



# Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage

Autumn 2002 Volume 29, No. 2



## A Heritage Abuilding

By David Bullock\*

*"For there is no discrepancy between old and new works of art, none whatsoever. The great works of the past remain 'aesthetically' distinct and emotionally near to us. and all the more if there are new works constantly arriving to fortify their position. Perhaps we might look at them 'in a historical sense' if this constant renovation of art forms could be stopped, because in that case our aesthetic perception would have come to an end also."*

George Seferis,  
Nobel Prize Winner (Literature)

"You may well ask what on earth is an article about an as yet, unbuilt commercially marketed building doing in the newsletter of a heritage organization?"

*Continued on page 2*

I offer two reasons. First, the building will occupy the site of the now-demolished Daly Building. The controversy about the latter's preservation generated a good deal of heat in the media and in heritage circles – justifiably so, in view of the dominance of the building and its location at a crossroads of 'national' heritage (the ceremonial route) and that of 'local' Ottawa (juxtaposition with the Chateau Laurier and the old Union Station at the top of the Rideau Street streetscape). Second, it is an opportunity to remind readers that Heritage Ottawa considers our future built heritage as well as our past.

Some people were vehemently opposed to the demolition of the Daly Building and the consequent loss of what had been a good example of the

## News from the Executive

### Changes in Executive



Caroline Quinn

Carolyn Quinn has resigned her presidency of Heritage Ottawa, and has been replaced by David Flemming on an interim basis until the election of officers at the next Annual General Meeting to be held 3 May 2003.

Carolyn Quinn has served Heritage Ottawa well during her term of office, and has done much to raise and strengthen Heritage Ottawa's recognition as a leading advocacy group.

Heritage Ottawa will not be totally deprived of Carolyn Quinn's skills and determination to preserve Ottawa's Built Heritage, for she has agreed to serve as Past-President. On behalf of the members of Heritage Ottawa, we thank both Carolyn and David Flemming for their past service and wish them well in their new positions.

The Chair of the Nominating Committee, Gordon Cullingham has relinquished that position, which will be taken over by Past-President, Carolyn Quinn.

*Continued on page 2*

## News Continued...

**Heritage Ottawa will not be totally deprived of Carolyn Quinn's skills and determination to preserve Ottawa's Built Heritage, she will continue to serve on the Board as Past-President.**

### H.O. Restructuring Proposal

David Flemming has presented to the Board a reorganisation proposal identifying objectives to double membership within three years, broaden membership to outlying areas in the new City boundaries. To achieve these objectives, David recommended the formation of six new committees (Finance, Membership, Newsletter and Publicity, Program, Research and Publication, and Community Advocacy). The Board will meet quarterly; an Executive Committee will meet monthly. Board members responded positively to the proposal, and discussion followed on potential implementation. David Flemming suggested membership could be expanded by a series of monthly lectures, rotated in location in different parts of Ottawa. An implementation plan could be presented at the next 3 May 2003 Annual General Meeting.

## Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Heritage Ottawa is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating the preservation, restoration, and adaptive re-use of the National Capital's built and natural heritage.

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## A Heritage Abuilding: continued from page 1

*The building as it will appear from four different aspects.*

Chicago Style in an early 20th-century department store. Others felt that the extent of ill-designed modifications over the years had turned the structure into a travesty which would cost a fortune to return to even a semblance of the original and which would not be missed. I commend to you the 1950s photograph reproduced in the last issue of this Newsletter looking down Rideau Street from the National War Memorial. It shows clearly the dominance of the Daly Building. For better or worse, it is gone and people have become used to the open space left by its removal.

*... it is an opportunity to remind readers that **Heritage Ottawa** considers our future built heritage as well as our past.*

What will take its place? The building, designed by distinguished Montreal architect Dan Hanganu, is symmetrical in design on all four elevations and constructed of masonry—yes, a modern eleven-storey stone building! The colour of the stone has been chosen to weather to a shade not clashing with other adjacent buildings. Like them, it has strongly defined corners. The windows are set-in, giving a discernible shadow effect. The overall height is roughly equal to the Connaught Building, just to the north, with a gap between allowing a view of the Chateau Laurier from George Street through the ByWard Market Area. This gap provides for the entrance to the residences and their parking garage as well as to the Chateau



Laurier's service dock and steps between the streets. The building is set back from Rideau Street by about 26m, that is, approximately level with the south east corner tower of the Chateau Laurier.

The bottom two floors of the building consist of potentially two-storey commercial spaces, some with entry-level on Sussex Drive and others with entry-level on MacKenzie Avenue. They all will be served from the commercial atrium to be entered from a park-like plaza on Rideau Street.

Above the commercial levels are nine floors of condominium apartments, being marketed as "700 Sussex" and above them roof-top mechanical installations. The residences are laid out roughly in a U-shape around common services while the upper floors lie around another atrium rising to the roof, and planted with gardens open towards Rideau Street.

From the point of view of passers-by, the new building will blend rather than stand out or clash with its neighbours. Significant to pedestrians will be the open plaza and the commercial atrium where shops and restaurants have the potential for animation, adding something of the street life of the Market and Rideau Street to the relatively sedate atmosphere surrounding the Chateau Laurier and the old Union Station. We shall have to come back in a half century to judge how the building fits into Ottawa's heritage, but I for one, find it quite promising.

*\*David Bullock is a member of the Board of Heritage Ottawa. Any opinions expressed in the article are his alone and likely not shared by other Board members.*

# The Alexandra Interprovincial Bridge

By Paul Stumes

With few exceptions all major cities around the globe have developed on the banks of rivers or on sea coasts. When settlements sprang up on a site on one side of a river, it was just a matter of time before the opposite side too became populated. Eventually, economic and social reasons would call for a rapid and safe means of transporting people and goods between the two sides, and so arrived the concept of a bridge. The place where Canada's Capital is located has followed this course of evolution.

Where once the loaded canoes had to be portaged over the Asticou (now Chaudiere) Falls on the Kitsissippi (now Ottawa), settlements, which grew into cities sprang up on both shores.; these cities are Ottawa and Hull. The first bridge between the two cities was built in several sections over the Chaudiere Falls in 1827, followed by several improved versions. The second bridge, the present Prince of Wales Bridge, was opened for railway traffic in 1882.

For a long period the Chaudiere Bridge was the only way to cross the river by foot or carriage. In the late 1860's the Quebec legislature instigated a study for a second bridge somewhere over Lac Dechenes. The idea was well received by the City of Ottawa with a proposal to build it closer to the centre of the City.

In 1890 a group of 27 local businessmen established the Interprovincial Bridge Company to promote the construction of a new bridge between Hull and Nepean Point in Ottawa. The grandiose proposal suggested that this bridge should have a central track for railway and roads for carriages and pedestrians on the two sides. The Company collected a starting capital of \$30,000 for the project.

The proposal was submitted to the House of Commons and the Senate by the Cities of Ottawa and Hull. The members of the Commons expressed their concern about the expenses and the Senate questioned the idea of building a bridge so close to the Parliament Hill. Nevertheless, the proposal was accepted with a condition that the work must commence by 1892 and the bridge be completed by 1895. The ground was broken with great ceremony on both sides of the river on April 20, 1892. However the construction of the bridge did not begin earnestly until 1898.

Between 1892 and 1898 many of the small railway companies amalgamated into national railway giants and these made their interest in the new bridge known with more than just words. the City of Ottawa offered to contribute \$150,000 toward the construction and this sum was later increased by a sum of \$50,000.

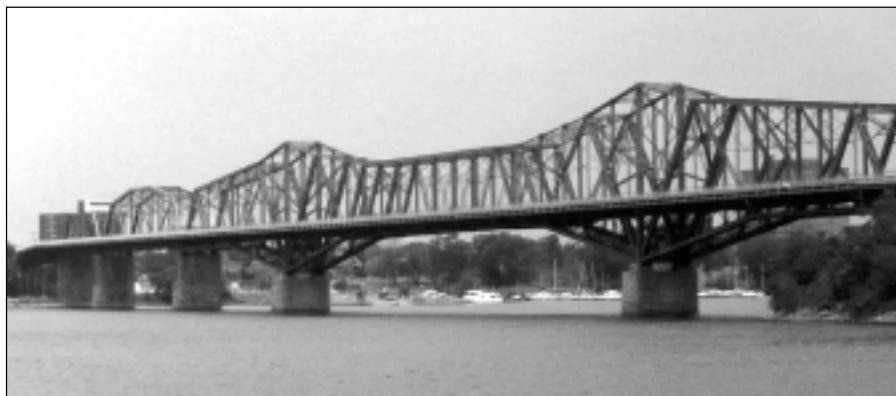
After careful consideration, the H. J. Beemer Company of Montreal was given the contract as General Contractor of the project. The huge and complex steel structure was manufactured by the well-known Dominion Bridge Company. The construction of the concrete piers started in early 1898. This work was made challenging by up to 50 ft thick layer of timber debris which had accumulated on the river-bottom as the waste from the many sawmills around the area.

The erection of steel superstructure commenced in October 1899. The five span trusses were together 1,848 feet long, with a centre cantilever span of 556 feet. At that time this was the fourth longest truss in the world. The vertical load posts at the long cantilever sections were an impressive 95 feet high. The railway tracks on the centre and roads for general traffic on the both sides made the bridge 62 feet wide. The construction of the bridge cost \$250,000, which at that time was an enormous sum.

The Interprovincial Bridge was assembled by October 1899 and a locomotive made a load testing run across On December 12. On February 1901 the bridge was open for carriages and pedestrians and by April trains were crossing in either direction.

In September 1901 when King Edward VII and his beautiful consort, Queen Alexandra, visited Ottawa, the Interprovincial Bridge was renamed the Alexandra Bridge in her honour.

In 1902 the Canadian Pacific Railway took possession of the bridge, which remained in their hands until 1967 when it was taken over by the National Capital Commission. The N.C.C. removed the railway tracks, and the centre and eastern lanes were opened to vehicular traffic. The western lane became reserved for pedestrian and bicycle



The Alexandra Bridge spans the Ottawa River and two cultures.

Continued on page 4

## Alexandra Interprovincial Bridge...



One of the plaques affixed to each end of the bridge.

usage. These lanes offer their users a picturesque view of the Parliamentary district and its environs.

Following the 1967 take-over, the piers and the steel superstructure were thoroughly examined by consulting engineers. The report of these experts indicated that the bridge was in excellent condition for its age and, that with some minor repairs and regular maintenance, could be safely used for many more years.

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**I**n September 1901 when the King Edward VII and his beautiful consort, Queen Alexandra visited Ottawa, the Interprovincial Bridge was renamed the Alexandra Bridge in her honour.

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During the past century bridges everywhere became more than just means of crossing waters. Aesthetically

built bridges became proud, easily identifiable symbols of their cities and became national heritages, such as the Tower Bridge of London, the Golden Gate Bridge of San Francisco and Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Australia.

The Royal Alexandra Bridge unites two provinces and two cultures and as part of the N.C.C.'s Ceremonial Route leading from the National Gallery in Ottawa, Ontario to the Museum of Civilisation in Hull, Quebec, has attained greater cultural significance. Providing, as it does, an imposing view of the capital; the bridge's giant but graceful structure could, with time and a little more publicity in tourist brochures, become recognised as one of Ottawa's identifiable symbols.

*Note: Some information for this article has been provided by Virendra Sahni, P.Eng., Manager, Structural and transit Services, City of Ottawa.*

## An Update on the Ashcroft Saga

by David Flemming

On 29 August 2002, forty people attended a meeting at City Hall called by Councillor Elisabeth Arnold, to elicit public comment on Ashcroft Homes' latest proposal for 320 McLeod Street. Councillor Arnold chaired the meeting which involved a presentation by Ashcroft's Dennis Gratton and comments by City planners, John Smith, Grant Lindsay and Stuart Lazear and by at least a dozen others who attended the meeting.

The latest Ashcroft design calls for a nine-storey (down from the 20 and later 13 stories proposed at previous meetings) residential building (100 one or two bedroom units and 148 parking spaces) with 6,600 sq ft of office/commercial space on the ground floor. The design looked very much like a reduced version of the 13 storey proposal from a few months ago. Although this new proposal does not require an amendment to the current Official Plan, it would require a rezoning of the property from R5 to R6 to accommodate the nine storey structure. Heritage Approval would be required to demolish the existing building (a Category 4 heritage building - the lowest category) since it is part of the Centretown Heritage Conservation District. Also, it is surrounded by three Category 2 and one Category 1 (the highest designation) buildings.

The public response was similar to that of the previous meetings: everyone who spoke opposed it based on the building's height, massing, potential traffic & shade problems and its unsuitability for the Centretown Heritage Conservation District. Heritage Ottawa was especially concerned about the precedent that would be set for Centretown if the proposal were to be approved and stressed the need to have any review of the Zoning and Heritage Overlay for the area done as part of the process of developing a new Official Plan for the City rather than by Zoning amendment.

City staff will report to Council on this proposal in the fall. It is hoped that Councillor Arnold will report to her colleagues on the almost-unanimous public opposition to date.

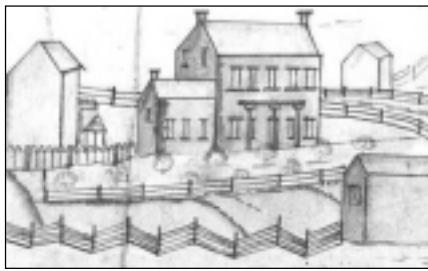
# The Billings House: A photo-history of its architectural development\*

The Billings House, one of Ottawa's oldest dwellings was built for Braddish and Almira Billings, two of Ottawa's earliest settlers, between the years 1827-29. Five successive generations of the family had lived in the house until 1950, when this well-preserved and architecturally unique building was acquired by the City of Ottawa and subsequently declared a National Historic Monument.



*The house today*

The Billings House was the second home of the pioneer family, their first being a log cabin built on the bank of the Rideau River. Preparations for the new house began in 1813, but erection did not start until 14 years later, with the family taking occupancy in October 1829.



*Drawing of the planned or original house*

The Billings House is an excellent example of the transition from Georgian to the Neo-classical style of architecture in Upper Canada. Its New England influences in both construction

and style reflects the Billings ancestry. The house is a two and a half story frame house built on a stone foundation. The exterior clapboard siding is painted white and the shutters were originally painted green.



*Circa 1835*

As can be expected, over its lifetime the house has had certain modification and additions. It is not always possible to give exact dates of these changes, so some approximate dates will be given. Major additions to the house will be indicated in the text, but several others will be evident in the succession of photographs that accompany this article. The north wing was added as a kitchen in 1831. The south wing was added in 1870. The cupola was added to the roof some time before 1914.



Between 1914 and the mid-twenties extra windows appear to have been added to the cupola. A half storey with a dormer window was erected over the north wing and a portico was added to the front and rear main entrances.



The front portico has slender doric columns supporting the second floor balcony.



The rear portico has squared off pillars supporting the balcony.



Casement windows and electricity were added in later years, as were three dormers to front and to the rear roofs.



*Note moulding under gables and above the windows*

\*This photo-history is based on photos and literature supplied by Stephane Bruneau, Acting Education and Interpretation Officer; and taken from the Billings Estate museum website.

# History of Barns in Canada\*

## Historical Perspective on Agricultural Structures (part one)

by Ineke Van Zeeland B.Eng. M.Eng.

**A**gricultural structures have been of historical importance in the early development of Canada. There were farmers among the early waves of immigrants that came to Canada when Europe discovered and began exploring North America. The food and other agricultural products that they produced not only provided for the needs of their own families, but excess production allowed for the continued growth of the Canadian economy and population. In the past, most agricultural structures were not designed by engineers, having been developed over generations for their specific uses. The designs and materials used were often dictated by the location of the structure: topography, weather and type of local building material available all affected the resulting structures built. The type of farming activities that the structure was to accommodate also dictated specific structural requirements. Farm buildings have changed over the years as different requirements have been imposed and new methods and materials have been developed. However, a close look at how the needs for crop and animal shelter were met by early farmers reveals a surprising number of ideas that are still valid today.

The first European settlers in Canada probably waited until the first crops were harvested to construct the necessary storage facilities. In some places, the first of these structures were made of wattle and daub. However, in the eastern parts of Canada, barns were usually constructed of logs supported on low stone piers. As farmers prospered, more stone might be used for the walls of the first floor, or the barn would be framed with hewn timbers, connected with mortise and tenon joints and still supported on stone piers.

The first roofs were usually covered with slabs of bark, although thatching was used as well, especially in eastern Canada. Some roofs were constructed

with warped or scooped-out wooden slabs laid with the hollow sides alternately up and down and overlapped, much like tile is used today. This carried the rain water off with little leakage. Shakes became the most common roofing material, though.

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the pioneers moved west, sod barns and houses became common on the prairies. No trees or large stones were available, so the pioneer farmer used wide strips of prairie sod laid one upon the other to build up a thick wall. Sod was then used in a variety of ways to cover the roof. These sod structures were common until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As wood frame construction went west, it was the barns that were replaced first, and then the houses. This was probably due to the fact that the sod houses were warmer and required less heat during the cold prairie winters. However, although sod made excellent walls, roofs invariably leaked and dust and falling debris were constant problems.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, little or no winter production was expected from livestock. Agricultural buildings were therefore constructed only for the protection of grain and equipment, while fodder for animals was stacked in the yard and the stock was given minimal shelter. As time went on, larger barns began to be constructed for hay and straw storage and were equipped with threshing floors. Horses were the first to be given protection, while cows were provided with only an open shed. Later, as barn design evolved, space was provided for cows.

In the Ottawa Valley there was a European influence reflecting the settler's origins that was evident in the designs of agricultural structures built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even though local materials were used. The English influence can be seen in both wooden and stone barns with high side walls and low pitched roofs. The doors were at the



Booth barn, Central Experimental Farm

middle of each side for drive-through access to the threshing floor. Bays on either side of the threshing floor were used to store unthreshed grain or hay. Mow storage for hay may have also been provided above the grainery or cow stable at one end of the barn. Often barns and additional sheds were built to form an "L" or "U" shape to give more protection from the weather.

The influence of the Germans (Deutsch) can be seen in the style popularly known as "Pennsylvania Dutch". It is not restricted to Pennsylvania. In the Ottawa Valley, this style has contributed the idea of a drive floor entrance above the stable that is reached from a bank or hill of earth on one side.

Gambrel roof barns became very popular in this area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as farms increased in size and greater storage area was needed. Silos built out of hewn timbers were also being constructed for the same reason. Both are still very evident in the Ottawa Valley, although the wooden silos are very seldom still used, and there is usually one or more modern silos, often in concrete, standing right next to an old wooden one.

The continued change in Canadian agriculture has greatly influenced the design of farm buildings. Improved breeding, feeding, and health care have increased animal production. Mechanization and improved cultivating practices has increased crop production. The movement to "single commodity" farming has changed farming from a lifestyle to an industrial business. These developments have required the design of larger buildings that meet the specific needs of the enterprise housed. The multi-purpose barn housing cows, horses, sheep, pigs, and chickens, as well as hay and grain, is no longer needed.

## Barns continued...

Designs are required for large milking parlours to milk 200 to 2,000 dairy cows, cage laying buildings housing 40,000 to 100,000 hens, environmentally controlled storage for fruits and vegetables, and on-farm grain storage incorporating sophisticated drying and handling systems.

Every type of farming is being affected, and the old barns are seldom used for their original purposes. But, they were often built so sturdy, having a grace that is not often found in today's utilitarian agricultural structures, that

they are being put to new uses. Some have been renovated into homes, often leaving the inner framing timbers visible to provide architectural interest. In the Ottawa Valley, a number of old barns have been turned into artist's studios, providing the high open spaces artists often require. And at least one in this region has been turned into a museum.

**This article is to be continued in the next issue.**

*\*Taken from a paper written by the author as part of an assigned undergraduate project leading to a B.Eng. degree.*

# The City of Ottawa Heritage Grant Program Update – 2002

A heritage grant of up to \$5,000 is available on a matching basis to assist owners of heritage buildings designated under Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act with restoration work. An owner can apply for one grant per year. One year must have elapsed between the grant payment for the first grant and an application for the next grant. Grants are approved subject to the availability of funding, which is approved by Ottawa City Council as part of the overall City budget each year.

### Eligible Projects Include

Conservation of existing exterior elements, such as:

Deteriorated original windows, gingerbread trim or decorative metal work.

Repointing mortar joints in masonry surfaces.

Restoration of missing features based on documentary evidence, such as reinstating a blocked-in window, rebuilding an interesting chimney stack or re-roofing with the original material.

Custom restoration work, such as replicating porch columns or trim, or building new windows to replace originals that are beyond repair.

Staff trained in architectural conservation will determine the eligibility of your project, provide technical advice and assist you with the application process.

### How to Apply

You should first discuss your proposal with staff in the Heritage Section of the Development Services Department. Staff will be able to assist you in determining the information required to process your application.

This publication is intended to provide general information only. The original by-laws, acts, regulations and other relevant documents should be consulted for detailed references. For more information please visit the Client Service Centre or call the City of Ottawa at 580-2400 or visit the website at [www.city.ottawa.on.ca](http://www.city.ottawa.on.ca), City Services, Planning and Zoning.

Client Service Centre locations:

City Hall, 110 Laurier Avenue West

Ben Franklin Place,  
101 Centrepointe Drive

Kanata, 580 Terry Fox Drive

Kinburn, 5670 Carp Road

Metcalfe, 8243 Victoria Street

North Gower, 2155 Roger Stevenson Drive

Orleans, 255 Centrum Boulevard

The Planning and Infrastructure Approvals Branch Staff are located at :  
2 Constellation Drive, Ottawa  
(corner of Woodroffe & Baseline Road)

# Notice to Readers

### Dear Members

Perhaps some of you might know my two books, Historical Walks The Gatineau Park Story, and Capital Walks Walking Tours of Ottawa?

I'm delighted to say that Fitzhenry & Whiteside are publishing the third and second editions, respectively, and will also publish a third, new book, all in spring of 2003.

I'm writing because I know we members all share a deep love for our heritage spaces. As well, I know that many of you know the city extremely well, particularly its built heritage.

If any of you are so-inclined, I would enjoy hearing any comments you might have on my books, perhaps Capital Walks in particular considering we're Heritage Ottawa. Don't be shy: if you spy errors or omissions, please know that I would gratefully receive your input, as well as any ideas for buildings to include.

My husband Eric is collaborating on the projects: he is my map maker. Again, if you see any discrepancies or have other comments, please do feel free to let us know.

I look forward to hearing from you. Contact me at my e-mail address:

(Fletcher <[chesley@netcom.ca](mailto:chesley@netcom.ca)> else drop me a line.

Thanks for any assistance you might give.

Best regards,

Katharine Fletcher  
4316 Steele Line  
Quyon, Quebec  
J0X 2V0

# Heritage Ottawa's New Logo

by Jean Palmer



John Arnold

Heritage Ottawa's familiar fanlight window emblem has been respectfully consigned to the archives and a new logo is heading our newsletter, stationery, walking tours and upcoming brochures.

The circular form is reminiscent of a seal or coin. It depicts at its centre the Aberdeen Pavilion, a building the survival of which was one of our proudest victories. Our fight to preserve the 'Cattle Castle' involved political action, a massive demonstration, "Hands Around the Aberdeen" and campaign buttons.

The protective circle around the Aberdeen Pavilion represents Municipal Designation under the Ontario Heritage act.

Our organisation's name in both official languages emphasises that no linguistic divide exists when it comes to preserving Ottawa's built heritage. The legacy belongs to us all and we share the responsibility for its protection.

The new logo was developed by a Heritage Ottawa sub-committee, headed by John Arnold. A handsome new brochure will be out very soon, sporting on its cover the new Heritage Ottawa logo.

## Heritage Ottawa Official Website

Heritage Ottawa now has an official website, which was launched earlier this year. Our very capable webmaster, Peter O' Malley of O' Malley Communications Incorporated, has developed a user-friendly informative site, that will keep viewers up to date with Heritage Ottawa's activities. Members are encouraged to visit the H.O. website at: [www.heritageottawa.org](http://www.heritageottawa.org)

A French language website is also in creation and its domain name has been registered. This website will carry translations or adaptations from the English component; however, translation services have yet to be arranged.

Articles originally written in French will also be carried; these will appear as translations or adaptations on the English language website.



Please, forward with payment to:

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## Book Reviews

**Eric Ross Arthur:  
Conservation in Context**

*Edited by Alec Keefer.*

Published by the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy, 2001.

This modest but very welcome book throws new light and appreciation on Eric Ross Arthur's impact on Canadian architecture while providing the reader with an affectionate look at his life.

A professor at the University of Toronto, School of Architecture, Eric Ross Arthur founded the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario in the 1930s contributing significantly to raising awareness of Ontario's heritage both natural and architectural.

The nine chapters of the book are based on the presentations made at a colloquium in 1998. Excerpt from review by William Moffatt published in *Acorn: The Journal of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario*, Spring, 2002.

**Jeff Keshen and Nicole St-Onge:  
Ottawa: Making a Capital**

Published by University of Ottawa Press, 2002.

An indispensable collection of essays on the history of Ottawa, some in French.

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