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Susan Bugey

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Résumé de l'article

Une donnée importante de la construction du paysage urbain du XIX^e siècle fut l'apparition du « maître d'oeuvre » qui, à Halifax, se produisit vers 1860 et qui changea considérablement le rôle des constructeurs de bâtiments : en effet, des artisans spécialisés devinrent ainsi des entrepreneurs capables de faire face aux nécessités de la construction à grande échelle. Ils se chargeaient de travaux dont l'envergure permettait l'emploi d'une main-d'oeuvre permanente et menaient à bien tous les aspects de l'entreprise. L'un d'eux fut George Lang, maçon écossais qui, entre 1858 et 1865, obtint des contrats pour la construction d'un certain nombre de bâtiments d'importance dans Halifax en pleine croissance. Une étude sur un de ces « maître d'oeuvre » nous éclaire en partie sur le paysage urbain, bien qu'il reste beaucoup de travail à faire pour élucider les rapports entre constructeurs, artisans et architectes, sur le rôle de la législation, sur l'approvisionnement en matériaux et la nature de ceux-ci, sur l'aspect économique de la construction et sur la relation entre les bâtiments et l'environnement urbain.

BUILDING IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY HALIFAX:

THE CASE OF GEORGE LANG*

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Susan Buggiey

Résumé/Abstract

Une donnée importante de la construction du paysage urbain du XIX^e siècle fut l'apparition du "maître d'oeuvre" qui, à Halifax, se produisit vers 1860 et qui changea considérablement le rôle des constructeurs de bâtiments: en effet, des artisans spécialisés devinrent ainsi des entrepreneurs capables de faire face aux nécessités de la construction à grande échelle. Ils se chargeaient de travaux dont l'envergure permettait l'emploi d'une main-d'oeuvre permanente et menaient à bien tous les aspects de l'entreprise. L'un d'eux fut George Lang, maçon écossais qui, entre 1858 et 1865, obtint des contrats pour la construction d'un certain nombre de bâtiments d'importance dans Halifax en pleine croissance. Une étude sur un de ces "maître d'oeuvre" nous éclaire en partie sur le paysage urbain, bien qu'il reste beaucoup de travail à faire pour élucider les rapports entre constructeurs, artisans et architectes, sur le rôle de la législation, sur l'approvisionnement en matériaux et la nature de ceux-ci, sur l'aspect économique de la construction et sur la relation entre les bâtiments et l'environnement urbain.

An important element in the construction of the nineteenth century cityscape was the "master builder," who in Halifax emerged in the late 1850s and early 1860s, and who significantly changed the role of builders from, primarily, artisans in particular trades to contractors with capacity to meet the needs of large scale construction. They were men who undertook building on a scale sufficient to employ a continuous workforce and who usually carried out all aspects of a contract. One such man was George Lang, a Scottish mason, who in the period 1858 to 1865 contracted for construction of a number of major buildings in growing Halifax. The study of one such "master builder" provides some insight into the study of the cityscape, though much work remains on the inter-relationship of builder, artisan, and architect, as well as the role of legislation, the nature and supply of material, the economics of the building process and the general relationship of buildings to the urban environment.

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*A version of this paper was first presented to the annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada in May 1978.

Canadian historians have not paid much attention to building either as an indicator in urban expansion or as an industry. It has not received here any of the intricate study of its economic or labour perspectives that H.J. Dyos and his colleagues have given, for example, to the London building world. This may be due in part to the absence, outside Quebec, of readily accessible records relating to building. It may also be a result of the largely social and demographic concerns of urban history to date. A study of the career of Halifax builder George Lang (1821-1881) can, however, throw light on some broader aspects of building in that mid-nineteenth century city.

Halifax in the 1850s was a booming provincial town. Population growth, new local and provincial autonomy, commercial optimism, and economic prosperity contributed to a sense of well-being and a dedication to the Victorian ethic of improvement. All of these circumstances stimulated building activity in the town. At the same time three catastrophic fires in the downtown core within a five year period (1857-61) provided the catalyst for major changes in the townscape of that area.

Although F.S. Cozzens, on his visit in 1859, found Halifax a "quaint mouldy old town pok[ing] its wooden gables through the fog,"¹ the city was already beginning to shed its somewhat dingy appearance for larger-scale, more fashionable, stone and brick structures and blocks. This new building, some of it architect-designed, was to give downtown Halifax, particularly the area east of Barrington Street to the harbour, its predominant

character for over a century. Some parts of it remain relatively intact today.

Many factors contributed to the townscape which emerged. A "brick law" passed in 1857 required that new buildings in the downtown core be constructed of stone or brick. In addition to the new regulations, the sheer quantity of construction going on encouraged investment in the supply of the sturdier building materials. Technological developments made available other materials, particularly mass-produced cast iron ornament and wooden finishing products. Moreover, the period coincided with a rejection of classicism and a new taste for decoration which found its most fashionable expression in the Italianate mode. All of these features, in a period of prosperity, created opportunities for design and construction which attracted architects and builders to Halifax.

It was the builders who put the many facets - design, materials, utilities - together in the art of building. The business section of the *Halifax City Directory* for 1858-59 lists twenty builders; that for 1863 only five. At the same time, the number of joiners rose from eleven to thirty-seven and masons from eight to twenty-one, while other segments of the building trades, including cabinet-makers, painters and building suppliers, remained relatively stable.² In this brief period the high demand for building services changed the definition of the term "builder" in Halifax. In 1858, all those who provided general building services styled themselves builders. They were apparently skilled artisans willing to undertake contracts for whole

structures; they themselves probably carried out the portions related to their particular trades and contracted with others to carry out the other trades. Usually the principal was either a mason or a carpenter. By 1863 the five builders listed - George Blaiklock, Robert David, George Lang, Robert Malcolm and Henry Peters - had all undertaken building on a scale sufficient to employ a continuous workforce who usually carried out most aspects of the contract. They were also those reported most frequently in the newspapers as having tendered on important building projects and having taken building contracts. During the five year period they had been actively engaged in the supply of building materials to the town, the commercial rebuilding of the downtown core, and the expansion of domestic and institutional building. An examination of the career of one of these builders, George Lang, affords some view of the nature of the builder's role and of building operations in mid-nineteenth century Halifax.

Although Lang's building career lasted less than a decade - 1858 to 1865 - it is typical in many respects of the experiences, accomplishments and stresses of his longer-lived competitors. The fact that he is remembered today while his contemporaries are largely forgotten is attributable to one work. In a city where the British garrison and naval presence are still proudly remembered, Lang's fame rests upon a military monument. In 1855, at the height of the Crimean War, patriotic Haligonians subscribed to erect a monument to honour two of Nova Scotia's sons killed in duty at Sebastopol: Augustus Frederick Welsford (1811-1855) and William B.C.A. Parker (1820-1855). Lang

was chosen to carve the monument. Work got underway in 1859, and by July 1860 the "perfect figure of a lion, life size" had been completed and raised into position in St. Paul's Cemetery where it stands today (Fig. 1).³ Lang's association with the Welsford-Parker monument made his name a household word in the town. The lion he made his trademark on several of the buildings he subsequently undertook.

Like almost all nineteenth century Halifax builders, Lang was not a native son. A Scottish mason, he was born around 1821 in Roxburghshire. His first known work was on the Scott Monument erected in Edinburgh between 1841 and 1846 as a memorial to novelist Sir Walter Scott. The work was infamous for the exposure it caused workmen to the sulphurous Craigleith stone, and in later life Lang claimed to be the only survivor of the crew of masons who had worked on the monument. A contemporary account indicates that Lang went from Edinburgh to St. John's, Newfoundland at the behest of Bishop Feild who had just obtained plans for his Cathedral of St. John The Baptist from the English architect Sir George Gilbert Scott. He probably arrived among a group of Scottish masons in 1847 and 1848 to work on the cathedral. Massive destruction by fire in 1846 led to substantial rebuilding in St. John's. Lang may have gained further building experience there before moving to New Brunswick in 1851 as resident manager of the new Albert Quarries.⁴

From Albert, Lang moved to Halifax in 1858. His short career there included all four types of major building activity in the town at mid-century: governmental,

commercial, institutional and domestic.

Of these, governmental building is the most easily identified and the most extensively documented. Incorporation in 1841 and the granting of responsible government in 1848 brought control of the public purse and a sense of financial power to provincial and municipal government. Both these developments stimulated government spending; building was one of the forms such spending took. New structures erected in the Halifax area between 1850 and 1865 included a new market house (1854), a lunatic asylum (1856), a city prison (1857), a city hospital (1857), a county court house (1858), a county jail (1863), and a provincial customs and post office building (1864).⁵

A well-established system for regulating government construction existed in the province. After the legislature had passed an enabling act authorizing funds, commissioners were appointed to obtain plans, call for and select tenders, and oversee completion of the construction. They might hold an architectural competition or name an architect directly. In either case, the architect was responsible for creating a design for the building conformable with the sums and materials specified by the commissioners, for supplying the plans and specifications, for overseeing the construction, ensuring its workmanship and adherence to the specifications, and for issuing the certificates of completion which enabled the builder to obtain payment.⁶

Lang's Halifax career began and ended with major government contracts. It began with the Halifax County Court House designed

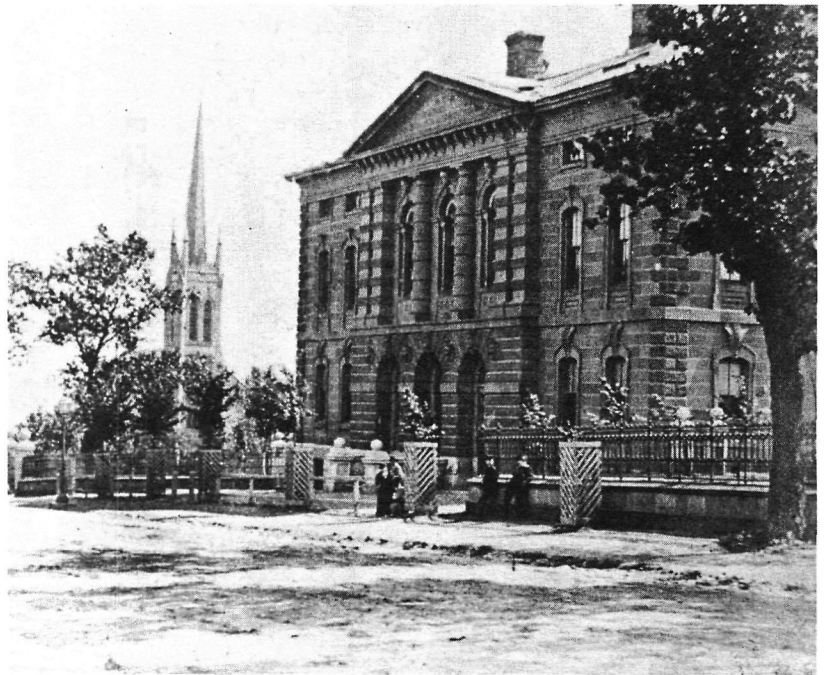
in 1858 by William Thomas and Sons of Toronto. Lang's competitors for the contract for constructing the court house represented the leading building firms in Halifax: Robert Malcolm, an Englishman who had emigrated to Halifax in 1832 and had been involved in the local building scene ever since; Robert Davis, an experienced builder whose local work included the market house, the prison, the lunatic asylum and two banks; Peters, Blaiklock and Peters, a firm of Quebec principals who had been active in Halifax since undertaking construction of the Fort Needham Barracks for the British army garrison in 1852. Although Malcolm's low tender was accepted, he surrendered within a month, citing serious errors in calculations. In the new round of tenders, Lang's low bid of £8952 was accepted. Begun late in 1858, the building was opened late in 1860. While the commissioners complained that work had not progressed as rapidly as the contract specified, Lang received favourable comment in the local press which established him firmly as a competent and responsible builder in the town.⁷ With alterations, repairs and additions the court house continued until 1972 to fulfill the purpose for which it was constructed. It now houses the provincial library system.

In a period which saw both the Crimean War and the American Civil War, the British military and naval presence in Halifax provided another significant source of government spending. The 1850s saw the completion of the Halifax Citadel and construction of the huge Fort Needham Barracks. Lang was peripherally involved in military construction, through work at the Barracks and at Fort Massey



Inauguration of the Sebastopol Monument, St. Paul's Cemetery, Halifax, 17 July 1860. Photo by W. Chase. The bold leonine sculpture punctuates the south end of Barrington Street as a commercial thoroughfare and helps to unite the green space of the cemetery to its architectural neighbours. (Source: Nova Scotia Museum).

Halifax County Court House, 1860s. The court house features the vermiculated and rusticated stone and the carved head keystones characteristic of the work of its designers, William Thomas & Sons. It was George Lang's first building contract in Halifax. (Source: Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia).



in south Halifax in the early 1860s.⁸

While government construction was important to the building industry because of its large scale and its assured payments, its structures tended to be widely distributed throughout the city. It was instead commercial building which had the largest impact on the downtown cityscape at mid-century. Haligonian merchants had profited from the freeing of trade represented by British repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and by the introduction of reciprocity with the United States in 1854. Shipbuilding and international trade stimulated Halifax's provincial hinterland which the Intercolonial Railroad promised to extend. Negotiations were underway to terminate a British monopoly on development of Nova Scotia's coal resources while gold rushes as far away as California and Australia stimulated exploration and expectation in the Nova Scotian gold fields. Three destructive fires in this period of prosperity were the proximate stimuli to a commercial building bonanza in the town.

Until mid-century Halifax was remarkable for the absence of the large scale fires common in other colonial towns. Then, in 1847, 1859 and 1861, fires each wiped out two full blocks of central Halifax.⁹ Commercial rebuilding in the burnt out district in 1857 and 1858 was stone and brick, three or four storeys high, expressive of the local prosperity and business confidence. When the already substantial north block of Granville Street, the centre of the Halifax dry goods trade, was destroyed in 1859, citizens called for "a range of buildings which, for uniformity, beauty and

simple elegance, cannot be surpassed in America" and for seizing the "present opportunity" to "grac[e] that district with something akin to model edifices." Within three months designs had been prepared for at least seven proprietors by William Thomas and Sons of Toronto, through their local partner, C.P. Thomas.¹⁰ The major structure in the group was the Palace Buildings, a range of six warehouses for four merchants, at an estimated cost of £15,000. The contract for the whole work went to George Lang. Situated in the centre of the west side of the block, they were constructed to a single design: four storeys high, with ornamental cast iron shop fronts with wrought iron rolling window shutters, and Albert freestone facades on the upper storeys. The buildings were completed and opened late in 1860.¹¹

In addition to the Palace Buildings, Lang was involved in the construction of three other buildings in the same block. One was E. Billing and Company's elegant London House just to the right of the Palace Buildings. Lang was responsible only for the mason's work on this structure, the carpentry having been let as a separate contract. Atop the structure stood Lang's symbol, a carved stone lion. On the extreme right the most northerly structure in the block was a four storey brick and stone store and warehouse again constructed by Lang. Above the cast iron shop front, the facade was covered with Portland cement and trimmed with freestone quoins. At the opposite end of the block Lang constructed two warehouses for Robert Romans, known as the Prince of Wales Building, again to the designs of Thomas and at a cost of £4200.¹² In fact

only two structures in the block were not done by Lang. All those done by Lang had cast iron shop fronts from Daniel Badger's Architectural Iron Works in New York.¹³

Lang's Granville Street buildings were still standing until 1978 when the structures were demolished. Taken down stone by stone, the facades have now been reconstructed in the hotel complex currently under development by Durham Leaseholds Limited. Lang's buildings were all on the west side of the street and none are included in the completed Historic Properties development of the east side of the street.

As Lang's experience with the Granville Street buildings shows, the role of the builder in mid-century Halifax was a precarious one. Tendering was highly competitive; the builder had to estimate accurately his competition, his markets for both supplies and labour, and any technical problems. The usual contract for construction of a building provided specifications and supervision by the architect but left the contractor to finance his own operations, to find materials and labour, and to complete construction against an established deadline, often incorporating a penalty clause for failure to meet the date. Lang's contract for Romans' stores, for example, signed in August 1860, was to be completed by mid-April 1861, with a penalty of £90 per week for non-completion. Lang evidently completed on time. Payment was to be made 85 per cent on completion and the balance three months later. Lang had therefore to finance all his materials and labour costs during construction, an amount of more than £4000. In fact, Romans

was unable to pay the costs when the building was completed; in lieu of cash he gave Lang a mortgage on the property and on two other lots that he owned. Lang carried the mortgage until 1864 when he assigned it to his own principal creditor, James Forman. Similarly, Edward Billing paid Lang with two promissory notes dated two and three months respectively after opening. When Billing proved unable to pay them, he provided additional security via mortgages. When Billing assigned his property to creditors in 1862, Lang was one of four holding mortgages on the lands and buildings. There is no evidence that he recovered anything on the debt. Lang suffered further losses when the courts awarded him only 63 per cent of the claims for other debts that he sought through judicial channels.¹⁴

Lang's experience with the Granville Street buildings seems to have discouraged him from undertaking other private commercial contracts. While substantial commercial building continued on the fringes of the burnt out district through the early 1860s, Lang took only two further contracts - that for a four storey stone and brick store for the solidly-established hardware dealer Patrick Walsh and that for three brick and stone stores for magistrate David Falconer.¹⁵

With work on the Granville Street buildings largely completed by 1861, construction began to shift from private commercial buildings to structures for private institutions. That year the Union Bank, the Halifax Insurance Company and the Nova Scotia Marine Insurance Company all started major office structures. Lang took the contract for the last, a four storey building on Bedford Row



West Side of Granville Street, Halifax, 1860s. The rhythm and Italianate detailing of the twelve bay Palace Buildings dominate this commercial streetscape where uniform building heights, free stone facades and fashionable cast iron store fronts reflect the prosperity of Halifax in 1860. (Source Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia).

constructed in 1861-62 and demolished in 1935 to make way for Nova Scotia government buildings.¹⁶

Institutional building was religious as well as financial. In 1862 Lang constructed a school house on the grounds of St. Luke's Anglican Church. It was built in Lang's usual materials - stone and brick - and in a style befitting the Gothic church. At the same time Lang undertook a freestone library building for King's College at Windsor, designed by architect David Stirling.

Stirling was a Scotsman, born, like Lang, in the county of Roxburghshire. Whether Lang met him at home or in Newfoundland in the late 1840s is unknown. They were partners in the early operation of the Albert Quarries until Stirling departed for Upper Canada whence he returned to Halifax in 1862. King's College Library was the first of a series of building projects in which Stirling and Lang participated jointly.¹⁷

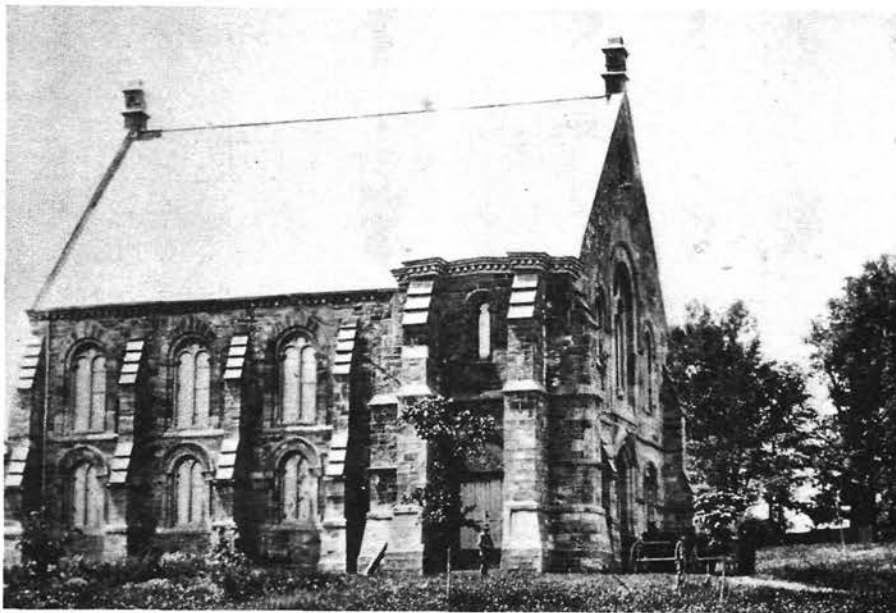
The most important of them was the Halifax Club, constructed in 1862-63. The premises for the leading gentlemen's association of the city were elegant and extravagant; in keeping with the image of the club, their rooms were "fitted in the most modern style and with all the improvements of the age."¹⁸ The club retains its original function today.

While governmental, commercial and institutional buildings were commissioned and thus built to meet a particular client's requirements, extensive residential construction in Halifax in the mid-1860s was carried out on a speculative basis. Concentration upon commercial

building from 1858 to 1861 had deprived the domestic market of building services. At the same time prosperity had created both the desire and the necessary affluence for better housing. With the decline of commercial building in the early 1860s, both builders and those who styled themselves house carpenters tended to shift their work forces to the domestic market. The break-up of large estates provided building lots on the fringes of the central core: the south portions of Hollis and Pleasant Streets, to the west on Queen and Morris Streets, beyond that in Smith's Fields to Victoria Road, and in the field between the Horticultural Gardens and Camp Hill Cemetery. The most noteworthy of this building appears to have been done by George Blaiklock and Henry Peters, formerly of the firm of Peters, Blaiklock and Peters, but at the time operating independent building establishments.¹⁹ Although Lang purchased a few building lots, apparently for speculative purposes, he does not appear to have undertaken any significant domestic construction except on contract. In 1863 he built the impressive Keith Hall, designed by the firm of Stirling and Way, for the brewer and politician Alexander Keith. At the same time Lang co-operated with Stirling and Way in the construction of some "Tudor style" cottages in the Bowery. In 1864 he undertook a house contract in Park Street. Lang's experiments with "Warren's Improved Fire and Water-Proof Roofing," his occasional bids on domestic contracts, and his purchase of building lots, mainly in 1864, suggests that it was promising opportunity elsewhere rather than lack of interest which largely kept Lang out of the busy domestic construction field.²⁰

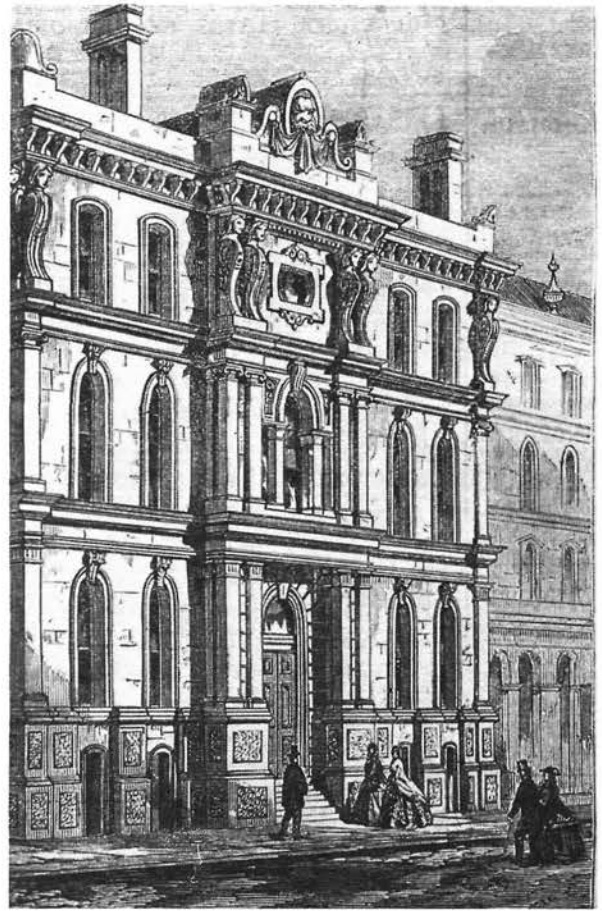


Nova Scotia Marine Insurance building (centre), Bedford Row, Halifax, c.1870. Extensive rebuilding in stone and brick, with ornamentation new in both style and material, transformed downtown Halifax on the eve of Confederation. (Source: Archives of Ontario).



King's College Library, Windsor, N.S. Stirling and Lang's buttressed structure, looking more like a church than a school, reflects the strong religious heritage with which its educational function was associated. (Source: Public Archives of Nova Scotia).

The Halifax Club, 1863. Designed by David Stirling and built by George Lang, the club appears here as pictured in the Illustrated London News at the time of its opening.



The Provincial Building, Halifax, c. 1870. Another Stirling and Lang building, this massive block structure displays the architect's virtuosity in handling Italianate forms. (Source: Archives of Ontario).

An important part of any building operation, whether it be commissioned or speculative, is the supply of materials. At mid-century a builder seems usually to have been expected to supply the materials required for building as well as to perform the building activity. Lang's career exemplifies this direct connection between building and the supply of building materials. From 1851 to 1858 he was resident manager of the Albert Freestone Quarries in Albert County, New Brunswick. Opened in 1851 under the joint management of Lang and David Stirling, the quarries were financed by Nova Scotian entrepreneur C.D. Archibald and his English associates. They were clearly intended from the outset to supply the American market, and by 1858, when the financing and management transferred from London to New York, they claimed to be supplying major points along the American eastern seaboard. When Lang left the company and moved to Halifax in 1858, he capitalized upon his intimate knowledge of the products and operation of the quarries to supply not only the block of freestone for the Welsford-Parker monument but also the stone required for his first two building assignments - the Halifax County Court House and the northwest block of Granville Street. Lang did not, however, introduce Albert freestone to Halifax, for Robert Davis had already used it in construction of the Bank of Nova Scotia in 1856.²¹

In the course of his Halifax career Lang was also involved in the supply of building materials. Unlike his principal competitors - Robert Davis, who opened a granite quarry at Birch Cove in 1855, and Henry Peters and George Blaiklock, who established a substantial

brickyard at Eastern Passage - Lang did not find his supply in the immediate Halifax area. In 1863, he opened a slate quarry at the Gore, near Douglas in Hants County, which was claimed to have produced the first important local supply of slate.²² Up to that time almost all slate used in Halifax had been imported. The unusual vertical formation of the Hants County slate made for particularly easy working.

Lang was not concerned only with the economic supply of building materials. He prepared selections of Nova Scotian building stones for display at the International Exhibitions in London in 1862 and in Dublin in 1865. These included blocks of dressed freestone from Tatamagouche, Wallace, Kennetcook, and Boulardie, Cape Breton. All were reported as being extensively quarried for building purposes and some as being exported to the United States.²³

Finally, having got himself into financial difficulties of which more will be said shortly, Lang spent the last fifteen years of his life operating a brickyard and tile manufactory in Shubenacadie.²⁴

Lang's final building contract - for a provincial customs building and post office - is worth examining in detail for the light it sheds on building operations in mid-nineteenth century Halifax. Since the Nova Scotia Marine Insurance building had been completed in 1862, six of its rooms had been rented by the provincial customs department. At that time public notice was taken of the need for a government building to house the customs service and the post office. A site immediately opposite Provincial House in

central Halifax was purchased in 1863; plans by Stirling were ready by the end of the year.²⁵ When tenders were called in January 1864, complaints were immediately raised against the short tendering period of one month. Accusations of collusion between the architect and a local builder were levelled.²⁶ Clearly the allusion was to Lang, for he alone of the leading Halifax builders had worked with Stirling since the latter's return from Upper Canada early in 1862, and together they had carried out five projects in the two years.

In any case, of the seven tenders entered, Lang's at \$89,800 was the lowest. It was, in fact, nearly \$10,000 lower than its nearest competitor and \$18,600 lower than the highest offer. For the sum, Lang undertook to provide all the materials and labour, to adhere to the plans and specifications in the construction, and to complete the building by 1 June 1866.²⁷

From the outset, a number of factors conspired against Lang's success. The project was thirty per cent larger than his largest previous undertaking, the Palace Buildings. In this instance, however, he could not rely upon the fully operational Albert Quarries for his supply of materials but turned to the quarry at Saw Mill Brook near Pictou where he employed quarrymen and a foreman directly. To handle the large freestone blocks for the walls, Lang purchased a forty horsepower steam engine from the United States.²⁸

On the site of the Provincial Building, Lang's contract provided for supervision and inspection by the commissioners, the architect and the newly appointed clerk of

works, and all of them were empowered to give orders to the workmen without Lang's sanction. This potentially hazardous division of authority coincided with trouble in the Halifax labour market. Early in 1864 the House Joiners Union Society of Halifax obtained an act of incorporation from the legislature. At the end of May 150 carpenters were reported on strike "in consequence of Master Mechanics not complying with the demand of the 'Union'" for an increase in wages. Business in the building trades was briefly at a standstill until most employers complied with the request. A month later the stone-cutters (incorporated 1865) were on strike demanding \$2 a day.²⁹ It is not apparent to what extent the union movement and the strikes actually affected work at the site of the Provincial Building. The scope of the project suggests, however, that Lang's existing work force was inadequate to the task and that he early came under pressure from the commissioners to increase the number of men employed; this he probably did, despite the turbulent and expensive labour market.

No single cause resulted in Lang's failure late in 1865. Nevertheless, financing the operation was clearly one of the contributing factors. On undertaking the contract, Lang raised \$10,000 by assigning Romans' 1861 mortgage to James Forman, cashier of the Bank of Nova Scotia, but here acting in his own right as Lang's principal financier. Forman had already put up \$13,000 for the Hants County slate quarry the previous year and subsequently advanced "very large sums of money" to enable Lang to pay the workmen and purchase materials for the construction. In return Lang assigned to him all the payments

received, totalling over \$26,500. Moreover, Forman claimed that over \$7,000 was still due to Lang, a sum estimated by an independent architectural evaluation at \$16,000. Lang was already familiar with discrepancies between completion of work and valid payment from his Granville Street constructions. An excess of expenditures over reimbursements clearly did contribute to Lang's inability to proceed with the contract to the satisfaction of the commissioners. By August 1865 it was rumoured that "each separate brick and stone is to be marked with the date of the year it was put in." In October Lang assigned his property and interests, valued at nearly \$15,000, to Forman, and by year end had surrendered the contract.³⁰ When new tenders were called in January 1866, John Brookfield, soon to become the leading contractor in Halifax, entered a successful bid of \$80,790 (only \$9,000 below Lang's original contract price). It took Brookfield two years to complete the structure.³¹ Confederation made the still uncompleted building the subject of an early federal-provincial squabble. A federal building for a century, it may now be returned to the province for use by Members of the Legislative Assembly.

In the fluid and precarious building world of mid-nineteenth century Halifax, Lang worked in various capacities - as a sculptor, as a mason where he had no other role in a construction, as a master craftsman where he contracted with other master craftsmen to provide building skills, but principally as approaching what E.W. Cooney has described as a master builder³² - that is, one who undertook to construct a whole building, making arrangements for the necessary

financing, and hiring all artisans and labourers required to complete the work. The nature of building in Halifax in this period significantly changed the role of builders from being primarily artisans in particular trades to being contractors with capacity to meet the varied needs of large scale construction.

While study of the career of George Lang has thrown light on some aspects of the development of the cityscape and the operations of the building industry in Halifax, other studies of various types are needed. Examinations of architects, like David Stirling, and of Lang's contemporary builders, would further clarify roles and relationships among architects, builders and artisans within the building industry. The industry itself needs study in terms of the legislation and practices governing it in various periods, the supply of materials through importation, local availability and local manufacture, and the changes in building technology and their effects on both design and construction. A synthesis of such studies could lead to a sound evaluation of the roles played by training, partnerships, design, materials, technology and economic circumstances in the evolution of the cityscape. The cityscape itself warrants attention to determine the impact not only of buildings but of the larger landscape. While the style, scale, and materials of individual buildings are usually recognized in historic assessments, the spatial relationships, ornamentation, materials and vistas contributed by the streets themselves have too often been overlooked in their impact on the cityscape. Serious study of the physical character of

Canadian cities in the past is largely just beginning.

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NOTES

- 1 Frederic S. Cozzens, *Acadia; or, A Month with the Bluenoses* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859), p. 18.
- 2 *Mugent's Business Directory of the City of Halifax for 1858-9* (Halifax, 1858); *The Halifax, Nova Scotia Business Directory for 1863*, comp. Luke Hutchinson (Halifax, 1863).
- 3 *Novascotian* (Halifax), 24 Dec. 1855, 2 Jan., 2 and 16 July 1860; *Acadian Recorder* (Halifax), 28 May 1859.
- 4 *Novascotian*, 25 Oct. 1858, "Mason" to editor; *Acadian Recorder*, 6 July 1881; PAC, MG17 B1, section 292, misc. papers, 1842-50.
- 5 *Morning Journal* (Halifax, 19 Apr. 1854; *Novascotian*, 16 June 1856, 20 Apr. 1857; *Acadian Recorder*, 24 July 1857, 9 Oct. 1858; *Evening Express* (Halifax), 16 Sept. 1863; 3 Feb. 1864.
- 6 See, for example, PANS, Vertical Mss. File, Halifax, Provincial Building (new), Agreement, 3 Feb. 1864; (hereafter cited as PANS, Agreement); *Debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia*, (hereafter cited as *Debates*), 1864, p. 26.
- 7 *Novascotian*, 13 Sept., 11 Oct. 1858; 31 Oct. 1859; *Acadian Recorder*, 9 Oct. 1858; *Evening Express*, 11 Feb. 1861; *Nova Scotia Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1860, App. pp. 681-2.
- 8 PANS, RG39C, 1862, #1278, Harris vs Lang.
- 9 The fires occurred on New Year's Eve, 1857, 9 September 1859 and 12 January 1861. *Novascotian*, 6 Jan. 1857; 12 Sept. 1859; 21 Jan. 1861.
- 10 *Novascotian*, 19 Sept., 12 & 26 Dec. 1859.
- 11 *Novascotian*, 26 Dec. 1859; *Halifax Reporter*, 3 Nov. 1860.
- 12 *Halifax Reporter*, 3 & 24 Nov. 1860; PANS, RG39C, 1862, #1314, Thomas vs Romans.
- 13 *Illustrations of Iron Architecture, made by the Architectural Iron Works of the City of New York* (N.Y., 1865), reprinted in *The Origins of Cast Iron Architecture in America* (New York, 1970), pp. 24-25.
- 14 *Acadian Recorder*, 9 Oct. 1858; PANS, RG39C, 1862, #1314, Thomas vs Romans; #1653, Murdoch vs Romans and Lang; #1654, Murdoch vs Romans, Duffus and Lang; #1555, Murdoch vs Billing et al; #1281, Lang vs Chipman; #1282, Lang vs Tropolet; PANS, RG47, Halifax County, bk. 130 f. 345; bk. 133 f. 166.
- 15 *Evening Express*, 28 Mar. 1862; 15 June 1863.
- 16 *Evening Express*, 17 Apr., 13 Nov. 1861; 29 Oct. 1862.
- 17 *Evening Express*, 28 Mar., 7 Apr., 12 May 1862; Queen's University Archives, notebook of David Stirling, photocopy in PANS, MG1, no. 1307B.
- 18 *Evening Express*, 19 May, 25 July 1862; 30 Oct. 1863; *Illustrated London News*, 14 Nov. 1863, pp. 496-7.
- 19 *Acadian Recorder*, 26 Oct. 1862; 14, 21 Mar. 1863, *British Colonist* (Halifax), 27 May 1862; *Evening Express*, 26 Feb. 1862; 22 Apr. 1863; 4, 15 & 26 Jan., 10 Feb., 20 Apr. 1864; 27 Mar., 14 July, 24 Nov. 1865.
- 20 *Evening Express*, 9 Nov.

- 1863; PANS, RG47, Halifax County, bk. 143 f. 537; *Acadian Recorders*, 2 Aug. 1862; RG47, Halifax County, bk. 140, f. 59; bk. 143, ff. 497, 713.
- 21 PANB, Registry, Albert County, bk. D, f. 379; bk. E, f. 530; bk. F, ff. 160-3; bk. G ff. 25, 72-74; *Morning News* (St. John), 8 May 1854; PANS, RG39C, 1862, #1315, O'Connor vs Archibald, *Novascotian*, 29 Nov. 1858.
- 22 *Novascotian*, 21 May, 22 Aug. 1855; PANS, RG47, Hants County, bk. 47, pp. 245-50; *Evening Express*, 13 Jan. 1864; *Eastern Chronicle* (Pictou), 7 Jan. 1864; PANS, RG39C, 1862, #4390, Mott vs Lang.
- 23 Nova Scotia. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1864, app. 35 (p. 32); 1866, app. 36 (p. 5).
- 24 Lovell's *Province of Nova Scotia Directory for 1871*, p. 361; McAlpine's *Maritime Provinces Directory for 1880-81*, pp. 250n & 465.
- 25 *Evening Express*, 29 Oct. 1862; 28 Dec. 1863.
- 26 *Acadian Recorder*, 2 Jan. 1864; *Evening Express*, 15 Jan. 1864.
- 27 *Evening Express*, 3 Feb. 1864; PANS, Agreement, PANS, VMF, Provincial Building, report of commissioners, 1 Feb. 1868 (hereafter cited as report of commissioners).
- 28 PANS, VMF, Provincial Building, affidavit by Robert Douglas, 15 Sept. 1869; *Halifax Reporter*, 11 June 1864; *British Colonist*, 14 June 1864.
- 29 PANS, Agreement; *British Colonist*, 5 Jan., 4 June 1864; *Evening Express*, 3, 29 June 1864; *Debates*, 1864, pp. 73, 294; 27 Vic. c.24; 28 Vic. c.75.
- 30 PANS, RG47, Halifax County, bk. 147 f. 493; bk. 150, ff. 591, 592; bk. 151 ff. 134, 136; Hants County, bk. 47 pp. 245-50; PANS, report of commissioners; PANS, VMF, Provincial Building, petition of James Forman; *Acadian Recorder*, 26 Aug. 1865.
- 31 *Acadian Recorder*, 20 Jan. 1866; *Evening Express*, 5 Mar. 1866; PANS, report of commissioners.
- 32 E.W. Cooney, "The Origins of the Victorian Master Builders," *The Economic History Review*, VIII (1955), pp. 167-76.