

NEWSLETTER

December 8, 1977

DECEMBER MEETING

DATE Wednesday, December 14, 1977
8:00 p.m.

PLACE Philomene Terrace, 375 Daly Ave.

Heritage Ottawa will have an opportunity to tour the two city-owned houses that form part of this handsome terrace built by Honoré Robillard in 1874-75.

Clifford Ham and Desmond Underhill from the City of Ottawa will talk about the city's reasons for having bought these properties, and the restoration work that was undertaken on them. Once restored, the houses will be put on the market for sale. This is the only opportunity the public will have to tour them before they are advertised.

Some of the other units will also be open to view. Mary Roaf has made arrangements for Heritage Ottawa to see some of the long-occupied houses which will show the different ways that owners have modified a basic plan to reflect different life-styles and decorating preferences.

FUTURE MEETINGS

In January, Heritage Ottawa will join in celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Rideau Club with an event to be held there. The date will be announced in the January Newsletter.

In February, Michael Newton of the N.C.C.'s Heritage Unit will give a lecture based on his research of Lower Town.

HERITAGE OTTAWA GALLERY

"Looking back - The Jewish Community in Ottawa" continues at the Heritage Ottawa Gallery, 62 John Street. The gallery is open weekends from 1:00 until 5:00, with the exception of December 24 and 25. Admission is free.

Jack Macgillivray, formerly chief of installations at The National Gallery, has joined Heritage Ottawa as exhibitions chairman. He has some excellent plans for the Fraser Schoolhouse and welcomes any volunteer assistance.

When the present show closes at the end of December, help will be needed to give the gallery a thorough housecleaning and touch-up maintenance. Please offer your support by telephoning Stella Kirk at 745-0551.

MURRAY STREET SYNAGOGUE

In 1926 the congregation of Machzikei Hadas engaged the architect W.E. Noffke to design a synagogue to be located at the corner of King Edward Avenue and Murray Street. The design that Noffke provided for the congregation of eastern European Orthodox Jews was basically an eighteenth-century English baroque church plan. Two features of the design which reflect the religious and aesthetic needs of the congregation were the arrangement of interior space and the erection of two small towers on the front of the synagogue. The internal arrangement of the sanctuary followed the traditional arrangement for an Orthodox Jewish synagogue while the towers are reminiscent of the low flanking towers or pavilions found on many eastern European synagogues.

The congregation also commissioned a series of murals to be painted on the face of the women's balconies, which are located on three sides of the sanctuary. The murals consist of panels representing the astrological signs. Astrology and Judaism have had a long association: a fourth-century synagogue in Israel has been excavated to reveal a floor decorated with a mosaic design of the zodiac, a thirteenth-century commentator tried to relate the standards of the twelve tribes of Israel to the signs of the zodiac, and numerous eighteenth and nineteenth-century synagogues in eastern Europe were decorated with paintings of astrological signs.

When the members of Machzikei Hadas synagogue commissioned the murals for their synagogue, they were following a tradition from their homeland and incorporating it into a Canadian context. There are several other known examples of this decorative motif being used in other Canadian synagogues and in each case it was carried out by first-generation Canadians.

The murals are considered an excellent example of folk art and now that the synagogue, which is owned by the City, is threatened with demolition, Heritage Ottawa and the Jewish Historical Society are working to preserve them. The City of Ottawa has agreed to give the two organizations time to prepare a programme for their removal, procedures have been developed for their removal, and several Jewish institutions and the Museum of Man have indicated their interest in taking the murals.

Martin Weil

FRASER SCHOOLHOUSE - OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

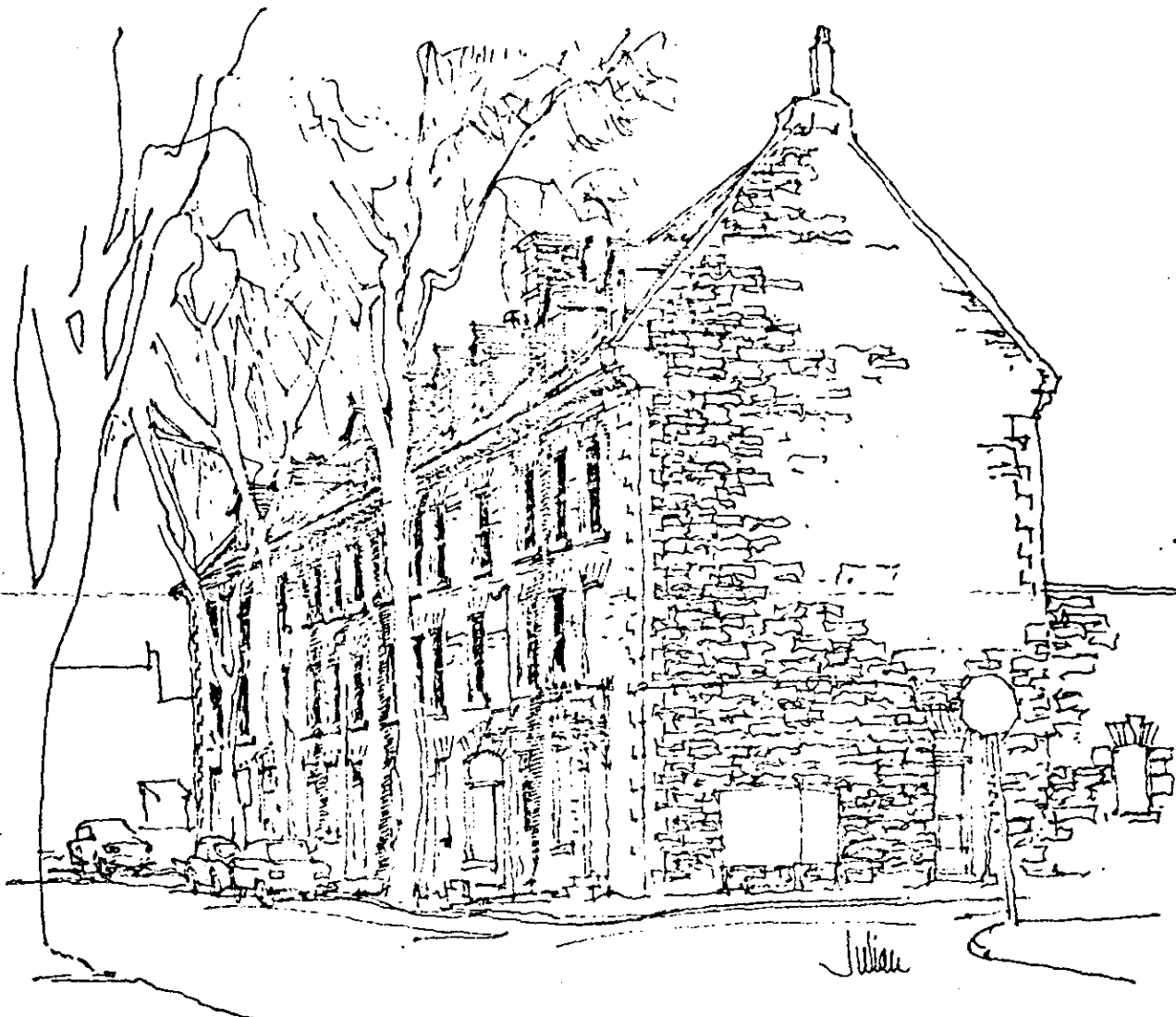
Space suitable for a small office will be available for rent in the Fraser Schoolhouse commencing January 1. The ground floor room measures approximately 120 square feet and rents for \$150 per month. Storage space is available on the upper floor. For further information, contact the Heritage Ottawa office at 745-0551 or Bill Keenan at 692-2400.

LOCAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

Heritage Ottawa is looking for someone to represent the membership on the Local Council of Women. Any members who currently belong to the L.C.W. and would like to represent Heritage Ottawa are asked to telephone Stella Kirk at 745-0551.

MEMBERSHIPS

Please send in your renewals if you have not already done so. The January Newsletter will contain a complete list of the paid-up membership.



HERITAGE CANADA BUYS LOWER TOWN BUILDING

Heritage Canada has purchased Heritage House, one of Lower Town's most impressive grey stone buildings, located on Murray Street between Sussex Drive and Parent Street.

Empty for some time, the building had become run down and dilapidated. It is located on prime land, and Heritage Canada officials were worried that it might be torn down for development.

Heritage House is located in Lower Town's heritage conservation area which was recently recognized by City Council. Heritage Canada hopes that its investment will encourage others to invest and contribute to the heritage conservation area.

The former inn was built in 1871 and was originally known as the Martineau Hotel (named after its builder, Eugène Martineau, Mayor of Ottawa in 1872-73). Now called Heritage House, the building was purchased for \$500,000. Restoration

will be supervised by Heritage Canada, and will be completed by late 1978. The architectural firm of A.J. Diamond and Associates has been retained for the restoration work.

Four storeys in height, the building features eight gables, two carriage entrances, and three stone wings at the rear which were originally kitchens. The ground floor and second floor will be rehabilitated for commercial use while the third and fourth floors will become Heritage Canada's new headquarters.

Heritage Canada, a national charitable organization concerned with the conservation of heritage structures, owns 22 properties located in conservation areas in seven Canadian provinces. Heritage House is Heritage Canada's first acquisition in central Canada.

Françoise Parent,
Heritage Canada