

NEWSLETTER

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W.E. KEENAN, President

Joan Mackie, Editor

FEBRUARY MEETING

DATE: Heritage Day
Monday, February 19, 1979
8:00 p.m.

PLACE: Ottawa Public Library Auditorium
Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street

In celebration of Heritage Day, Marc Denhez, B.C.L., Barrister and Solicitor at Heritage Canada, will address the topic, "Heritage: there ought to be a law." This will be a public meeting, so bring along a friend, and be prepared to ask questions about the ways of, need for, and existence of heritage legislation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is inviting members of Heritage Ottawa to propose persons for election to the Board of Directors. Names of potential directors should be submitted, in writing, to the Nominating Committee, Heritage Ottawa, P.O. Box 510, Station B, Ottawa.

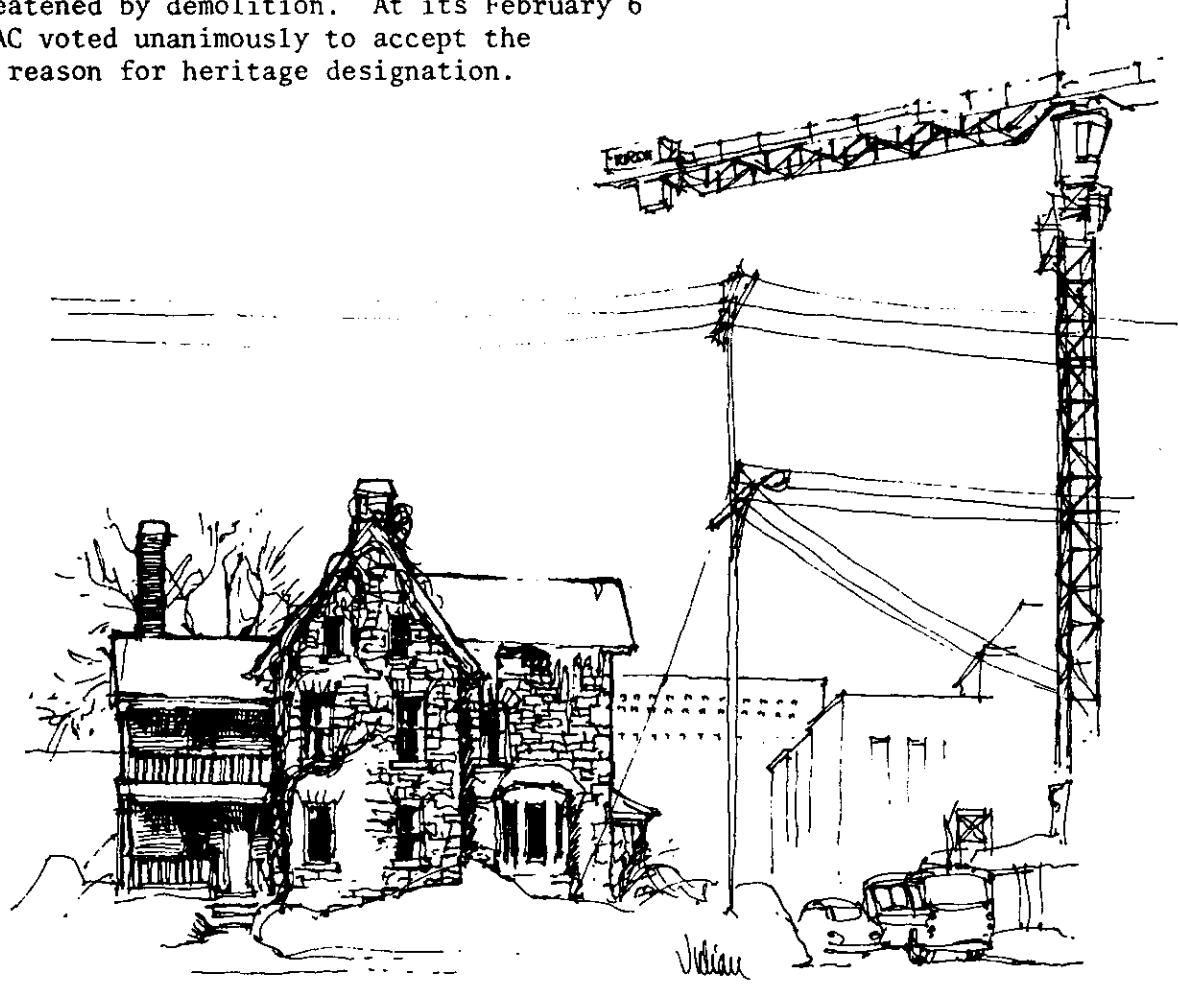
CLEGG HOUSE, 136 BAY STREET

Built prior to 1866 by unemployed canal builders, on land acquired from the Slater estate, the house was purchased by Captain William Clegg, ordinance paymaster, artist, and route selector in Lt.-Col. John By's Royal Engineers. Now owned by St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, the house is threatened by demolition. At its February 6 meeting, LACAC voted unanimously to accept the statement of reason for heritage designation.

BUILDINGS IN THE NEWS

The Ottawa Citizen reported on January 29, 1979 that tours of the Billings House will resume in May, thanks to Ontario Municipal Board approval of a zone change from "residential" to "public" heritage. The estate was open to the public briefly last summer, but opposition from neighbouring residents forced the closure after it had been open a mere two weeks. Board of Control has approved an expenditure of \$215,000 for the restoration of the property.

The McKellar House on Richmond Road (now better known for its present-day tenants, radio station CKOY) will be incorporated into a townhouse community planned for the 2.3-acre surrounding land, according to Timberlay Developments Ltd. The house, built in the early 1800s, was designated last summer under the terms of The Ontario Heritage Act, 1974, so changes to the property will be closely monitored.



HERITAGE OTTAWA GALLERY

"Images of the Past" continues at the Fraser Schoolhouse, 62 John Street. Open weekends from 1:00 to 5:00, this exhibition of old photographs of Ottawa has been loaned by the National Photography Collection of the Public Archives of Canada.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALDERMAN GEORGES BÉDARD

When Georges Bédard was elected to city council in 1974, he was immediately put to work on heritage matters. Former Mayor Greenberg had earlier established an Advisory Committee on Heritage and the new alderman was given the responsibility of coordinating it. Under his guidance, the mayor's committee grew into Ottawa's LACAC -- Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, under the terms of The Ontario Heritage Act, 1974.

"There were really no problems in establishing LACAC," says Alderman Bédard. "The politicians had been impressed with the work of the Advisory Committee, so were ready to accept LACAC, and the transition was very smooth. It had been relatively easy to find people of high calibre and diverse (but related) interests to serve on LACAC: architects, engineers, planners, businesspersons, historians and developers. City Council respects the committee's recommendations, and in only one case out of perhaps 150 recommendations has it gone against LACAC's advice."

"Our awareness of Ottawa's heritage has grown considerably in the last four or five years," he says, "and heritage was very much an issue in the past civic election. Ottawa is in a very interesting position at the moment and it is favourable to preservationists. The city is in a 'low demand' phase for office space. At times of 'high demand' for space, the tendency is to knock down old buildings and build to the maximum height allowance. But there's a glut of office space in Ottawa at the moment so the trend is to keep the smaller, old buildings that we have and to improve them. This, of course, makes for a much richer architectural environment."

The alderman feels that the city is conscientiously doing its part to respect Ottawa's heritage. "A lot of what we do in the name of heritage is really disguised under other programs. We've purchased old schools and churches for use as community centres, and we have two firehalls (on King Edward, and on Sunnyside) that we've recycled for other uses. We undertook to rehabilitate two units in Philomene Terrace, we're restoring the Billings Estate, and the money we put into improving the Byward Market area was really in the interest of preserving its heritage features."

Alderman Bédard maintains that no dramatic budget cuts will affect city spending for heritage-related projects. But he advises Heritage Ottawa to become more political, and to make friends with local politicians at all levels of government so that Heritage Ottawa can go to them both for help and to educate them about the city's heritage.

THE FUTURE OF THE TEMPORARY BUILDINGS

The Board of Directors, at a meeting in mid-January, discussed this issue of current interest. The result was a press release issued immediately to all local media. It read:

"Heritage Ottawa supports efforts to retain one example of the wartime architecture of Ottawa as represented by the temporary buildings. In doing this, Heritage Ottawa is expressing no opinion on the architectural merits of these buildings, but is recognizing that they are important as historical documents of that period."

From time to time, the Board issues press releases of this nature, following discussions on urgent issues at monthly meetings. In the future the Newsletter will report on important matters such as this. Comments from the membership are welcomed. What do you think about the temporary buildings? Please send comments to the Editor, Newsletter, Heritage Ottawa, P.O. Box 510, Station B, Ottawa.

PARTICIPATION

The Membership Committee of the Board of Directors is grateful to all those who filled out forms indicating a willingness to work in specific areas of interest. Anyone still wishing to volunteer for particular committee work (Membership, Finance, Exhibitions, Fraser Schoolhouse, Archives, Newsletter, Publicity, Docents, Program, Policy) may do so by telephoning Stella Kirk at the Heritage Ottawa office, 745-0551.

BOOK REVIEW

Patrick M.O. Evans. The Wrights. Ottawa: National Capital Commission, Revised Edition 1978. 414 pp., 121 pp. index, many illus., \$20.00 (paper)

For any person who has ever attempted to trace the roots of his or her family tree, this work by Mr. Evans is awesome indeed.

He has in his second and amended edition delved very deeply into the Wright family and their connections. This is not just tables of family relationships but the reproductions of photographs and written documents presented in a manner that is pleasant to read, informative for the historian, and a living record of the many families it covers. Mr. Evans tells us he has over 10,000 index cards on the people he has researched for this book.

For those of us whose families have lived in this area for some time it is a tremendous source of information. Reading family charts or pedigree tables can be confusing, but Mr. Evans has made his tables very clear for tracing or retracing a family. I would recommend to anyone using this book first to read carefully page 414, the index explanation.

The charming drawings used to illustrate an era and the "Musical Chairs" that Mr. Evans plays with family relationships all give a light and amusing touch to this in-depth study of one of the founders of our National Capital Region.