

BALDWIN, Lawrence C.M. (Martin) (1891 – 1968)

Martin Baldwin had a varied career which included being both an architect and a curator. He made a substantial contribution to the development of the arts, playing a key role in the development of the Art Gallery of Ontario by serving as its curator and director from 1932 to 1961.

Baldwin was born in Toronto on August 31, 1891 and was educated at Trinity College School, Port Hope. He graduated from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Architecture and became a draftsman with the firm of Symons and Rae from 1910 until 1912. He later joined the firm of Sproatt and Rolph in the same position until the outbreak of World War 1. He served in the Armed Forces until 1918. In 1919 he was a draftsman with Thomas W. Lamb, Toronto and from 1921 to 1924 he had his own practice. He later entered into partnership with Gerald E. Greene, forming the firm of Baldwin and Greene (1928 to 1932).

Baldwin and Greene executed a number of refined designs for residences, office buildings and apartments around Toronto. Their distinctive designs for office towers include the Central Building, Richmond St. West (1928) and the Concourse Building at 100 Adelaide St. West (1928). This sixteen-storey speculative office tower engaged the services of J.E.H. MacDonald, one of Canada's best known painters, to design spandrel panels based on natural motifs. MacDonald also completed the mosaic decoration around the portico and foyer. The Victory Building at 80 Richmond Street West (1929-30) with its colored brick, marble and cast stone detailing is more streamlined Art Deco in character. The Claridge Apartment building at 1 Clarendon Avenue at Avenue Road (1927-28) is Venetian Gothic in detail and its reception hall (decorated by artists J.E.H. MacDonald and Carl Schaffer) is still regarded as one of the most beautiful interiors in Toronto.