

NEWSLETTER

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FEBRUARY IS HERITAGE MONTH!

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, IS HERITAGE DAY!

February is the month we should all take time to savour our inheritance from the past. Sadly, the National Capital region has lost a lot of its architectural heritage to fire. Even the Parliament Buildings did not escape unscathed: we lost the original Centre Block to a disastrous fire in 1916.

Other buildings have been lost to the wrecker's ball. The Rideau Street Convent, unique in North America, is the best--and most tragic--example of this.

Fire is something beyond our control, but destruction by man is not. For architectural conservationists, Heritage Month should be a time to take a good look at our surroundings and to think of ways to ensure that deserving buildings and neighbourhoods are protected.

If "look back" is the general theme for Heritage Month, then "look up" should be the particular motto of groups like Heritage Ottawa. Too few of us look beyond the neon signs and formica fronts of our commercial streets. How many people in Ottawa know what a gem the Zeller's building is? Or how attractive Bank Street could be? The Market used to be pretty seedy, the Marble Works was covered in cement, Oregano's was a dusty army surplus store.

A reminder like this to members of Heritage Ottawa is perhaps unnecessary--preaching to the converted. Except that it might remind us to encourage others to become more aware of their surroundings. And perhaps we are not all converts. Not all of our members are in favour of restoring the Daly Building; its dirt and grime blind them to the possibilities inherent in this fine old building.

The only tangible victory won by the group who fought so hard to save the Rideau St. Convent was a promise by the director of the National Gallery to incorporate the ceiling and pillars from the Convent's chapel into the new National Gallery, whenever it was built. Mrs. Boggs has given her assurances, now as director of Museums Construction, that her promise still stands. But is this what we want? A window from here, a stone from there, a plaque commemorating what no longer exists?

Obviously, a vital, growing city cannot preserve everything. But there are some structures which simply must not be torn down. It may be an apocryphal story, but I'm told that to solve parking problems on the Hill, an M.P. motioned that the House vote to tear down the East Block and build a parking lot in its place.

The Rideau Street Convent was a turning point. The Parliament Buildings and other venerated structures are safer now, in large part because of the publicity surrounding the loss of the Convent and the legislation which grew out of it.

But what about buildings less well known, less attractive at first glance? It's up to us to keep a watchful eye on them and to marshal public support when they are threatened.

If we don't, who will?

Judy

HERITAGE OTTAWA ANNUAL AWARDS

In recognition of their longstanding contributions to heritage conservation, Heritage Ottawa has nominated Mary Anne Phillips and Bob Haig as recipients of this year's Heritage Awards.

The awards will be presented at a small luncheon ceremony on Heritage Day, February 21, at the Fraser Schoolhouse.

"PROTESTANT CHILDREN'S VILLAGE"

The Protestant Children's Village at 983 Carling Ave. (just east of the Civic Hospital) is in danger. This lovely old half-timbered, Tudor-style house, used as a daycare centre for several years, may be demolished to make way for a high-rise development.

Surrounded by woods which border Carling Ave. and are a haven for birds and small animals, the building played a significant part in originally opening up the area.

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"PROTESTANT CHILDREN'S VILLAGE" (cont'd)

Some kind of designation is called for to save this building, and an appeal has been made to LACAC.

Stella Kirk

OFFICIAL OPENING OF BYTOWN MUSEUM EXHIBIT Monday, February 21

Members of Heritage Ottawa are invited to the official opening of the Bytown Museum's exhibit "Colonel By to Confederation" at the Museum's temporary location, 540 Wellington Street (corner of Bronson), on Heritage Day, Monday, February 21, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

His Excellency the Lord Moran, British High Commissioner to Canada, will open the exhibit, and refreshments will be served.

NEW DISPLAY AT FRASER SCHOOLHOUSE

Members of Heritage Ottawa are also invited to see the Bytown Museum's new display "Governors General of Canada, their Wives, and Contemporary Monarchy 1867-1983", which opened February 2 at the Fraser Schoolhouse, 62 John Street.

MODELS OF THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Members and history buffs will be interested in an exhibit displayed on the 4th floor of the Public Archives-National Library at 395 Wellington Street during February and March. On view are models of the original Centre Block, just as it was before being destroyed by the fire of 1916, and of the Parliamentary Library, which luckily was saved.

The models were built by retired architect (and Heritage Ottawa member) Maxwell M. Kalman, whose model of the East Block can be seen on permanent exhibition in the basement of the East Block near the main entrance.

LOST-WAX TECHNIQUE

For those of you who (like me) were puzzled by the demonstration of the "lost-wax" technique at the Currency Museum during the January 29 tour, you might be relieved to know that the explanation was wrong.

The piece desired is first modelled in wax (not clay). Soft clay is then applied over the wax, and the whole thing is fired. The wax, of course, melts during the firing, leaving a baked clay mold into which the molten metal may be poured. After the metal cools, the clay mold is broken, and the gold, silver or bronze image remains.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Just in case you missed them, the following items about local heritage buildings appeared in The Citizen over the past month:

Ottawa School of Art

An "Unwrapping Ceremony and Tour" held Monday, February 14, kicked off a \$1 million renovation programme destined to turn a 76-year-old building at 35 George Street (just behind the Bay) into the new, permanent home for the Ottawa School of Art.

The renovations (to be carried out by Rysavy & Rysavy Architects, the firm responsible for the facelift of the Peace Tower) will upgrade the George St. site to current building standards as well as creating 12 new studios and an exhibition gallery for the School, now located in temporary quarters near Tunney's Pasture.

New stairwells and an elevator will also be installed in the stone structure, which over the years has served as a government office building.

The School, with 1,500 full- and part-time students involved in drawing, painting, print-making and sculpture classes, hopes to move to its new home in August.

Renovation work is being paid for with a \$500,000 Wintario grant, a \$250,000 City of Ottawa grant, and \$250,000 to be raised by the School itself. The building is owned by the National Capital Commission.



Artist's sketch of renovated art school

PRESS CLIPPINGS (cont'd)Renovation of Lemieux Island Gatehouse

Two Ottawa businessmen propose to open a restaurant in the (circa 1920?) gatehouse at the entrance to the 100-year-old Lemieux Island pumping station.

Robert Marshall and Tony Cinkant (responsible for renovations at Barrymore's on Bank Street and The Bronson 190 Salon, in the former Davidson House on Bronson near Laurier) have asked the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (which owns the gatehouse) for a 15-year lease in which the monthly rent would be 6 per cent of restaurant receipts above \$65,000 a month. /This formula may result in a rather low rent for Messrs Marshall and Cinkant; on the other hand, they have undertaken to spend approximately \$100,000 to restore the heritage property--Ed./

Built in 1873, the pumping station itself supplied water to the Hintenberg area until 1916. The newer gatehouse was a private residence until property standards problems forced the Region to close it two years ago.

"New Simpson's Building Owners may face Trouble" (The Citizen, Feb. 3)

On January 31, the Bank of Nova Scotia became the new owner of the 5-storey building vacated by Simpson's on the Sparks St. Mall. The Bank plans to spend about \$6 million renovating the interior and facades of the building to house a bank branch and area headquarters.

Built by Frederick and Eva Carling in 1909, the building housed the Murphy-Gamble department store for 62 years, until Simpson's bought the business and building in 1971. The building is believed to be one of the first reinforced concrete frame structures in Ottawa and, according to a report to the City's Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, is notable for the "glass-cage" effect of its original facade. (The windows have been filled in with stone or aluminum siding, but the original stone framing and roof cornice remain available for restoration.)

Diane Holmes, Nancy Smith and other concerned individuals met with Bank officials and architects to see whether proposed renovations might restore the 74-year-old building to its original window-filled appearance.

The Bank's present plans are to wrap the building in a very modern design, with both Sparks St. and Queen St. facades

matching. Diane Holmes informs us that, as a result of the Feb. 10 meeting, the Bank's architects have agreed to remove part of the existing facade to see what lies beneath. If indeed the original facade can be restored, a complete change of plans will be required. Diane reports that Bank representatives have, however, seemed quite cooperative so far.

ACTIVITIES OF HERITAGE OTTAWA IN 1982

To show you what a bargain your membership in Heritage Ottawa is, Stella Kirk has compiled a list of the activities offered members during 1982, as well as some of the work done by the Board to preserve local heritage buildings (see over).

Don't forget Jennifer's request in last month's newsletter to let us know what you would like to do in 1983. After looking at the summary of activities for 1982, drop us a note or give Stella a call Tuesday or Thursday mornings to let us know what type of activity you would like to see continued or to give us suggestions for something new. The phone number is 745-0551.

ACTIVITIES OF HERITAGE OTTAWA IN 1982

EXHIBITIONS

Of Watercolours by New Zealand artist John Castle, R.A.
Of Pen and Ink Sketches by artist Julian Smith.
Of Photographs of Heritage Scenes by Carleton University Photo Club.
Of Works by the Students of the Ottawa School of Art.
Of the Paintings of "The Rideau Canal Then and Now" by Ottawa Schoolchildren.
Of Scenes of the Rideau Canal, colour photographs by Don Lahey.
Of "Women's Fashions 1850-1910" by the Ottawa Historical Society.

TOURS

Rideau Hall
Billings House

TALKS by

Judy Burns, President of Ottawa Historical Society, on William Stewart.
Sandra Gwyn, local author and historian, on Public Servant of a by-gone era.

FILMS

The Old Cow Town Maple Creek, Saskatchewan.
Main Street Project, Perth, Ontario.

SLIDE SHOW

In Praise of Older Houses, by Hellmut Schade.

SEMINAR

Bytown on the Rideau - at Carleton University.

DRAWING CONTEST

The Rideau Canal Then and Now - for schoolchildren. Mayor Dewar presented scrolls to 36 of the 600 entrants.

BOOK REPORT

The Canadian Old House Catalogue, by John Hearn.

PICNIC

The Phillips' Place, Cantley, Quebec, on a glorious Sunday in September.

- ... Lobbied for changes to the Income Tax Act, for reform to encourage preservation instead of demolition.
- ... Formed "The Friends of the Daly Building" a group dedicated to save the Daly Building. We demonstrated, cleaned a portion of the building, and now selling buttons to encourage public participation to save this building.
- ... Lost the fight to save the Clegg House.
- ... Won the fight to save the Aberdeen Pavilion, which will be renovated by the Minto Skating Club.
- ... Reminded Jean Boggs of promise to incorporate the ceiling and pillars from the Chapel of the Rideau Street Convent into the new art gallery.