

GREGG, Alfred Holden (1868 – 1945)

Alfred Gregg was a prominent Toronto architect who was a senior partner in the firm of Wickson and Gregg which practiced from 1904 to 1936. Early in his career he was one of the prominent members of Toronto Architectural Sketch Club. The firm was well connected to the Toronto establishment, Timothy Eaton in particular, which helped the firm to create its fine Classical, Georgian and Gothic designs for buildings throughout the country.

Alfred Holden Gregg was born in Toronto in 1868 and began studies at the Model School and Jarvis Street Collegiate Institute. He continued his education at the Toronto School of Art, now the Ontario College of Art. In order to expand his professional experience he joined H.H. Richardson's office in Boston in 1887-88 which was one of the leading firms on the continent and did much to develop the Romanesque revival style so popular in the late 19th century. Gregg became a charter member of the Boston Architectural Club and practiced in New York City before returning to Canada. Gregg learned his profession by working for his brother, William R. Gregg whose partner he became in 1893 until 1905.

Upon return to Toronto he set up practice with his brother who also had worked with Richardson in Boston. The firm of Gregg and Gregg established a reputation for competent ecclesiastical and industrial buildings at the turn of the century. The firm designed numerous churches in small towns around Ontario. In Toronto they designed Wychwood Park Presbyterian Church, St. Clair Avenue West (1903). One of their designs the Eclipse Whitewear Building, King and John Street, Toronto (1904) is typical of the Toronto warehouse building with load bearing masonry walls allowing

the exterior to incorporate large window areas.

The firm of Wickson and Gregg (1905-1936) won early recognition for its involvement in the designs for the Toronto Public Library, College at St. George Street, Toronto (1906) which they designed in conjunction with A.H. Chapman. In 1909 they also became the firm which served the Eaton family, designing their large Georgian mansion on the Toronto escarpment, Ardwood Hall (1909-11, demolished 1936). In the same year they were commissioned to design Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, St. Clair Avenue West at Dunvegan Road (1911-14) which is one of the most impressive 20th century gothic churches in the country. This was due in part to the generous site and the largesse of the patron. The design was based on English Cathedral architecture of the 15th century with its solid monumentality expressed in its great buttresses, rough finished stone walls and elaborate decorative tracery. Wickson and Gregg also designed Villa Fiori, the palatial country estate and farm for the Eaton family at King, Ontario (1928-29).

Wickson and Gregg designed the reconstruction of the Berkeley Street Firehall, Berkeley at Adelaide Street, Toronto (1905) which is executed in an unusual combination of Edwardian styles. Also the Calvin Presbyterian Church, Delisle Avenue near Yonge Street, Toronto (1926-27) and St. Andrew's United Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia (1926-27) which was well received at the time of its construction. They were also responsible for many robust warehouse structures throughout Toronto including those for the Copp Clark Publishing Company, Wellington Street, Toronto (1909) and Marmaduke Rawlinson Storage, St. Joseph Street (1905-07).