

# Buildings and Construction at McGill, 1970–2002

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Although McGill's great building spree of the 1960s began leveling off in the early '70s, as it did at other Canadian universities, new construction and renovation of older buildings would characterize the University throughout the final three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—the principalships of Robert Bell (1970–1979), David Johnston (1979–1994), and Bernard Shapiro (1994–2002). That the pace of work would be somewhat reduced, reflected how thoroughly McGill's geography had been restructured in the '60s to accommodate future teaching and research activities. The combination of late 20<sup>th</sup> century inflation and new construction would, however, increase five fold the value of buildings, grounds, and equipment.

Completion of the '60s agenda resulted in notable building being constructed during the 1970s. In 1971, Burnside Hall was opened to house the departments of Geography, Mathematics, Meteorology, Computer Science, and the Computing Centre. That same year, the old Student Union was gutted and rebuilt as the McCord Museum; and the east wing and central block of Royal Victoria College were remodeled and renamed, Strathcona Music Building, after Lord Strathcona—RVC's founder. In 1972, the newly constructed Samuel Bronfman Building began housing the Faculty of Management. Its construction required the controversial demolition of Prince of Wales Terrace, north-west corner of Sherbrooke and McTavish Streets. In 1974, the gymnasium of the former Royal Victoria College, and now Strathcona Music Building, was gutted and reopened as Maurice Pollock Hall. This hall hosts tens of thousands of people annually at musical events, and for many Montrealers is their major point of contact with McGill. A new physics building was inaugurated on University St. in 1977—named after McGill's Nobel Laureate, Lord Rutherford. The concrete brutalist architecture of the Burnside, Bronfman, and Rutherford buildings elicited little contemporary enthusiasm. In 1978, the opening of the Macdonald-Stewart Building at Macdonald College marked the end of prolonged uncertainty about the College's future and the start of a new era for the Faculty of Agriculture. The Wilder Penfield Wing of the Montreal Neurological Institute, also in concrete brutalism, opened in 1979.

Fulfillment of a goal first articulated in 1949 of acquiring the block bound by McTavish and Peel streets to the east and west and Pine Avenue and McGregor St. to the north and south, was achieved in 1976 with McGill's acquisition

for \$1.5M of the Marianopolis College property—when the College moved elsewhere in the city. With this purchase, comprising both heritage and newer buildings, the University's future growth on contiguous property was assured. Existing buildings at the south-west corner of the block were remodeled and re-opened in 1979 as the R. E. Powell Student Services Building—named after the University's tenth Chancellor, 1957–1964. The older buildings have been preserved and used by various units. In 1978, McGregor St. was renamed Avenue du Docteur-Penfield, in honour of the MNI's founder, Wilder Penfield.

Instead of large new construction projects, the 1980s saw major renovation of older building projects, funded in part by the McGill Development Program of the '70s. In 1982, Redpath Hall—opened in 1893 as the library's reading room but used since 1954 for meetings and concerts—was reopened after renovations and the addition of a classical French organ, constructed by Helmuth Wolf. Along with Pollock Hall, Redpath Hall supports the performance stream of the Faculty of Music and welcomes large audiences to McGill. The Macdonald Physics Building—having been radically remodeled and renamed the Macdonald-Stewart Building—was reopened in 1982 as the Physical Sciences and Engineering Library. In 1987, after renovation by Architects Ray Affleck and Arcop Associates, the Macdonald Chemistry Building was renamed the Macdonald-Harrington Building, and became home to the Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning. All three buildings were originally designed in the 1890s by Sir Andrew Taylor, an outstanding Montreal architect responsible for more McGill buildings than anyone else in the University's history.

One of the few new buildings of the decade was the 1984 Webster Pavilion and Brain-Imaging Centre at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital.

The 1990s began with several renovation projects, and the opening of new buildings. In 1990, the McGill bookstore moved into a specifically designed structure on McTavish St. that, at the time, was the largest university bookstore in Eastern Canada. Solin Hall, which had begun life as a chocolate factory near the Atwater Market, was gutted and reopened in 1990 as a student residence. The reopening of Lady Meredith House, at the corner of Peel and Pine, in 1991 after being damaged in a fire the previous year, would be widely acknowledged as a highly successful restoration project. In 1991, the McCord Museum reopened after extensive renovation and the construction of new wing, which doubled its size. Tomlinson Hall and Tomlinson

Fieldhouse were inaugurated in 1993/94, as part of the student supported project to expand and enhance the Sir Arthur Currie Gymnasium. Dr. Richard Tomlinson's generosity was crucial to the success of this project.

At the end of the decade, McGill embarked upon the design and construction of several new buildings. Great care was taken with their design, due to space constraints within the University's campus, and height restrictions imposed by the city on new construction near Mount Royal. Instead of a uniform style, a range of architects and contemporary designs were employed. One unifying characteristic of these new buildings was their lack of parking facilities. In 1997, the M. H. Wong Engineering Building was opened along the upper stretches on Dr. Penfield. The following year, the Nahum Gelber Law Library opened on Upper Peel St, contiguous with Chancellor Day Hall. Unlike the Wong Building that was financed by both private benefactors and government

grants, the Gelber Library was paid for entirely by private money. In 1999, the William and Mary Brown Student Services Building, contiguous with the Student Union, was opened. The Montreal Neurological Institute's Brain Tumour Research Centre was officially opened by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in 2002.

Towards the end of this era, development of McGill's physical plant took a sharp change of direction. An office building at 688 Sherbrooke St. W., corner of University St., was purchased in 1998 for joint academic and administrative use. On September 12, 2002, McGill bonds were issued to raise funds for a self-financing, student-residential project. The issue proved highly successful, raising \$150M.

\*NOTE: TABLES 1, 2, & 3 "Property Value and Construction in Progress" are based upon information found in the annual financial reports to the Board of Governors.

YEAR	Estimated Value of Grounds, Buildings, and Equipment	Construction in Progress
1970	\$123,633,347	\$3,782,743
1971	\$135,275,688	\$2,795,802
1972	\$138,609,601	\$5,376,846
1973	\$142,603,443	\$6,499,065
1974	\$145,704,402	\$6,722,495
1975	\$155,649,853	\$3,031,320
1976	\$158,480,981	\$5,056,675
1977	\$168,403,030	\$7,695,097
1978	\$177,231,000	\$14,773,000
1979	\$199,453,000	\$4,204,000

TABLE 1. Property Value and Construction in Progress\*

YEAR	Estimated Value of Grounds, Buildings, and Equipment	Construction in Progress
1980	\$203,353,000	\$4,099,000
1981	209,583,000	3,853,000
1982	218,735,000	5,236,000
1983	231,195,000	8,960,000
1984	237,564,000** (228,665,000)**	12,416,000
1985	247,083,000	6,575,000
1986	262,982,000	9,823,000
1987	277,594,000	9,191,000
1988	290,522,000	10,301,000
1989	308,187,000	14,396,000## (16,097,000)##

TABLE 2. Property Value and Construction in Progress\*

\*\*the 1984 and 1985 figures disagree with one another

##the 1989 and 1990 figures disagree with one another

YEAR	Estimated Value of Grounds, Buildings, and Equipment	Construction in Progress
1990	\$328,536,000	\$24,681,000
1991	381,376,000	14,428,000
1992	413,805,000	4,847,000
1993	437,804,000	6,387,000
1994	491,086,000	10,429,000
1995	540,755,000 (532,346,000)**	8,018,000
1996	515,898,000**	20,000,000
1997	518,764,000	6,300,000
1998	489,845,000	38,690,000
1999	499,967,000	34,827,000
2000	572,584,000	13,671,000
2001	602,005,000	9,741,000
2002	650,744,000	22,031,000

TABLE 3. Property Value and Construction in Progress\*

\*\*Plant assets were re-evaluated according to methods and rates, varying by asset class, determined by Quebec. This formula was followed thereafter and accounts for the initial decrease in value.