

Parkwood National Historic Site

The Construction of Parkwood



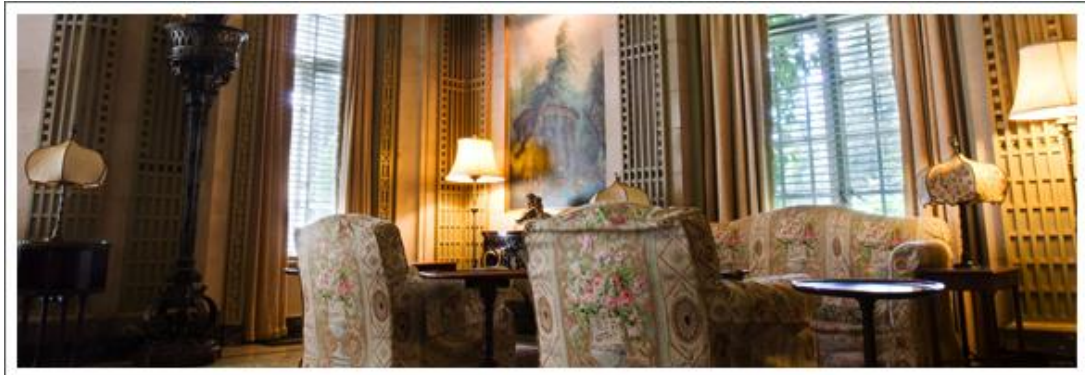
By early 1915, The McLaughlins had achieved “First Family” status in Oshawa and purchased the former Prospect Park to be the site of their new home. Parkwood was born of a collaboration between Sam McLaughlin, his wife Adelaide, and the best artists, architects and landscape designers of the time.

Inspired by early 20th century Beaux-Arts design, the mansion was built between 1915-17, shortly before McLaughlin became founding President of General Motors of Canada.

The mansion represents a rare residential design by architects Darling and Pearson, the team who are widely credited as an outstanding influence on Canadian institutional architecture. They were responsible for endowing towns across Canada with over a thousand Edwardian Baroque revival Beaux Arts style buildings. In addition to Parkwood, in Toronto they designed such monumental structures as the Toronto General Hospital, the University of Toronto and the

Royal Ontario Museum. It is said that Pearson created a Canadian icon when he designed the tower of the new Centre Block of Parliament in 1917.

The house is Classic Revival in style, with some Georgian features. Additions and alterations were done in the '30's and '40's, which included the addition of two interior spaces in the classic Art Deco style, by award-winning Toronto architect John M. Lyle.



While inspired by the historic villas, chateaux and stately homes of Europe, the McLaughlin's fashioned their estate to include the newest trends and innovations. The design of Parkwood's architecture, interior decorations and garden landscapes are all imbued with a 20th century style and a distinctly North American sensibility, including some outstanding examples of art moderne. Although uncommon to the period, the most modern systems for comfort and convenience were incorporated into the house design, including a central clock network, and in-house telephone system, an elevator, a central vacuum system, remote controlled consoles for an outdoor lighting system, air conditioning, climate-controls for the art gallery, a humidification system, sophisticated heating and water systems and a walk-in refrigerator!

Parkwood was designed for entertaining, with unusual recreational features, amenities and novelties to be enjoyed by the McLaughlin's and their many guests. These remarkable features continue to delight today, including a squash court, a grand conservatory, a rare Aeolian organ, a heated indoor swimming pool, a bowling alley and a games room.



