

Westmount places
and their stories /10

Description

The history behind the familiar, and the forgotten mosaic of businesses and homes that yielded to progress

By **Michael Walsh**

Previously published on June 24, 2017

Before 2000, everything was about being contextual, and buildings were supposed to be good citizens.

Bernard Tschumi (Architect)

Much has been said about the sense of community one feels as a Westmount resident. This feeling is heightened when store proprietors wave at you while you walk outside their places of business. This occurs on a regular basis during my daily public transportation commute between Westmount and downtown Montreal. Specifically, the bus stops at the south side of St. Catherine and Metcalfe – adjacent to “Westmount Place” – an apartment building with a massive footprint. It wasn’t until recently, that I noticed the building has one entrance on Metcalfe (201) and another on Kensington (200).

The building opened with great flair in 1956 – the Westmount Examiner ran a full-page advertisement proclaiming “In New York, it’s Sutton Place... In Paris, it’s Place Vendôme... Now in Montreal, it’s Westmount Place”. The Montreal Gazette described the building as having “...commanding views in a beautiful fireproof elevator building, individual air conditioners, balconies, landscaped roof gardens (with a lily pool) and solarium”. The building’s on-site services included a coffee shop, drug store and various service stores.

‘In New York, it’s Sutton Place... In Paris, it’s Place Vendôme... Now in Montreal, it’s Westmount Place.’

Today, I pay as much attention to this building, and those across the street, as I do to people on the bus!

However, I have wondered what occupied this one block area over the past several decades. Spending a bit of time on this matter, one starts to appreciate the forgotten mosaic of businesses and homes, including those of a well-known architect and mason. Over time, these homes and residences yielded to 'progress' that produced the current urban landscape. (In some municipalities, distinctive plaques commemorate notable residents and events.)

Let's step back in time, and discover how this area of Westmount has evolved.



South side St. Catherine Street West of Metcalfe

4400 St. Catherine



concept of urban planning and was Ottawa's first (plens and parklands) with urban spaces.

4404 St. Catherine

J. H. Hutchison (contractor) – 1902

Notable achievements included the construction of North America's first ice palace.

The Ice Palace built for the first Winter Carnival, in 1883, was North America's first Ice Palace. It was designed by architect and mason A.C. Hutchinson, an expert in cut-stone work who had supervised work on the Christ Church Cathedral at age 19 before working on the Canadian Parliament buildings earlier in his career. –



IceCubicle.net

4424 St. Catherine

Charles E. T. Woodley (traveller) – 1902; Newson Construction Company – 1967

4425 St. Catherine

Andrew Angus (bookkeeper) and R. G. Angus (advertising agent) – 1899; Henry H. Curtis (druggist) – 1902; Brunel Custom Tailor – 1967

4427 St. Catherine

Peter C. Small (commercial traveller) – 1899; J. Mundie (clothing) – 1902

4428 St. Catherine

J. S. Hewson Equipment Rental Company – 1957; Cliffside Garage – 1957; R. T. Smith Construction Company Limited – 1957; Foreign Motors Limited – 1967

4430 St. Catherine

Thomas Shaw (commercial merchant) – 1902; Miss A. E. James – 1932; S. Schwartz & Co – 1932; George H. Knott & Company – 1941; Norman Wade Company Limited (reproduction office) – 1967

4431 St. Catherine

Debbies Coffee Shop – 1967

4434 St. Catherine

Maag Company Limited – 1957; Odhner Adding Machine Company – 1967

Lathem Time Recorder Limited – 1967

Established in 1919 with headquarters in Atlanta, the company manufactures time clock software.



Redpath Museum

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4435 St. Catherine

Westmount Place Snack Bar – 1957; Westmount Place Drug Store – 1957; Westmount Hi-Fi and T.V. – 1967; Midwest Electric & Television Registered – 1967

4436 St. Catherine

James M. Shaw (dentist) – 1902; H. Finestone – 1932; Mrs. C. Wadsworth (widower) – 1941

4441 St. Catherine

Westmount Place Pastry – 1957; Vincent the Barber – 1960; Joe the Barber – 1967

4444 St. Catherine

J. H. Elliot (artist) – 1899; I. Q. & E. Secretarial Services Limited – 1957

Richardson Bond & Wright Limited – 1957

The company developed into one of the most important printing establishments in Canada. In 1918 they began selling printed forms that were made using a new development in the printing industry. It was known as “Fleming’s Standardized Process”, a method of lithographing forms on a patented roll-fed press. This development was a forerunner of web-press technology and made R-B-W the largest manufacturer of single blank forms in Canada. They also had “the first offset press in the world to be web-fed”. They also developed the Photo-Repro System. During the Second World War, the plant was used to print Canadian ration booklets, as well as secret Allied Codebooks for the war effort. – Grey Roots Museum & Archives

Orient Hosiery Sales Limited – 1957; Canadian Silk Products Corporation – 1957; Marrotte & Co – 1957

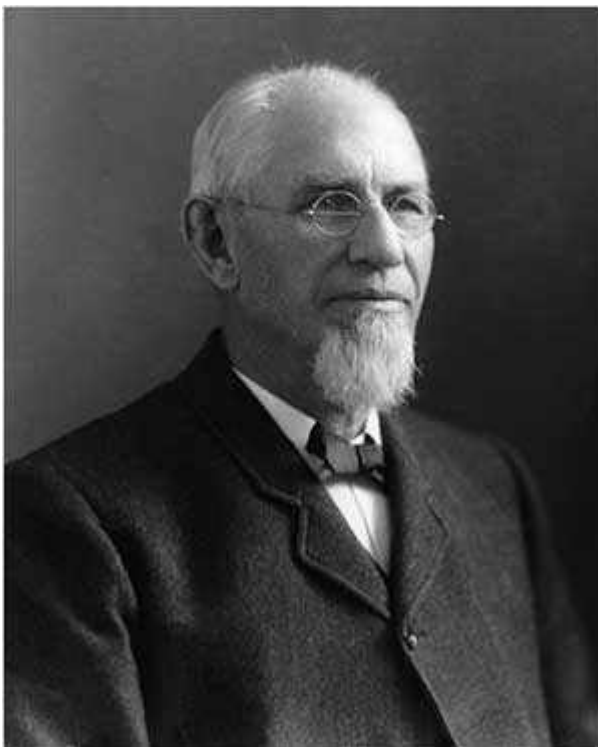
E. S. & A. Robinson (Canada) Limited – 1957

This British company (founded in 1844) manufactured wrapping paper and paper bags for grocers. Their largest overseas operation was in Canada where they produced laminated packaging materials.

Abitibi Sales Company Limited – 1957; Hamilton Cotton Company Limited – 1957; Stewart William & Son Limited – 1957

4445 St. Catherine

H. H. De Zouche (Carpenter) – 1899; Pierre My Hairdresser – 1960



Alexander Cowper Hutchison
Image: Wikimedia Commons

4447 St. Catherine

Alexander Cowper Hutchison



(Hutchinson & Wood) – 1899

Alexander Cowper Hutchison (Architect) was born in Montreal in 1838. In company with James Morrison, he erected some of the principal buildings in Montreal. He was entrusted with supervising the stonework of Christ Church Cathedral, known to be the finest example of Norman Gothic on the continent. He afterwards moved to Ottawa, where he was engaged in the Parliament Buildings, in charge of stone cutting. Returning to Montreal he decided to commence practice as an architect in 1863 and soon secured a large practice. He was appointed a member of the Royal Canadian Academy by the Marquis of Lorne in 1880.– The Canadian Architect and Builder, 1895

Notable buildings include *The Redpath Museum*, a major expansion of the Windsor Hotel, Queen's Public School, Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Fire Station No. 5 and the Mechanics Institute.

4451 St. Catherine

H. H. Regan and Sons Grocers – 1899; Metcalfe Pharmacy – 1941

Feature image: North side of St. Catherine Street West of Metcalfe – Michael Walsh

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Michael Walsh is a long-time Westmount resident. He is happily retired from nearly four decades in the field of higher education technology. A “professional student” by nature, his academic training, and publishing, include statistical methodology, mycology and animal psychology. During this period, he was also an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces. Prior to moving to Montreal, he was contracted by the Ontario Ministry of Education evaluating bilingual primary and secondary school programs. Today, he enjoys spending time with his (huge) Saint Bernard while discovering the city's past and sharing stories of the majestic trees that grace the parks and streets. He can be contacted at michaell2003@hotmail.com or through his blog [Westmount Overlooked](#)

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Date Created

November 2020