

CURRY, Samuel George (1854 – 1942)

Samuel Curry held various executive positions with important architectural firms and was involved in the design of many fine buildings across Canada. His reputation was established mostly with partners, who developed large practices which served the design needs of the upper middle class.

His contributions to the profession began with the Architectural Guild of Toronto for which he served as Secretary-Treasurer from 1887 to 1891. Curry was also actively involved in the establishment of the Ontario Association of Architects, as he played an important role on the original Council of 1890 and served as the organizations second president in 1892.

Samuel Curry was born in Port Hope, Ontario in 1854 and as young man in Kingston he made the drawings and designs for the Education Block and the Royal Military College. Curry began his practices with Frank Darling in 1880. He left the partnership in 1892 shortly after Henry Sproatt and John A. Pearson joined the firm. Subsequently he formed partnerships with F.S. Baker, 1895-99; Henry Sproatt and Ernest Rolph, 1906-08; and W.F. Sparling, 1910-17. In the intervening years he practiced on his own.

With Frank Darling he completed many outstanding commissions beginning with the first prize for the Ontario Legislative building at Queen's Park. Their design was not, however, executed. By 1885 they had established themselves, producing such distinguished designs as the Bank of Montreal, Yonge and Front Street, Toronto,

(1885-86) a rich self-assured building expressing the virtues of the young country, containing a beautifully decorated 45-foot high banking rotunda. The Toronto Club, Bay and Wellington Street, (1888) was one of the early club buildings erected by Toronto's elite, designed in the Renaissance Revival style with restrained application of stone to the Palladian window and round arched openings. In 1889 they designed the first hospital in the world specifically for children, producing a deft E-shaped plan built in a lightly dressed Richardsonian style with symbolically expressive angels carved above the entrance arch.

Curry was also a capable designer in his own right preparing plans for the commercial building he designed for Philip Jamieson, Queen and Yonge Street, Toronto (1895). It was recently revealed again after being covered by a modern metal screen. The facade of his commercial building for John Kay and Sons, King and Bay Street, Toronto (1899) has a classically composed arrangement of openings crowned by embellished scrolls and a colonnade. Curry's design for Postal Station F, Yonge and Charles Street, Toronto (1905) denotes its civic importance with a massive rock faced ashlar base and buff carved Ionic columns above.

Other designs with Sparling include; Toronto Trust and Guaranty building, 302 Bay Street, Toronto (1919-17) and Charles E. Goad Atlas Company, 105 Bond Street, Toronto (1912) and with Sproatt and Rolph, the National Club, Bay Street, Toronto (1906-07) and the Parsonage, Metropolitan Church, Queen at Church Street, Toronto (1906).