

The Road to Terrace Bank: Land Capitalization, Public Space, and the Redpath Family Home, 1837-1861

Roderick Macleod

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Résumé de l'article

Le promoteur immobilier montréalais John Redpath entreprit au XIXe siècle de subdiviser ses terres en lots résidentiels destinés à la nouvelle classe moyenne de la ville. Redpath montrait qu'il avait de fines antennes politiques et un sens aigu du marketing ; cependant, ses démarches avaient surtout pour but de consolider le statut social de la famille Redpath et de hausser son niveau de vie, l'un et l'autre de ces objectifs ayant déjà pour assise Terrace Bank, la maison au cœur du domaine familial. Seul moyen de gravir les échelons supérieurs : établir une banlieue pour la classe moyenne autour de ce domaine, sur les flancs du mont Royal. C'est pourquoi toutes les étapes de la planification et du lotissement furent déterminées par l'emplacement de la résidence de la famille Redpath et des autres maisons avoisinantes construites pour les membres de la famille élargie des Redpath. Ce projet d'aménagement foncier fut couronné de succès au cours des années 1840. Basé sur la consultation de correspondance privée, de documents notariés, de plans, de recensements et d'archives de cimetière, le présent article emprunte à l'urbanisme, à l'histoire politique et sociale ainsi qu'à l'histoire de la famille pour expliquer de façon nuancée la formation de l'environnement bâti au XIXe siècle, et pour nous enseigner la manière d'interpréter l'espace public.

The Road to Terrace Bank: Land Capitalization, Public Space, and the Redpath Family Home, 1837-1861

RODERICK MACLEOD

In the summer of 1837,¹ John Redpath and Jane Drummond, their many children, and five servants, took the road up the southern flank of Mount Royal, northwest of Montreal, to what was to be their home for the next quarter-century.² This was an unprecedented step. Until that time, despite much middle-class idealization of the countryside as a moral place,³ a Montreal businessman on the crest of his career would have seen a farmhouse located some miles from the city as a highly impractical place to live year round. The side of the mountain was, moreover, associated with retired gentlemen.⁴ But Redpath had no intention of becoming merely an amateur farmer along the lines of James McGill and other fur traders whose former homes dotted the mountainside. His own economic star was still very much rising, and he and Jane had every expectation (fulfilled, as things turned out) of having many more children. The move was an act of ambition. To live high above the city, away from its clutter and noise, in a spot with clean air, rolling grounds, and a beautiful view, had always

1 I would like to thank Brian Young of McGill University, not only for directing the doctoral thesis on which much of this article is based, but for subsequently employing me to do research at the Mount Royal Cemetery, some of which I have also made use of here. Thanks also to Myriam Cloutier of the Mount Royal Cemetery, François Cartier of the McCord Museum Archives, and James Armour of the Church of St Andrew and St Paul. I am grateful to Bradley Cross of St. Thomas University for his comments on an earlier version of this paper.

2 McCord Museum Archives (hereafter MMA), PO85-B/6, 20147, Letter Book: Letter to Joseph Classen, August 1837. The Redpaths had five servants in 1842, according to that year's census.

3 For a discussion of the nineteenth-century "rural idyll," see Leondore Davidoff, Jean L'Esperance, and Howard Newby, "Landscape with Figures: Home and Community in English Society," in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (eds), *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976): 146-151.

4 The exception to this trend was the McCord family, who had begun to build their own permanent home, Temple Grove, higher up the mountainside and further west, in the summer of 1837. Somewhat younger than Redpath, John Samuel McCord was hardly a retired gentleman; even so, he was a judge, and the scion of a family with much deeper roots in Canada than John Redpath. See Pamel Miller and Brian Young, "Private, Family and Community Life" in Miller (ed), *The McCord Family: A Passionate Vision* (Montreal: The McCord Museum of Canadian History, 1992).

been a mark of social and economic achievement. For the Redpaths, and for the ranks of the city's rising middle class who followed them up there, it would also be an important means of acquiring status. The process of creating suburban space was largely one of commodifying the image of country living. John Redpath proved a master at selling a vision of suburban life to families eager for a way both to invest recently-acquired capital and to escape urban congestion. The Redpath family benefitted from this vision, and from the consequent suburbanization of the mountainside, as it meant a considerable improvement in the value of their home. It also confirmed their own position as members of the city's bourgeoisie – to say nothing of their role as pioneers within this emerging suburban community. Symbolic of the Redpaths' achievement was the replacement of the farmhouse in 1861 with a grand Victorian mansion, Terrace Bank, which would sit at the head of a long driveway surrounded by trees and gardens like a country estate. At the same time, however, it would remain intimately connected to the city, which was in the process of rising up to meet it.

The farm, as purchased in November 1836, was primarily a piece of real estate.⁵ Redpath dedicated much of his energy over the subsequent decade-and-a-half to subdividing it, at substantial profit. As such, his endeavours serve as an excellent case study of land capitalization against a backdrop of a changing economy – on a par with many real estate ventures on the outskirts of Montreal, a number of which have been well-documented.⁶ The notion of land capitalism as outlined by Paul-André Linteau and Jean-Claude Robert is very useful to an understanding of the transformation of the nineteenth-century built environment.⁷ The act of subdivision was a process of capitalizing land, both in terms of making a profit that was out of proportion to its traditional use, and in terms of creating urban space out of farmland. Equally capitalist was the use of marketing strategies to create a need, directed at a group of people who were ripe to pursue such a need. In this respect, if only by degree, nineteenth-century real estate ventures (to say nothing of subsequent suburban schemes)

5 Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal (hereafter ANQ-M), Thomas Bedouin #5012, 4 November 1836.

6 For the development of the mountainside, see my "Salubrious Settings and Fortunate Families: The Making of Montreal's Golden Square Mile, 1840-1895" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1997); see also Paul-André Linteau, *Maison neuve, ou Comment de promoteurs fabriquent une ville, 1883-1918* (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1981); Robert Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal: the Making of an Industrial Landscape, 1850-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Kathleen Lord, "Days and Nights: Class, Gender, and Society on Notre Dame Street in Saint-Henri, 1875-1905" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2000); Walter Van Nus, "The Role of Suburban Government in the City Building Process: the Case of Notre Dame de Grace, 1876-1910," *Urban History Review*, XIII (October 1984).

7 Linteau and Robert, "Propriété foncière et société à Montréal." *Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française*: 28,1 (juin 1984).

differed from earlier, more leisurely projects.⁸ Historians of cities are often preoccupied with aesthetics, and overlook the significance of capitalism as a motor of physical change – except as the force behind industrialization and, consequently, wretched social conditions.⁹ The bourgeois exodus from the city centre, for example, did not simply occur because a class of people with money wished to escape soot and congestion; rather, it was part of a vision that had to be sold as painstakingly as the products of any factory. One of the aims of this paper, therefore, is to emphasize the crucial link between aesthetics and capitalism in creating an urban environment.

The other important link to be made here is the one between an environment and the people that built and inhabited it. All communities project an image, and this image is a reflection of both promoters and residents. The selling of Redpath's vision was a capitalist endeavor, but the vision itself was also tinged with a capitalist spirit. Its attraction was partly that of investment and enterprise, and it spoke to a world on the brink of change. Redpath launched his subdivision scheme at a time of political and economic confidence, and took full advantage of this climate. As with everything else in Lower Canada, moreover, the vision Redpath promoted and the confidence he tapped into had ethnic overtones. If Redpath's vision was explicitly liberal and capitalist, its character was also implicitly Anglo-Protestant. Following the rebellion of 1837, and the decades of tension leading up to it, the 1840s was a period of liberal Anglo-Protestant hegemony. By the 1850s, however, this cultural hegemony was in the process of being displaced by further ethnic tension, and the community that grew on and near the Redpath estate was defined by its distance not only from urban congestion, but from a working class that was heavily Catholic and French.

The example of the Redpath family is useful because it both built and inhabited the area that was, in effect, the cornerstone of this middle-class, Anglo-Protestant community. This is not only a case of human agency, but one that brings the family into focus. The figure of John Redpath may stand at the core of this story, but both his wives, his many children, and even his servants

8 Compare Alan Stewart's treatment of Montreal's St Lawrence ward: *Settling an Eighteenth-century Faubourg: Property and Family in the Saint-Laurent Suburb, 1735-1810* (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1988). See also Donald J Olsen, *Town Planning in London: the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1966); Hilary Ballon, *The Paris of Henri IV: Architecture and Urbanism* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1991).

9 The classic work on the history of the city is Lewis Mumford, *The History of the City* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961) but see also Leonardo Benevolo, *Storia della Città* (Rome: Editori Latenza, 1975), James E Vance, *This Scene of Man* (New York: Harper's College Press, 1977) and, closer to home, Jean Claude Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1981).

(although they receive only passing reference here) were a critical part of the development process. Not only were the members of the Redpath family the beneficiaries of the profit from the subdivision, but also active players in its generation. Unlike most other land capitalists, and even other developers of nearby farms who took their cue from his success, Redpath made use of the presence of his own home in the midst of the lots he was selling off. Architecturally, the sizeable farmhouse served as a model of what potential builders could envisage for themselves. On another level, the Redpath family itself, by continuing to live on the subdivided estate, helped define this area as one where women and children were a visible part along with the male heads of households; it was to be a family place, as well as a wealthy and leisured one. The Redpath subdivision scheme benefitted from the extended Redpath family, even as it enhanced their wealth and status; for its part, the Redpath home increased in value as a result of the real estate enterprise, even as it helped define the new community in the popular imagination. In short, there was a kind of symbiotic relationship between home, family, space, and capitalist enterprise.

This paper builds on some recent work by historians keen to explore the relationship between people – families in particular – and their environments. Colin Coates has carefully presented the landscape of Lower Canada from the perspective of landowners newly arrived from Britain with received ideas, and how these ideas played themselves out in, and ultimately transformed, the rural environment.¹⁰ Architectural historian Annmarie Adams has expanded an expertise in design and structure to include the actual experience of individuals in space, notably women in domestic space.¹¹ The work she has done with family historian Peter Gossage, combining analysis of space with an understanding of family dynamics in history, offers an unusual degree of insight into the workings of home, personal space, and domestic relations.¹² The challenge, as these authors state, is to move beyond examples from the wealthy minority. This paper does not attempt to meet that challenge – indeed, the Redpaths counted among the wealthiest in Montreal during the second half of the nineteenth century – but it does seek to take the basic premise of incorporating

10 Colin M. Coates, "Like 'The Thames towards Putney': The Appropriation of Landscape in Lower Canada," *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXIV, 3, 1993; also *Metamorphoses of Landscape and Community in Early Quebec* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2000).

11 Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, and Women, 1870-1900* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), and many contributions to collections and exhibitions.

12 Adams and Peter Gossage, "Chez Fadette: Girlhood, Family, and Private Space in Late Nineteenth-Century Saint-Hyacinthe," *Urban History Review*, March 1998, vol 26, No. 2 This article represents the early stages of a much larger study of the relationship between family and domestic space.

family into a discussion of the changing built environment and apply it to a somewhat larger canvas, namely the creation of a community. A treatment of the Redpath subdivision from the perspective of the Redpath family is the first step towards a broader study of Montreal's Anglo-Protestant bourgeoisie and the space these people occupied.

After presenting the background to the period under consideration, this paper traces the rise of the Redpath family prior to the launch of the subdivision scheme in the 1840s. It then moves on to discuss the Redpaths' real estate ventures, first from the economic point of view (the division of property, legal technicalities, sales campaigns, and profits) and then from the aesthetic point of view (the significance of landscape and of streets, privacy, and the physical appearance of house and grounds) – although these two themes cannot easily be separated as each is integral to the other. Family is an underlying theme at all points, both when it comes to property and inheritance, and when it comes to propriety and image. Unfortunately, sources for the Redpath family do not permit a foray into the interior lives of family members, but this paper does embrace a definition of public space that is broad enough to encompass all but the innermost workings of domestic life. In describing people obsessed with propriety, the way the Victorian middle-classes clearly were, we should not restrict the notion of public space to what went on in the streets or the marketplace.

Montreal and the “Transition”

The period 1837 to 1861 was an era of radical change for Montreal and Lower Canada. It more or less encompasses the so-called transition from feudalism to capitalism: the rebellions of 1837-38 put in motion a series of political and institutional reforms that resulted in bourgeois democracy and the industrial revolution, both of which were firmly underway by 1861. The period also literally dovetails the first quarter-century in the reign of Queen Victoria, giving rise to the quality of “early Victorian” that characterized many aspects of social and cultural life. The rise of a middle class to a position of prominence, and the identification of an industrial working class, were also features of these decades, as were the growing divisions between them. In this light, Redpath's subdivision scheme was an important part of middle-class cultural formation. The attraction of bourgeois families to the mountainside was the product of a desire by the middle class to distinguish itself from its humbler origins. A sense of propriety was another factor: as the bourgeoisie created institutions to regulate daily life, and organized space to conform with this orderly pattern, it grew increasingly intolerant of behaviour that deviated from these standards. Certainly the regulation of public space, which had been a feature of urban life for generations, became more intense towards the middle of the century as middle-class reformers sought to make the city conform to the image they wished

to project. The width of streets envisaged for the Redpath subdivisions was part of this desire to adopt an image that was diametrically opposed to the congestion of working-class neighbourhoods.

The period also saw considerable population growth and urban expansion. In 1837 Montreal was largely confined to the old town and its surrounding faubourgs. Its streets were narrow and not uniformly straight, lined with squat stone houses with sharp roofs. It also contained stores, workshops, and institutional buildings, including a large number of churches and the homes of various religious organizations, both Protestant and Catholic. An industrial zone was beginning to take shape along the Lachine Canal to the south west of town, and settlements slowly spread outwards along the roads leading through the faubourgs. One of these roads, often called "rue de la Montagne" or "Mountain Street," meandered up the southern slope of Mount Royal, crossing a gap in the ridge before running down towards Côte des Neiges to the north. The old homes built by the gentlemen farmers of a previous generation were reached by long paths rising from the St Antoine faubourg or from Mountain Street itself.

These paths, and the parallel boundaries of the various farms, would give shape to a residential suburb which emerged in the wake of Redpath's subdivision scheme over the course of the 1840s and 1850s and to which many of the old town's institutions would be eventually relocated. This would be Anglo-Protestant space, its streets filling with the residences of Montreal's Anglo-Protestant elite as it sought to distinguish itself, not only from the homes of the poor that crowded the growing industrial areas near the canal and the port, but from the city's French population and Catholic majority. Relations between ethnic and linguistic groups, although never without tension, grew worse through the 1840s and 1850s with street violence, the rise of ultramontanism, and the establishment of separate education systems. Consequently, Montreal's expansion was characterized by divisions along ethnic and linguistic as well as class lines.

Although Lower Canada's rulers had always been British, an English-speaking middle class came into its own during the years following the rebellions. With the defeat of the *patriotes*, whose liberal vision was often blurred by nationalist and even reactionary tendencies, moderate reformers who had shown their loyalty to the crown were now in a position to impose their vision by sitting on, or otherwise influencing, the Special Council. This body, British in character if not absolutely in composition, ran Lower Canada from 1838 until legislative institutions were restored in 1841. The Council's position of unopposed authority allowed its members to effect long-awaited institutional reforms; as a result, within this brief period, a number of ordinances fundamentally changed Canadian society.¹³ High on the agenda of all reformers was

13 Brian Young, "Positive Law, Positive State: Class Realignment and the Transformation of Lower Canada, 1815-1866," in Allan Greer and Ian Radforth (ed), *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

the elimination of seigneurialism, or at any rate the many rights of seigneurs that were seen to impede good capitalist relations.¹⁴ For example, under seigneurialism landed property could not be owned or sold outright, as it could under the terms of British land tenure, but was subject to a variety of feudal dues such as *cens et rentes* and *lods et ventes*, which were the bane of anyone attempting to make a profit on land transactions.¹⁵ Accordingly, the Special Council passed an ordinance in 1840 permitting *censitaires* (people who had acquired land from seigneurs) to terminate their ongoing financial obligations by making one assessed payment. This development meant that, as of 1840, landowners such as Redpath could sell their land without obliging purchasers to continue making seigneurial payments. A related problem was the right of a landowner's wife and heirs to make use of portions of his property after his death, thereby (in the eyes of a man like Redpath) reducing the ability of potential land developers to exploit their purchases without fear of legal challenges down the road. The Registry Ordinance, passed early in 1841, obliged people to register their marriage contracts if they wished their terms to be legally binding; it also enabled them to make arrangements that would replace these standing rights.¹⁶ Such reforms would prove crucial to Redpath in the capitalization of his property, and in the ordering of his family's financial and domestic relations.

John Redpath and his family

Redpath's background was essentially artisanal, like many who made up Montreal's growing middle class in the 1820s and 1830s.¹⁷ Having trained as a stone mason under Edinburgh builder George Drummond, he was mobile

14 The opposition to feudal tenure must be seen in the specific context of Lower Canada, where reformers were influenced by the pursuit of freehold tenure in the United States, France, and England. According to Richard Rodger, Scotland's bourgeoisie made use of existing feudalism to capitalize property and make fortunes throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries. See *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

15 The clearest discussion of these feudal obligations can be found in Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), Chapter Five.

16 Bettina Bradbury, "Debating Dower: Patriarchy, Capitalism, and Widow's Rights in Lower Canada," in Tamara Myers, Kate Boyer, Mary Anne Poutanen and Steven Watt (eds), *Power, Place and Identity: Historical Studies of Social and Legal Regulation in Quebec* (Montreal History Group, 1998).

17 While acknowledging the importance of the merchant class who rose to economic prominence in the wake of the Conquest, I subscribe to the view of a largely non-conformist (in this case Presbyterian), manufacturing "middle" class as described by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (University of Chicago Press, 1987).

enough to have immigrated to Canada at the age of about twenty in 1816, along with several of his brothers and Drummond's son Robert.¹⁸ He was also shrewd enough to cross the linguistic and confessional divide in Montreal and secure construction contracts for a wide variety of public projects, including Notre Dame Church, the British and Canadian School, the Theatre Royal, the Bank of Montreal, and above all the Lachine Canal. He married in his early twenties to Janet McPhee, a woman slightly older than himself who was the daughter of a business contact in Upper Canada; over the following decade the couple would have six children. For some years the family was based in Jones Falls, a village along the Rideau River in Upper Canada, where they shared living quarters with John's married sister Elspeth who had recently immigrated. From Jones Falls, he supervised the construction of the Rideau Canal, a project that would bring him a small fortune. And, by the 1830s, he was in a position to invest in banking, river transport, and real estate, and to be offered directorships in several rising corporations.

Upon completion of the work on the Rideau Canal, the Redpaths settled in Montreal in a new house in the old town. In the late summer of 1831 their five children were Elizabeth (11), Peter (10), Mary (7), Helen (4), and Jane Margaret (2). A sixth child, Jane, had died at the age of three some years before. A seventh, John James, was born early in 1834.¹⁹ As Scots Presbyterians, the family had attended St Gabriel Street church, Montreal's "High Kirk," but as of 1831, being "held very firmly by the Puritan theology", they broke away to join the more evangelical St Paul's Presbyterian congregation.²⁰ The minister of St Paul's, the Reverend Edward Black, ran an academy to which the Redpaths sent their son Peter; they also made regular payments throughout the later 1820s for Elizabeth's education, although it is not clear which school she attended.²¹ The Redpath family would continue to embrace an evangelical form of Presbyterianism: John served for many years as the superintendent of St Paul's Sabbath school, and in the 1840s would spearhead the Montreal movement to establish the Free Church, a congregation that objected to the control over local church organization by the Church of Scotland. The family owned a lot in the Protestant Burial Ground just to the north of the old town, and it was here that they buried their daughter Jane. In the summer of 1834 she was joined by her mother, who died from complications resulting from the birth of John James.

18 Richard Feltoe, *Redpath: The History of a Sugar House* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., 1991), 23.

19 Feltoe, 290. Jane and Jane Margaret should not be confused; Victorian families often gave the names of their deceased children to younger siblings.

20 Robert Campbell, *A History of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, St. Gabriel Street, Montreal* (Montreal: W. Drysdale, 1887), 390.

21 James Croil, *History of St. Paul's Church, Montreal* (Unpublished manuscript in the Church of St Andrew and St Paul Archives, c. 1909) MMA, PO85-B/6, 20169, Household Expenses: regular entries, 1827.

Left with a baby and several young children, Redpath took his family to Jones Falls to stay with his sister Elspeth. Over the course of the next few months he also made trips to the nearby city of Kingston to visit his old friend Robert Drummond and – agreeably and conveniently for a widower – Drummond’s eighteen-year-old sister, Jane, who had recently joined him from Scotland.²² Robert’s sudden death later that year left Jane in an awkward position, and it may have been this, as much as whatever charms Redpath had to offer, that convinced her to agree to marry a man twice her age with six children. The couple were married in September 1835 and set up house in Montreal.

This second marriage, and especially Jane Drummond’s youth, had considerable significance for the Redpath family fortune, the space they created for themselves, and even the shape the city would take. On the whole, John Redpath remained on good terms with his older children, making generous arrangements for their inheritance (arrangements which, as we will see, also suited his business undertakings) and going into partnership with sons Peter and John James; the presence many years later of Jane Margaret Redpath living with her married older sister, and not her father and step-mother, is the only indication that tensions may have arisen within this “reconstituted” family. Certainly more could be made here of the process that Peter Gossage refers to as “stepfamily formation.”²³ At any rate, Redpath had a very different relationship with his second family. In part, this was because it had a different legal foundation, based as it was on separation of property rather than community of property²⁴ – a distinction that would have ramifications for business. The second family also represented a new personal venture. Significantly, the purchase of the mountain estate coincided with the birth of Jane’s first child, Margaret, in October 1836 and the development of the suburb over the following decade echoed the growth of this young family. We know very little of what Jane thought of her life in Montreal, but the world that was created at Terrace Bank was no doubt a comfortable one. She was to live there for seventy years, the last thirty-eight of them a widow, and the last twenty two (except for servants) alone.

In the early decades of the century, the mountainside had been the domain of self-styled gentlemen farmers, fur traders for the most part, who had made their fortunes and opted to retire to Montreal and live at least part of the year amid the orchards of Mount Royal’s southern slopes. [Figure 1] Although it would be an exaggeration to say that the area had fallen on hard times, by the

22 Feltoe, 29.

23 Gossage, “Tangled Webs: Remarriage and Stepfamily Conflict in 19th-Century Quebec,” in Tamara Myers et al, *Power, Place and Identity*.

24 For a discussion of the differences, see Bradbury, “Debating Dower,” 59-60.



Figure 1

1830s it did seem that a golden age had passed. The leading fur traders were long dead, their heirs living elsewhere. James McGill had bequeathed his estate to the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, a public body whom he expected to build a college on the site but which had done little by 1836 save lease the land to a farmer. François Desrivères, who was the area's single largest landowner in the 1820s, went bankrupt fighting the Royal Institution for control of McGill's estate, to which he claimed rights given that his widowed mother had married James McGill.²⁵ It was the Desrivères estate that Redpath purchased in the autumn of 1836. By that time there were stirrings of interest in building a college on the nearby McGill land, and further up the hill to the west the McCord family had purchased a sizeable piece of land and seemed ready to build a summer retreat there. With the purchase of the Desrivères property, the Redpaths were in a position to do something similar.

25 For a complete account of this contestation, see Stanley Bryce Frost, *McGill University For the Advancement of Learning* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1981), Chapter Two, and Cyrus MacMillan, *McGill and its Story* (London: John Lane, 1921), Chapter Three.

THE ROAD TO TERRACE BANK

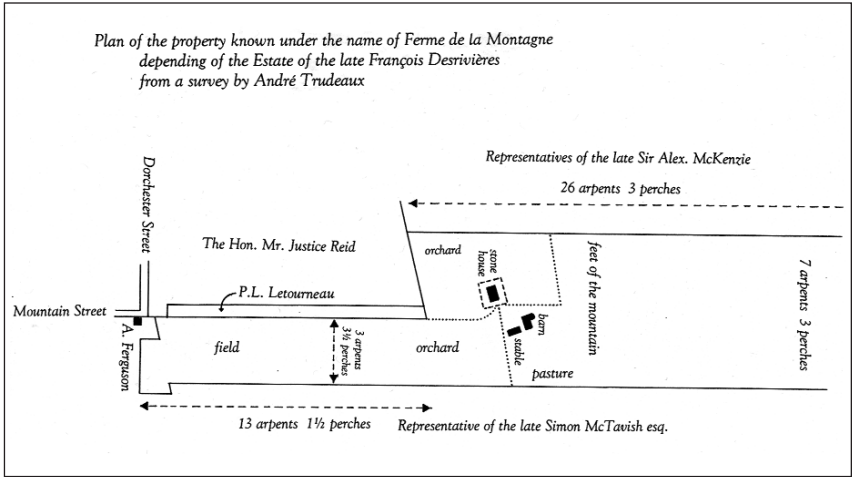


Figure 2

The Redpaths' new 235-acre estate consisted of a strip of land over 1500 feet wide running from slightly above the level of Sherbrooke Street for more than a mile over the top of the mountain and part way down the other side, plus a narrower strip 700 feet wide running down to about the level of Dorchester Street.²⁶ A plan attached to the deed of sale, drawn by the surveyor André Trudeau, gives some sense of the estate's appearance and types of terrain. [Figure 2] The lower strip was field, used for grazing like most of the lands on either side. The higher ground consisted of orchards, and contained the house, the stables, and the barn. A private road ran up to the house from the corner of Mountain and Dorchester streets, with the Redpath field to the right and the adjoining Letourneau farm to the left. The upper portion of the estate, by far the largest, consisted of densely forested mountaintop.

After some years of neglect and the usual travails of winter, the Terrace Bank grounds did not look their best in the spring of 1837, but Redpath was evidently determined to make something of the place. By the beginning of May he had taken steps to restore the lower part of the estate as a working farm:

I have ... engaged a farmer with his sub and each of these has his plough and pair of horses, they have already turned over about forty acres 16 of which I intend to plant with Murphy and the remainder with oats and peas. The orchard has been very much neglected and my object is to put the land into good condition in the first place and then lay it out in some way which I think, will answer the purpose. I have also got a gardener at work with his sub ... We

²⁶ ANQ-M, Bedouin #5012, 4 November 1836.

expect to move about the beginning of June when nature is clothed in her most gorgeous robes and you know the view is delightful.²⁷

The language here reveals the Victorian appreciation for nature – and even more, the Victorian fascination for bringing order to it. The natural setting was also part of a growing desire to create domestic space away from the bustle of town; clearly the Redpaths' efforts to improve the grounds was done so that they could make Terrace Bank their permanent home. Work went on over the summer, and by the end of July the family was able to move into the house, putting their former residence up for sale. Redpath was then able to declare to a friend that they now had "all the necessary enjoyments of life...and feel no inclination for company or what the world falsely calls amusements."²⁸ It would seem from his letter that his wife and children agreed.

This apparently idyllic life would be interrupted a few months later by the outbreak of the rebellions, which resulted in violence in the streets of Montreal and, even after order had been restored by British troops, widespread fear of social unrest. The following spring, Redpath complained that Lower Canada was "full of Rebels and any kind of business [is] at a stand." For this situation, he blamed the British government for not taking Canada's problems seriously, though he expressed optimism in "what Lord Durham will do for us ..."²⁹ The difficulty selling the house in town was proof enough, if proof were needed, that this was not a time to embark on any new economic venture. Ever one to take advantage of a situation, however, Redpath found a tenant for the house in no less a prestigious figure than John Colborne, the general in charge of suppressing the rebellions and the man who would succeed Durham as governor.³⁰ By 1839 Colborne and the British troops had routed the last of the rebels and restored a sense of order, at least to the business community. The Special Council was in the process of governing by decree, setting in motion the mechanisms by which bourgeois democracy would be implemented. For the Redpath family, the return to order was symbolized in August 1839 by the birth of John and Jane's second child, George.

The idea of subdividing part of the estate may have had its origins in the 1837 decision by the local "magistrates" to extend Sherbrooke Street westward from the St-Laurent faubourg across the fields on the mountain's lower slopes.

27 MMA, PO85-B/6, 20147, Letter Book: Letter to C. Carthidge, 6 May 1837.

28 Ibid., Letter Book: Letter to Joseph Classen, August 1837. Compare Redpath's statement of contentment to that expressed by James Luckcock in 1820 regarding his new home in the suburbs of Edgbaston: "I have all my heart could wish. The house and garden planned by myself, the situation picturesque, secluded and charming ..." see Davidoff and Hall, 17.

29 MMA, PO85-B/6, 20147, Letter Book: Letter to J. Clarke, 20 April 1838.

30 Ibid., Letter Book: Letters to Commissary General Brice, 10 November 1837 and 2 February 1838.

This plan proved a crucial factor in shaping the Redpath estate, both as a family home and as a potential suburban development. While the grounds were still being prepared for the family's move, they received notice that this thoroughfare, intended to be eighty-feet wide, would soon be run across the estate at the base of the orchards, resulting in the destruction of several trees. Redpath promptly hired two local gardeners to mark the line of the proposed street, calculate the expected damage, and put a monetary figure on it so he could seek compensation. In submitting this bill for damages, Redpath assured the magistrates that he was agreeable to ceding them the land required for the street, provided that they would have the lower fields refenced and the road to Terrace Bank capped with a gate.³¹ Sherbrooke Street would not be completely laid out until 1839, but as it began to take shape it suggested certain possibilities. A wide street running parallel to the front of the house, and perpendicular to the property's boundary lines and the line of the road to Terrace Bank, made it possible to conceive of the rest of the property in terms of a grid of building lots. Equally timely was Redpath's acquaintance with land surveyor John Ostell, who was at this time supervising the construction of the Arts Building on the upper part of the nearby McGill estate. The two would have a long business partnership, including their mutual involvement in city planning and eventually in the construction of the sugar factory along the Lachine Canal.

Mountain real estate

The Redpath estate comprised four distinct geographical zones – a fifth was the vast mountain wilderness above – each lending itself to a different sort of treatment. Below Sherbrooke Street, the land was relatively flat, consisting of open fields. Above, the lower slopes of the mountain sported orchards, the land divided into east and west sections by the line of the road to Terrace Bank. Further up, at the head of the road, lay the house itself and its grounds, an area that the Redpaths were careful to retain for themselves throughout the period of their real estate transactions. According to the Trudeauaux plan, Terrace Bank was a stone house in a yard surrounded by a low wall; it was almost certainly akin in style to Burnside, James McGill's farmhouse lying some distance to the east, though probably larger given that so many well-to-do people inhabited it for a quarter century.³² Like the Redpath home, Burnside stood at the head of a long straight lane which also led to a barn and stables. Terrace Bank was,

31 Ibid., Letter Book: Letter to George McKircher and John McGergor, 22 June 1837; letter to "the worshipful the magistrates of Montreal," 23 June 1837; letter to P. Auger, Road Treasurer, 6 Sept 1838.

32 Frost, *McGill University*, 57. According to Frost, Burnside contained a hall and two large (24 foot square) rooms on the main floor, an extensive cellar with kitchen and servants' quarters, and a top floor with at least two finished rooms and plenty of attic space. See also ANQ-M, Isaac Jones Gibb #13712, 23 March 1852.

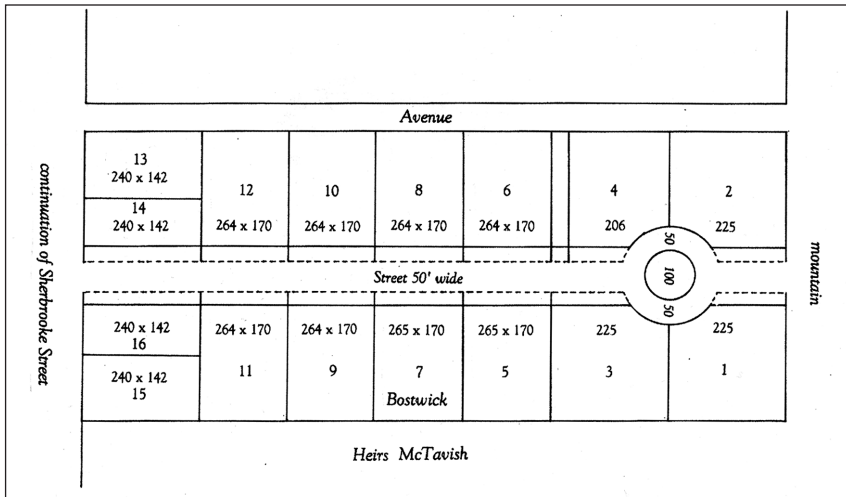


Figure 3

however, on much higher ground, and surrounded by orchard – a site for potential development that almost spoke for itself. The part of the estate to the east of the road, rising up to the line of the Redpath barn and stables, combined all the advantages of Terrace Bank itself without infringing upon the house or the view from it. Accordingly, it was this zone that Redpath chose to sell first.

In the spring of 1840 Redpath hired Ostell to design a subdivision plan for this area that would best exploit its natural features. Ostell proposed two ranges of large-sized lots straddling a wide central avenue rising up from Sherbrooke Street. [Figure 3] The avenue was to be named Drummond Street, in honour of Jane's family. With nothing more than a design on paper to mark this strip of land as a subdivision scheme, Redpath advertized as follows:

The subscriber having had several applications for Building land, has laid out the most eligible part of his property into Sixteen lots containing about one acre and one third each ... nearly the whole are in Orchard ... combining such advantages of soil and situation, commanding a most extensive prospect of the City, River and surrounding country ... their proximity to the City rendering them equally desirable for permanent residences or summer Cottages. The approaches to them are by Sherbrooke Street, which is eighty four feet and by Mountain Street which is about sixty feet in width. A superior road through the centre of the Lots is now in progress, and will be completed in the course of the summer ... [Apply to] Mr Ostell, Architect and Surveyor, Notre Dame Street, opposite Recollets church.³³

33 *Montreal Gazette*, May 1840.

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The advertisement is a curious combination of pastoral imagery (being “in orchard,” measured by “acres,” “soil and situation,” “extensive prospect,” “summer cottages”) and practical references. All in all, the tone is one of enterprise, of establishing the print of urban living on the mountainside. The care that was taken to supply lots with adequate roads and other services marks the spread of the city and its values out into the country, and not merely the popularization of the art of gentleman farming. It is for this reason that the advertisement so matter-of-factly refers to the “proximity of the city,” a remark calculated to distract potential purchasers who might have considered these lots rather far from town. To emphasize the advantages of a site – in this case the mountain and the views and the general sense of space – and to downplay the disadvantages of distance is the task of the suburb promoter. In the 1840s, the transition from farmland to suburb was still a very tentative one; it had to be established in the mind before it could be marked on the ground.

When the ad said that “several” people had already inquired about lots, this was above all a device to impress prospective buyers: it removed any doubt that the land was desirable, and instilled a vague sense of urgency. But there was nothing urgent about the scheme. Several developments, in fact, suggested that it would be prudent to wait for more dust to settle. One was the prospect of a political settlement of the general disruption in effect since the start of the rebellions; it would occur the following February in the form of legislation creating the Union of Canada. Hard on its heels would come the renewal of the incorporation of Montreal and the forming of the municipal “Committee on Roads and Improvements,” on which Redpath would sit and devote his considerable expertise as a builder and shaper of space. Even more relevant to land subdivision was the commutation ordinance, to which Redpath promptly responded. In December 1840, he commuted all that part of the estate that comprised the proposed subdivision and the strip of field below Sherbrooke Street.³⁴ Within a month he had transacted his first sale, “free and clear of *cens et rentes*,” to Orlin Bostwick, who purchased Lot No.7 half way up the avenue on the east side.³⁵

As it turned out, this sale was premature, giving the subsequent passing of the Registry Ordinance, which presented an opportunity to eliminate potential problems. Redpath began to make arrangements with his children by Janet McPhee, beginning with the eldest, Elizabeth, who had recently turned twenty-one and had married newspaper editor and temperance advocate John Dougall. The married partners were “separate as to property,” but John Redpath and Janet McPhee’s union had been under the older marriage regime; Elizabeth, at the age of majority, had a right to claim her inheritance from her mother, which

34 ANQ-M, Patrice Lacombe #808, 22 December 1840.

35 ANQ-M, Bedouin #5631, 20 January 1841.

could have taken the form of property – namely, the subdivision scheme. Accordingly, “trusting ... her father to make by will or otherwise such provision for his family,” she renounced any claim to the estate in return for a *donation*. Appropriately, this *donation* took the form of a lot on Drummond Street, No.4 at the top, next to Terrace Bank. With this last step completed in the transition to land capitalism, Redpath and Bostwick agreed to have the previous sale cancelled and a new one issued that would be free of the burden of Elizabeth’s potential claims.³⁶ Further purchasers came forward over the summer and autumn of 1841, including wealthy merchants David Torrance and William Workman, who bought several contiguous lots each.³⁷ These sales eventually brought in over £4000, a figure that can be compared favourably with the £10,000 cost of the entire estate six years before.

With the success of the Drummond Street scheme, Redpath decided to develop the lower part of the estate. Once again, Ostell designed the subdivision plan, now with careful reference to the intentions of the Committee on Roads and Improvements (of which he was also a member), namely to extend Ste-Catherine and Dorchester streets westward. For these streets, Redpath donated the necessary land to the city, which would be responsible for macadamizing and building sewers. The plan also called for three new north-south streets, one of which was Mountain Street, once part of the road to Terrace Bank. Each of these new streets was to be sixty-feet wide. The subdivision’s forty-eight lots were to be 120 by 145 feet on average, smaller than their counterparts on the higher subdivision, but far larger than was usual in urban areas. [Figure 4] For this sale, Redpath and Ostell resorted to an auction, which would have the effect, they hoped, of stirring up public attention on the lots and driving their prices up. To limit the supply, only twenty-eight lots went on sale in September 1842. The auction was well publicized; this time Redpath’s advertisement was simpler and more straightforward, leaving no doubt about the use of the lots or their most outstanding feature: “The delightful situation of these Lots renders them admirably adapted for private residences, besides being situated on spacious and airy streets, within about fifteen minutes’ walk of the centre of the city. The Lots are from 145 to 150 feet front, and contain nearly 20,000 superficial feet each. Easy terms of payment will be given.”³⁸

The appeal to spaciousness and airiness would not have been lost on dwellers in the old town. The result was more than satisfactory: all twenty eight lots were sold – even Ostell made a purchase – for an average of about £210 per lot.³⁹ The deeds, issued over several days by notary Thomas Bedouin, are

36 ANQ-M, Bedouin #5712, 10 July 1841 and #5716, 12 July 1841.

37 MMA, PO85-A/9, Account Book, July to December 1841.

38 *Montreal Gazette*, 2 September 1842.

39 ANQ-M, Bedouin #5914 through 5925, 20-24 September 1842; also #5935, 21 October 1842 and #5953, 24 December 1842.

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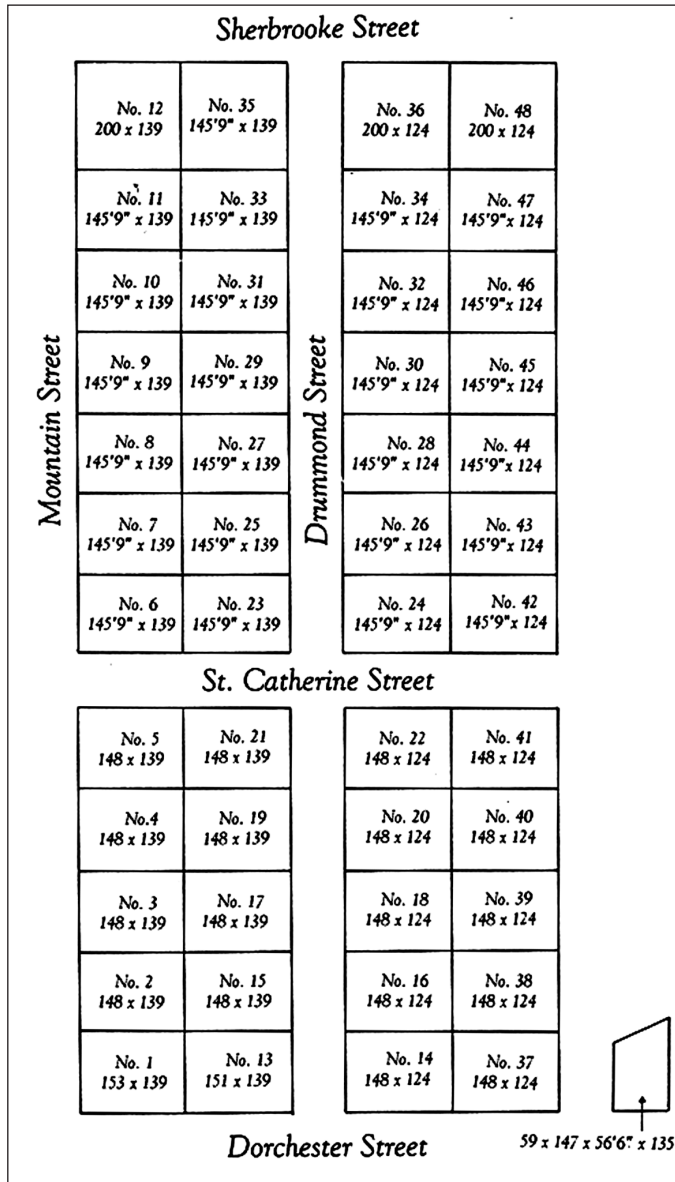


Figure 4

clear on the terms of payment, which the advertisement claimed were “easy.” A purchase required a downpayment, typically one-sixth of the agreed total price, which was normally paid before the deed was signed. The balance was to be paid in five equal instalments, on 1 June of each year. As such, the sale brought Redpath nearly £900 in downpayments, and the promise of approximately the same amount, plus 6% interest, every year for the next five years. At subsequent intervals over the following months, Redpath judiciously auctioned more lots, with similar success.

By that time, Redpath had purchased, and commuted, additional land along Sherbrooke Street to the west of the road to Terrace Bank, thereby allowing him to offer lots fronting on the street.⁴⁰ On the eastern side of the road, construction had already begun on large family homes for the Torrances and Workmans, who used their multiple lots to create long estates, placing their houses well back from Sherbrooke Street. With this pattern as a model, Redpath created five spacious lots (three of them roughly 100 feet wide, the other two 155 feet wide) fronting on Sherbrooke Street with their backs to Terrace Bank and its gardens. There would also be two roads: one, Ontario Avenue, dividing the three smaller lots from the two larger ones, and the other, Redpath Street, running up alongside the boundary with the adjoining farm. [Figure 5] In the summer of 1844, the three smaller lots were sold for £333.6.8 each, and the other two for a total of £1100.⁴¹ The purchasers of the larger lots proceeded gradually to buy more land from Redpath higher up the slope, so that by the early 1850s they formed two strips measuring 640 feet and 400 feet in length respectively.⁴² The Redpaths permitted this degree of sprawl as it, and the houses built on these estates, were an asset to this emerging community. As Terrace Bank lay over a thousand feet from Sherbrooke Street, a fair amount of land could be granted before the house and its gardens would be encroached upon.

It should be noted that, with very few exceptions, purchasers of the Redpath lots did not build houses on them until well into the 1850s; by that time, many lots had exchanged hands several times. What Redpath had created, and then exploited, was not so much a building boom as a kind of mountain fever: a fascination for this capitalized land as real estate, and for the promise of a residential suburb shaped by Redpath’s advertising and Ostell’s maps. The confidence of the 1840s did not necessarily translate into an actual willingness to follow the Redpaths up the mountain – this would come in the

40 ANQ-M, Bedouin #5754, 3 November 1841; Lacombe #1035, 30 December 1842; Thomas Pelton #1870, 13 July 1844; Lacombe #1602, 13 July 1844.

41 ANQ-M, Pelton #1878 & 1879, 24 July 1844, and #1891-93, 7 August 1844.

42 ANQ-M, Pelton #1943, 19 October 1844 and #2080, 30 April 1845 and #2157, 22 July 1845 and #2450, 18 July 1846; Joseph Belle #12344, 16 August 1851.

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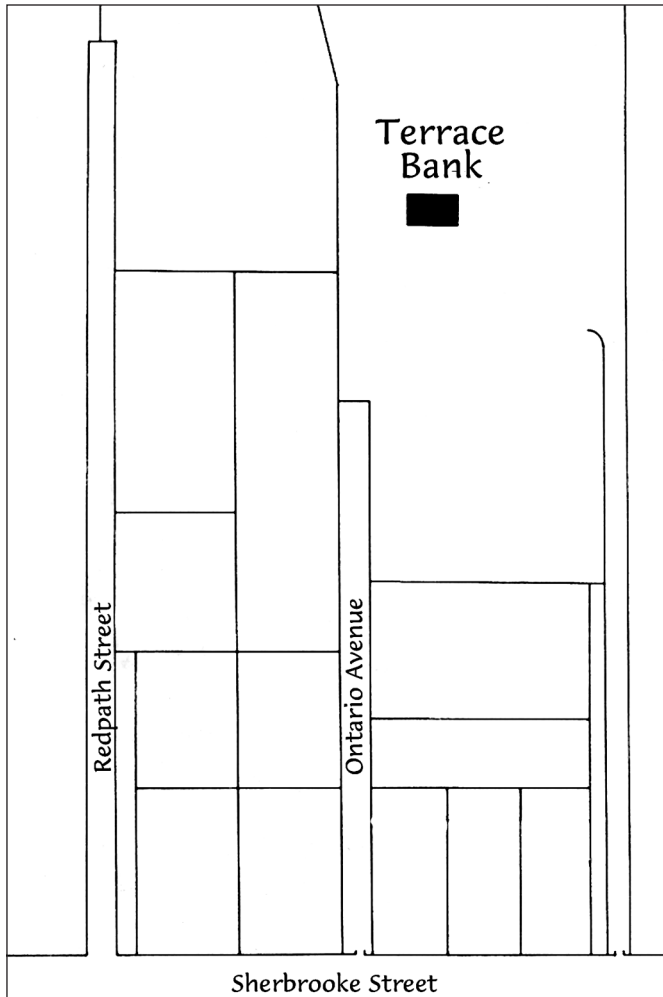


Figure 5

1850s and 60s in the wake of industrialization and ethnic tension – but it did spark a wave of land speculation that formed the foundation of the community. Furthermore, when homes were built they did not always correspond to the pattern suggested by the plans. For example, instead of a series of inward-facing houses on either side of Drummond Street, the Workman and Torrance families purchased several lots and created long estates, their houses facing downhill. Equally, the smaller squarish lots of the lower subdivision, which seemed ide-

ally suited to building detached homes, were eventually lined with terraces. These unexpected developments, however, should not detract from the effectiveness of the plans to inspire purchasers and, indirectly, to shape the built environment.

The period of mountain fever was brief. By 1846, British economic policy provoked a severe contraction of capital, curtailing the optimism that had characterized the preceding half decade. Once again, it was not a climate for financial risk, although local initiative would gradually result in an industrial boom in the 1850s. The Redpath venture into mountain real estate was, fortunately for them, almost at an end. In 1853, when the economy had turned again, Redpath sold more land bordering Ontario Avenue and Redpath Street, most of it consisting of large lots on which bourgeois families would eventually build mansions.⁴³ In such cases, the Redpaths had to strike a balance between making a profit from sales of land and preserving enough of their domain for their own enjoyment. By the end of that summer, the estate had been subdivided as much as it could be without endangering the family domain. The bulk of the Redpath subdivision activity, however, had been completed by 1846 – a time when most neighbouring landowners were just beginning to attempt to sell lots. Redpath had the perspicacity to market and sell his commodity when demand was high. As a result, he raised a staggering amount of capital. In little over a dozen years, sales on this one estate – on which the family continued to live in grand style, with little infringement on their space – generated nearly £25,000. With this sum, Redpath proceeded to build his sugar refinery on the Lachine Canal, the contract for which was signed in December 1853.⁴⁴

Shaping the landscape

The importance paid to space in the advertisements and legal documents related to the sale of Redpath lots should not be surprising. A sense of space is crucial to the transformation of land into built environment; it implies a human presence, be it houses or other buildings, places of recreation, or burial ground. In all cases, family is central to this human presence. Family members constitute the inhabitants of houses and graves (both of which are often celebrations of family) and of churches, schools, parks, and frequently places of work. The overall effect of this human presence is to make a new environment desirable. The Redpath subdivision schemes, and the language employed to execute them, marked the territory in a way that not only made it attractive real estate, but launched a nascent community. Members of the Redpath family were part of this spatial transformation; as continuing residents of the area's first real home,

43 ANQ-M, Belle #13584 & #13585, 3 June 1853.

44 Feltoe, 40.

they set the example for potential newcomers. It was partly for this reason that Redpath took such pains to provide property for his children within the subdivision; even away from Terrace Bank itself, family members served as advertisements for successful suburban living.

To describe the creation of space as a process of transforming land into a built environment is not to imply, of course, that rural land is somehow undifferentiated. Topographical variation is the obvious determinant of landscape, as is vegetation and other types of land use. One of the challenges to the Redpath schemes was to adapt the idea of subdivision to several different types of terrain: flat field, sloping orchard, and even forest and rock. The Drummond Street plan called for the transformation of an orchard, effectively from farm to pleasure garden. The enjoyment of cultivation, although a tangible feature of these lots, was also a selling point; the frequent use of the term “orchard” in advertisements implied a good deal more than a back garden with apple trees.⁴⁵ Even so, the presence of trees alone meant that these lots were a world apart from the city, however conveniently situated. The subdivision of the fields below, by contrast, relied almost exclusively on Ostell’s plan and careful marketing to attract purchasers. The relative flatness and shapelessness of these fields was turned into an advantage by the phrase “spacious and airy streets.” This was a quaint conceit, given that there were no streets, only fields which could not be anything but spacious and airy. Nevertheless, the reference to streets helped conjure up the buildings that would one day line them. When built up, instead of giving a view of more fields and the city beyond, the area would look inward on its own features, contained by the lines of streets.

Streets, therefore, had enormous potential for creating order, for bringing land under control, as it were. Like lots, streets were abstract definers of land – somewhat less abstract when lines were actually drawn: lots had to be surrounded by fences, and streets had to be lined with buildings in order to begin to take tangible form. Unlike lots, streets had no real value in the most basic terms of land capitalism: whereas lots brought profit to the landowner when sold, streets had to be conceded to the city in order to provide access to the lots. At another level, however, everything depended on the street, making its appearance a key determinant of the successful capitalization of the land. This was as true for the Drummond Street subdivision as it was for the fields below, as the terms of the first deeds of sale suggest:

In as much as ... Drummond Street is laid out to be ninety feet wide, and the intention of the said seller in giving it that dimension is principally to afford a better view *of the other lots* which are to be bounded by the said street ... the

45 See the advertisement quoted above; John Redpath himself referred to this development as the “North Orchard.” MMA, PO85-A/9: Account Book, 23 July 1841.

said purchaser shall forever have the right of enclosing immediately in front of the said lot with an open rail fence, and planting of trees or any kind of ornamental shrubs or flowers [on] a space of twenty feet out of the said ninety feet by the whole front of the said lot, but not at any time to erect or place thereon any other fence or any building whatsoever on pain of forfeiting the right arising ... from the present clause.⁴⁶ [emphasis mine]

By means of this stipulation Redpath intended to control the appearance of the new development, ensuring a sense of openness at the expense of stables or other structures that might otherwise have cluttered the street frontage. Although one might expect the width of the street to have been intended to afford a view of the city below, it was assumed that residents would give more significance to the view of each other's properties. Aesthetic standards were, and are, central to a street's orderly image, and in this case the orderliness was very much by way of contrast to the old town. Equally important to a suburban street, however, is the ability to supervise; when neighbours are constantly alert to the appearance of each others' homes, and to the use of each others' space, they reinforce a standard of behaviour. In these new, largely middle-class residential areas, therefore, public space served to preserve the propriety, and by implication the safety, of the community. This notion is, of course, highly ironic, given that public space had always been seen by the bourgeoisie as the domain of the popular classes, and therefore morally and physically dangerous. The regulation of public space, which so preoccupied nineteenth-century middle-class reformers, was here done naturally and unselfconsciously – except to the degree that it was anticipated in the deed of sale.

What was true for these new streets did not apply to the road to Terrace Bank, which remained a lane running up from Sherbrooke Street, lined with trees to separate it from the lots on either side and to create the effect of a grand entrance. Theoretically, this lane was an extension of Mountain Street, part of the lower Redpath subdivision, which was lined with lots and increasingly with buildings. The Redpaths, however, left no doubt that this was a private road: the lane was sealed at its base by a set of formidable gates which, in addition to highlighting the grandeur of the Redpath estate, proved a notable adornment to Sherbrooke Street. The lane rose in a straight line to the level of the Dougall property, whereupon it branched, one route leading sharply to the left where it meandered up to the front of the house. With relandscaping over the course of the 1850s and early 1860s, which accompanied the refurbishment of the house itself, this route took the form of a circular drive with a fountain in the centre. [Figure 6] The drive passed in front of the main entrance and two large bay win-

46 ANQ-M, Bedouin #5630, 20 January 1841. Note that the twenty-foot spaces referred to in the deed were later incorporated into the lots, making the street's actual width fifty feet, as shown in the plan.

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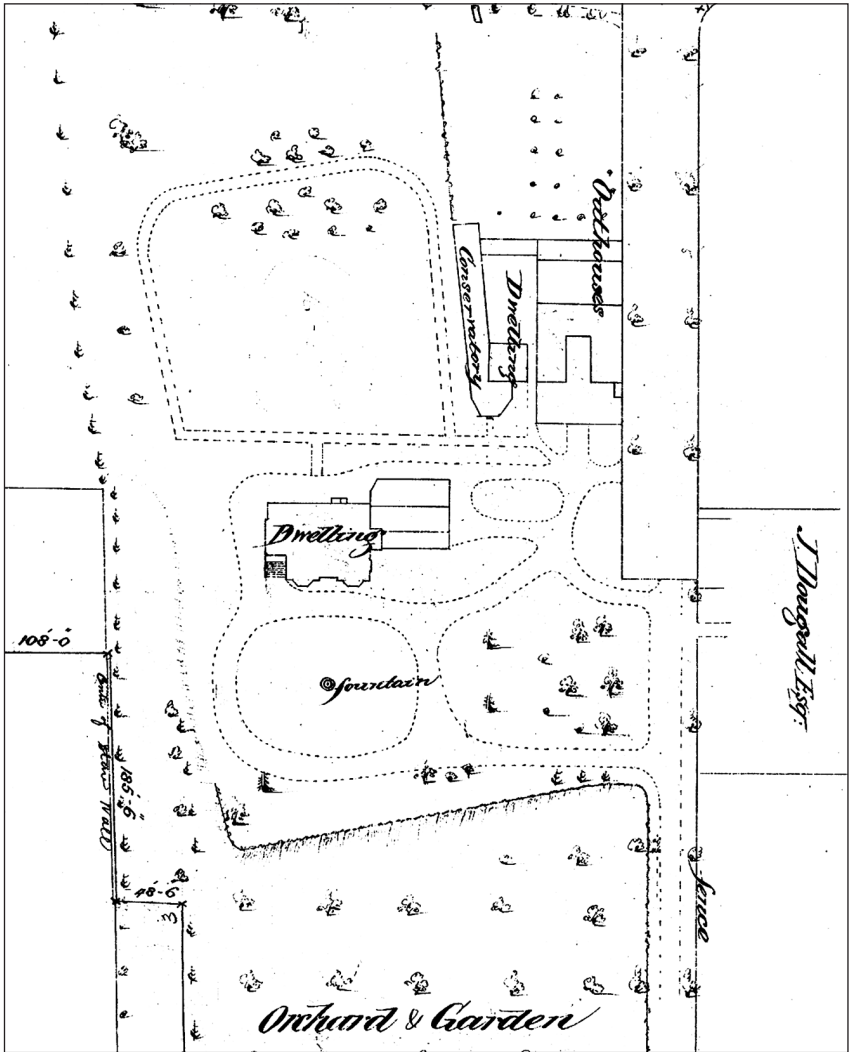


Figure 6

dows, useful for inspecting approaching visitors.⁴⁷ The drive also ran behind the house and led to the barn, conservatory, and gardener's quarters, which were also connected to the main lane. The lane continued straight up to the level of the top of Drummond Street, and then snaked up into the forest.⁴⁸

The private means of access that this road afforded set the Redpath family home apart from its neighbours, and yet the house and grounds were in plain view. In keeping with the suburban sense of community, outdoor activity and exterior adornment were part of public space. The new house, the gardens, the drive, and the fountain (perhaps the ultimate piece of conspicuous exterior furniture) were all meant to be seen, even if they were difficult to reach. The Redpaths guarded their distinction carefully. The last piece of land sold at the top of Redpath street, purchased by the Greenshields family in 1853, would have touched the edge of the Terrace Bank "nursery" and garden had it run in a straight line – but the boundary line of the Greenshields property was angled so that a 39-foot gap remained between it and the Redpath flowers.⁴⁹ Despite this proximity, there was no direct access between the two properties. On the east side, the line of trees along the lane kept the gardener's house and other "outbuildings" somewhat out of sight, hiding what might have been considered unattractive rural elements.⁵⁰ In another light, however, a resident gardener was crucial in maintaining landscaped grounds for both private pleasure and public spectacle. Some of the Redpaths' neighbours with similarly extensive grounds employed day labourers to tend to their gardens, but a resident gardener represented an additional layer of social status even if his home was partly hidden from view.⁵¹ The Terrace Bank conservatory, also located to the rear of the house, was another status symbol that was nevertheless crucial to keeping the grounds well-supplied with flowers.

By contrast to the well-maintained landscape of gardens and orchards, the mountain above remained a wilderness of rock and tree. If streets, houses, and gardens represented the steady encroachment of civilization up the mountain-side, the Redpath family home marked its northern limit. Despite a number of travelers' accounts of visits to the top, the mountain was a very private place in the 1850s. This was the way landowning families such as the Redpaths wanted it. The wilderness agreed with Victorian Romanticism, although its gloom also

47 ANQ-M, *Cartothèque*: CA601, S53, SS1, P644.

48 ANQ-M, J.S. Hunter #213, 22 September 1853, and #244, 30 December 1853.

49 See sketch plan attached to ANQ-M, Belle #12585, 3 June 1853.

50 In 1861, Terrace Bank still boasted two cows, two pigs, and three horses in addition to the apple trees that had to be cultivated; taking care of all these was the job of Henry Bowden, described as a "farmer" in the census return, who shared the cottage with his wife Jane and their grown daughter Elizabeth.

51 There were other such gardeners listed in the census for this area, but not many; their absence on other large estates suggests the use of day labourers.

represented danger of a sort, particularly to families. The taming of the wilderness, therefore, without sacrificing the sense of nature altogether, became the true reflection of the Victorian spirit. As of 1852 this spirit was personified in Mount Royal Cemetery, a venture started on the far side of the mountain by a number of the city's Anglo-Protestant business leaders, including Redpath.⁵² Instead of the congested downtown graveyard, Mount Royal Cemetery was intended to be a model of modern burial space: a vast, natural landscape penetrated by a minimal human presence, enough to civilize but not so much as to lose a sense of wonder.⁵³ The cemetery trustees' own description of their new property recalls the language of Redpath's subdivisions:

[There is] on the other side of the Mountain a tract of land ... possessing sufficient depth of soil, rivulets and springs to make ponds and lakes, well-wooded, and with an undulating surface and beautiful for situation – retired from the bustle and heat of the City, and yet near and convenient of access.⁵⁴

The cemetery, with its mix of nature and design, would later serve as a model for the Mount Royal Park, for which most of the mountain landowners sacrificed terrain in the 1870s. Although beyond the scope of this paper (and the lifetime of Redpath, who died in 1869), the creation of Mount Royal Park would complete the transformation of the mountain into civilized space, especially for the families of the mansions below.⁵⁵

The rebuilding of Terrace Bank in 1861 was done in part to accommodate a large number of children, although the main reason was no doubt the family's comfort and status. Indeed, by 1861, Redpath's children by his first marriage had all moved away. He had facilitated this process by making donations of land to various children: Elizabeth now lived in a house on the Drummond Street lot her father had given her in 1841, and Mary received a lot on the lower subdivision at the time of her marriage to banker Thomas M Taylor in 1851.⁵⁶ The Dougall

52 Mount Royal Cemetery Archives (hereafter MRCA), Minute Books, 8 April 1851.

53 For more on the development of Mount Royal Cemetery, see Brian Young, *Respectable Burial* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003). For more on the rural cemetery, see Blanche Linden-Ward, "Strange but Genteel Pleasure Grounds: Tourist and Leisure Uses of Nineteenth-Century Rural Cemeteries" in Richard E Meyer (ed), *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture* (Ann Arbor, London: UMI Research Press, 1989).

54 MRCA, Minute Books, Annual General Meeting, April 1852.

55 For a treatment of the creation of the park, see Irene Murray, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Design of Mount Royal Park, Montreal." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. XXVI: No. 3, October 1967. See also Frederick Law Olmsted, *Mount Royal, Montreal* (New York, 1881).

56 ANQ-M, Gibb #13183, 23 August 1851. The original purchaser had proved unable to make all his payments and the property was returned to Redpath in 1849.

family home was linked as much to the road to Terrace Bank as it was to Drummond Street, and became in effect a part of the parent estate; in the census they gave Mountain Street as their address. The Taylors built two semi-detached brick houses on their lot, and sold one to Peter Redpath, who moved in with Grace Wood, whom he had married in 1847. The two families lived side by side for some years. In 1857 Helen Redpath married Jane's younger brother George (thereby making her father her brother-in-law) and they moved to a house on St-Antoine Street, a short distance further down the hill. In 1861, John James Redpath, Janet McPhee's youngest child, was living with his sister Helen; John James and George Drummond were by now, along with Peter, principal figures in the family sugar business.⁵⁷ In that year, the unmarried twenty-eight-year-old Jane Redpath was living with her elder sister Elizabeth rather than with her father in Terrace Bank – a departure from Victorian custom that may indicate a problem between stepmother and daughter (who shared the same name, coincidentally). At any rate, it seems that, although Redpath wished to keep his older children nearby, Terrace Bank was the domain of his children with Jane Drummond. In 1861 the oldest of them, Margaret, was twenty five; the youngest, William, was three. At no time between the Redpath's arrival in 1837 and the late 1870s (when William was grown) were there no children at Terrace Bank. Similarly, the Dougall, Taylor, and Drummond homes were also full of children, confirming the significance of family to this suburban landscape.⁵⁸

Family remained equally important after death. In many ways, the Redpaths' most extensive and significant land sale (although not the most lucrative) was the one made to Mount Royal Cemetery. The northern boundary of the Redpath estate touched on the cemetery's original periphery, but in late 1854 Redpath decided to sell the trustees the topmost 49 acres.⁵⁹ The family had little use for this piece of property, but for the cemetery it represented a significant expansion of its territory, which until then had amounted to only 74 acres. Moreover, the addition meant that the cemetery now covered a major portion of the mountain's northern slope, and could now offer more prestigious lots on the higher ground for the city's wealthier Anglo-Protestant families. The Redpaths had owned (but not used) a lot in the older part of the cemetery, but readily abandoned it for a much larger one ("L1") in this more dramatic location. It was in this lot that John and Jane buried their daughter Harriet in May 1858. Some months later, they brought the remains of Wilhemmina, Isabella, and Charles from the downtown burial ground; these were children who had died during the 1840s, private tragedies that had undermined the public success of the subdivision schemes. Removing bodies from the old burial ground was common practice at this time, the result of a desire to keep the

57 Feltoe, 59.

58 1861 Manuscript Census for Montreal, Nos 4356, 4363, 6172, 6609.

59 MRCA, Minute Books, 3 November 1854.

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whole family together. On the same occasion, Janet McPhee's remains and those of her young daughter Jane were removed to the Mount Royal lot.⁶⁰ Janet was given a separate marker, some feet away from the main monument.

John and Jane, and their remaining children, would eventually find a home within this lot. John's epitaph was typically understated, emphasizing his good works over his business achievements. Yet, on another level it was far from modest; this was a man of the Victorian bourgeoisie who had no doubt as to his own importance:

Montreal, in its material progress, bears the marks of his mind and character. In this, and its Christian and benevolent institutions, may be found his best monument.

The reference to the city's material progress was fitting for someone whose efforts had contributed so much to the city's expansion; the creation of space was, by implication, Redpath's monument. By contrast, Jane's epitaph is conventional, inevitably defining her as Redpath's wife and quoting a verse from the Bible about being at rest. As the eldest resident Redpath son (Peter died in England), John James was buried in Lot L1 along with his family.⁶¹ Married women were normally buried in their husbands' lots, but again John Redpath took steps to ensure that some, at least, remained close: the Taylors and the Dougalls occupied adjoining lots, L2 and L3 respectively, and later sons-in-law (Bovey, Fleet, Plimsoll, etc) would receive portions of L1 for their families. In this manner, the residential arrangements within the extended Redpath family on one side of the mountain were reproduced on the other side in the cemetery.

The pattern established by the Redpath family was soon followed by others of similar background. The small amount of construction that took place on the estate during the early 1840s – some terraced houses on the lower subdivision, some mansions above Sherbrooke Street – gave way to a building boom by the 1850s with the economic recovery. Terraces soon lined Mountain and Drummond streets and many other parallel streets to the east and west. Nearer to Terrace Bank, the Torrance and Workman families were soon joined by the Greenshields, the Gaults, the Holtons, the Mackays, and the Mulhollands. These families were all leaders of the city's Anglo-Protestant bourgeoisie; their members would sit on the boards of various charities and companies (including the Mount Royal Cemetery) along with John Redpath and his sons – and, in some cases, Jane and their daughters. The 1860s and 70s would see nearly all of Montreal's wealthy English-speaking families relocate to the mountainside,

⁶⁰ MRCA, Record of Interment, 18 November 1858.

⁶¹ John James' daughter Amy would use part of Lot L1 to erect a separate monument for her husband, Thomas Roddick. This monument, one of the cemetery's showpieces, deliberately resembled the gates to McGill University, named after Roddick.

along with the institutions that served their needs: Protestant churches, the High School of Montreal, McGill University, and various libraries and museums – including the two on the McGill campus bearing the Redpath name. Houses, streets, and institutions served to establish this community as essentially English-speaking and Protestant. These families purchased lots in the Mount Royal Cemetery, typically on the higher ground that was originally part of the Redpath estate; all erected imposing monuments, often with epitaphs outlining their achievements and personal piety. Thus, the transformation of the mountain in the wake of the Redpath subdivision led to an articulated set of expectations for Montreal's wealthy Anglo-Protestant families, beginning with life on the southern slopes and ending with burial on the other side.

Conclusion

The fortunes of the Redpath family from the late 1830s to the early 1860s neatly reflected the dramatic social transformations taking place in Lower Canada during this period: changes in class relations, in the possession of land, in the buying and selling of property, in the marriage regime, in the regulation of space, even in aesthetics – if the Neo-Gothic style of the rebuilt Terrace Bank is an appropriate indication. Through the agency of the subdivision schemes (which is not to overlook, of course, the huge significance of the later Redpath business empire) the family benefitted from virtually every aspect of this change. Their ongoing presence on the mountainside allows us to see the family's involvement in real estate activity, and by extension shows how real estate activity directly shaped the lives of family members.

Naturally, the story of the Redpaths is a special one; the symbiotic relationship between family and built environment is not typical of land developers. Nevertheless, it is clear that the history of city building should not ignore the importance of family (in all its diverse meanings) to the success of projects, large or small. Equally clear is that discussions of family ought to involve an awareness of space; domestic relations, inheritance practices, social reproduction, and even sentiment, do not take place in a vacuum. In any case, the community that took shape on the side of the mountain in the wake of the Redpath subdivision schemes had a great impact on the fortunes of many families who came to live there; this particular space helped define a whole class of people. In this light, we must be sensitive to the nuances of what constitutes public space. The desire to set oneself physically apart from public life (which is the essence of suburbanization), and even the desire to find a fine and private place after death, does not by any means imply a removal from the boundaries of public space. Nor was such a removal desired by these families. Their homes and gardens, the streets they lived on, and the monuments they built, projected an image that marked these families in the public imagination, and they used this image to great effect in business careers, in political life, and in the marriage market.