

Vendredi, 18 avril 2014 - 9h00

Friday, April 18, 2014 - 9:00am

📍 Maison Timmins, 55 et 65 Place Belvédère, Westmount
Timmins House, 55 and 65 Belvedere Place, Westmount

*Quand une maison n'est-elle qu'une maison?
When is a house more than just one house?*

Westmount Home Divided

The stately of the stately homes of Westmount is a house divided.

The \$500,000 castle Noah Timmins built on Belvedere Place in 1929-30 has been deftly carved into two sections, each a private residence in the \$100,000-plus bracket.

Westmount Architect Stanley Shenkman executed the delicate division by cutting a 23-foot-wide gap through what once was the billiard and trophy room and a section of a dining room.

"It would have been criminal to demolish the whole house," the young architect said. "That's why we decided on the division to save it."

"There are very few left like it, and I believe we should try to preserve as many of them as we can."

To John Maxwell, a Timmins family employee for 32 years, it was "just like a part of my own home being torn down."

He recalled days when it took a household staff of 13 to maintain the home, and nights when guests spilled out of the enor-

By AL PALMER

mous dining room onto the spacious terrace and its panoramic view of the city.

The huge home stood empty since the gold mine millionaire's widow, Lelia, died in 1958. It stood on 84,000 square feet (at \$3.50 per square foot) of land, taxes alone ran to \$10,000 per year.

It was heated by any of three furnaces, oil, gas or coal. There was an "emergency supply" of 30 tons of Welsh Anthracite still on hand when Architect Shenkman arrived last fall to draw up plans for the alterations.

"I found the pipes were of solid brass, one-eighth of an inch thick, and as solid as the

day they were installed," he explained.

"The house was fireproof and formidable, with steel and concrete framing. A masterpiece of building."

The smaller half of the home was recently sold for \$110,000. The larger half, even with a \$150,000 price tag on it, has already attracted prospective buyers.

The coach house, which stands apart from the main building, was sold for \$70,000 after a wing was added to it. The wing also is of Tudor-Norman architecture; part of it was constructed by materials from the demolished section of the main house.



> Photo: Devora Neumark



> Photo: Louise Lachapelle



> Image: Pierre Corriveau, Louise Lachapelle et Devora Neumark

Recognized as the first architect to apply modern methods in estimating building costs,¹⁰ Archibald stressed that future teaching in the field had to be more practical, dealing with every-day problems, not only of design, but also of economics. He believed strongly that architectural building economics should be a vital part of the curriculum of architectural schools if the profession was to retain control of building design and operation. He felt the architect had to be more familiar with his "materials" and to be able to get the best results at the minimum cost. He hoped that "the day of vulgar and ostentatious display of wealth in the shape of barbaric ornamentation in design is beyond the horizon."¹¹

Son oeuvre a valu à Archibald de nombreux honneurs du *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, dont un premier prix dans la catégorie des intérieurs résidentiels, pour le salon de la résidence N.A. Timmins, et un premier prix dans la catégorie des édifices publics, pour le temple maçonnique *Memorial*. Reconnu comme étant le premier architecte à avoir employé des méthodes modernes d'évaluation des coûts de construction, Archibald était convaincu que l'aspect économique de l'architecture devait être un élément essentiel du cursus des écoles d'architecture. L'un des premiers à ériger un immeuble en acier dans cette partie du Canada, Archibald fut aussi un pionnier dans la façon de calculer avec précision la quantité d'acier requise afin de donner aux aciéries des renseignements exacts. Ses méthodes et calculs ont servi de modèle pour l'enseignement de l'architecture de ce pays.

> JOHN S. ARCHIBALD, ARCHITECT (1872-1934), Irene Puchalski, Concordia University



> Photo: Alex Huot

Habiter le contemporain NOT BUILT FOR EXTRACTION

