, 1912. Vol. 11 (22): 15
Whether the catalyst for Todd’s new approach for community design was the influence of early 20\textsuperscript{th} century town planning theorists, or if he was pandering to the desires of powerful clients, Todd’s thinking shifted. One wonders if his own ideas were obscured by commercial forces more powerful than he; or whether indeed Todd did embrace new thinking. In the end, Todd had sufficient professional confidence to make a shift from the certainty of the Olmsted ideas that had inspired him during his formative years.

\textbf{Illuminating the Todd Legacy}

From the beginning of Frederick Gage Todd’s career, he was a faithful disciple of the design principles of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and his sons. But while he was a disciple to these pioneers of landscape architecture and town planning, he was not an unthinking conduit of their powerful concepts. Most of Todd’s work shows clear Olmstedian influences, yet in some of his most high-profile and enduring projects he sought inspiration elsewhere.

Olmsted remains an influential giant in landscape architecture. He continues to be lionized by scholars, design professionals and even the general public. He is celebrated in books (both academic and popular\textsuperscript{127}), studies, seminars, and a television film. There is, in the United States, a National Association for Olmsted Parks, his former studio in Brookline, Massachusetts, is a National Historic Site\textsuperscript{128}. The United States Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp for Olmsted in 1999\textsuperscript{129}. And a three-metre high bronze statue of Olmsted was recently unveiled at the North Carolina Arboretum.\textsuperscript{130} As the New York Times observed upon his death in 1903, he was, “the master of a very grand art”.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{128} https://www.nps.gov/frla/index.htm (accessed September 3, 2016)
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{F.L.Olmsted is Dead} (The New York Times, Aug 29, 1903, np)
No statues have been raised to Frederick Gage Todd. In fact, his grave, as mentioned earlier in this paper, remains unmarked in Montreal’s Mount Royal Cemetery. There is no significant archive of his collected papers in any institution. However, he has not been completely forgotten. In 1995 the Association des architectes paysagistes du Quebec inaugurated the Prix Frederick-Todd as its highest award; and, recently a small park in the Town of Mount Royal was renamed Parc Todd to honour his role in the creation of the community. In spite of these efforts however, the chief monument to Todd is his work.

While Todd’s body of work is inspired and infused with Olmstedian principles it was still the product of Todd’s mind and art. While Todd worked closely with the Olmsteds on some projects, particularly early in his career, he was independently minded and in his exchanges with the Firm he was forthright and explicit. For example, many projects that began as Olmsted commissions on private estates in the Montreal area were later passed to Todd. The professional courtesy must have been appreciated. However, the transitions were not always harmonious and demonstrate that Todd was willing to question his former employers and mentors. Todd was his own man. An illustration of this is a brisk exchange surrounding work on the rural residence for the Canadian financier, Senator Hon. L.J. Forget. In a September 24th, 1900, letter, Todd writes to the Olmsteds,

> “Personally, I should much prefer that you would do this, as I certainly could not agree to another season to the exceedingly unsatisfactory arrangements for all concerned that prevailed last Spring.... You must yourself see that the work should either be left sufficiently in my hands so that I can go ahead and do something or else it should be entirely looked after by assistants from your office.”

In Canada, the volume of work acquired by the Olmsteds and Todd was approximately the same (see Table One). However, Todd’s projects

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134 E.g., Hartland MacDougall, Dorval, PQ; Sir Edward Clouston, Peel St. 1894; Clouston’s large country house near Senneville; Son of L.J Forget – Rodolphe Forget de Carlevoix at Mount Murray Seigniory; W.M. Mackenzie, TO, President of the CN Railway (who was involved with Point Grey).
tended to be bigger, more public and more geographically widespread. Also, more of Todd’s commissions were completed than those of the Olmsteds. Through no fault of the Olmsteds, many of their grandest Canadian plans, such as a redesign of Toronto’s waterfront\footnote{Olmsted Associates Records, Microfilm Series. Washington, DC. Library of Congress (Series B 309 1902 & 1912. Job #5680, Toronto Waterfront. And, T. Wickson, Reflections of Toronto Harbour. Toronto, ON: Toronto Port Authority. pp. 40-41.} never went beyond the enormous and magnificent linen panorama’s now stored in the bowels of Toronto’s Harbour Commission Building. Most significantly, more of Todd’s work was in the public realm, while in Canada many of the realized Olmsted projects were for private clients\footnote{N. Pollock-Ellwand, ‘The Olmsted Firm in Canada: A Correction of the Record’. Planning Perspectives, 21 (July 2006): 277-310.}. 

Though Todd is overshadowed in the popular mind by the Olmsteds the inescapable fact remains that Todd’s work continues to have a direct impact on more Canadians today, than the combined Canadian projects of the Olmsteds. The Olmsted mystique built on the laudable efforts of the American media and academy to celebrate this giant of landscape architecture, has often reduced Todd to a footnote, not just in the United States but also in much of Canada.

Frederick Todd, Canada’s first landscape architect had immense impact in the country he adopted. A study of his career exposes contemporary lessons such as the importance of sense of place in city building; the advantages of transit-oriented development; and the pleasures of well-designed urban parks. The irony is that Todd’s legacy has been obscured by the brilliance of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. -- the man from whom he drew his creative inspiration.
**Figure One**- Frederick Todd, circa 1938. (Source- “Planned Beatification in Canada article by Frederick Wright. September. *The Municipal Review of Canada.* 1938. Vol.34, (8):2)

**Figure Two**- St. Helen’s Island Park. (Source- *The Municipal Review of Canada.* 1938. Vol.34, (8):2. Todd’s “Restoration Plan of St. Helen’s Island, Montreal")
Figure Three - 1903 Plan by Todd,
(Source- Trinity College. Trinity College Archives. University of Toronto, Toronto, ON)
**Figure Four**- The 1868 General Plan of Riverside by Olmsted Sr., and Vaux

**Figure Five**- The Model City- Mount Royal. 1914. Plan of Todd's layout
(Source- Town of Mount Royal Archives)
Figure Six- Canadian Northern Montreal Land Company, Ltd., Mount Royal “The Model City”, Montreal, 1912, Cover (Source- Town of Mount Royal Archives)
Figure Seven - Plan of Leaside, 1912,
(Source- Toronto Star, December 2, 1912)
Figure Eight- Plan of Port Mann
(Source- British Columbia Magazine. 1912. P.179)