



Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage

Fall 2003 Volume 30, No. 3

President's Report

by David B. Flemming

Buildings at Risk

The demolition of the Caplan building has entered its second month and the last portions of the Rideau Street facade are coming down slowly so as not to rain bricks upon pedestrians on the street below. With the demolition of the Caplan building, Ottawa has lost one of the best examples of its 19th century commercial architecture.

The next preservation battle will be the one to save the former Registry Office on Nicholas Street. Built in 1873, it is a designated heritage building owned by Viking-Rideau Corporation who have recently said that the building has no part in their proposed expansion of Rideau Centre and the Congress Centre. A few years ago, Viking-Rideau offered to move the building to another location and it is hoped that if we cannot change their minds about preserving it on-site, they will still agree to a move. We met with City officials earlier this year to express our wish to preserve the building and a letter was sent to the Mayor and Councillors urging them to make preservation of the building *in situ* a condition of any municipal funding for an expansion of the Rideau Centre or Congress Centre.

It is now more than nine months since the loss of the two buildings on the Laurier-Nicholas-Waller site and the public has yet to be told what specific action will be taken against the developer, Groupe Lépine. Except for a few expressions of outrage from two or three councillors nearly ten months ago,



This interesting mural for more than a decade, graced the west wall of the Bowles Lunch Building on Sparks Street facing the site once occupied by the Citizen Building and the place where D'Arcy Mc Gee was assassinated. The vacant lot was latterly used by individual orators to deliver their messages to passers-by, and so acquired the name Speakers' Corner after that part of Hyde Park, London, U.K., which has for a much longer period served a similar purpose, though on a grander scale.

Heritage Ottawa supported the mixed-use development of this site, with the facade retention of the Hardy Arcade, the former Bowles Lunch and the facades of the the Sparks Street buildings to the west of the vacant site, up to O'Connor Street.

our elected representatives have been silent on this matter. Another example of the lack of political will by our elected representatives to defend Ottawa's built heritage. Meanwhile, work on the site continued without interruption and a "Now Open" sign has appeared on the new Laurier Tower.

On a happier note, the City of Ottawa recently renewed the lease on Grant House, 150 Elgin Street, to the owners of Friday's Roast Beef House.

It was feared that development proposals for the city-owned site bounded by Laurier, Elgin and Gloucester would recommend moving the building, however it now seems that city officials are following their new Arts and Heritage Plan which calls for a preservation rider to be put on the sale of any city-owned property with a heritage designation.

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Obituary

by Carolyn Quinn

One of the founding members and first President of Heritage Ottawa, R. A. J. Phillips, known as Bob to his friends, died July 9, 2003, at his home in Cantley, Quebec, surrounded by his family. On the same day, his final column appeared in *The Ottawa Citizen*.

Bob Phillips' commitment to Heritage Ottawa goes back at least to 1967 when he and his wife Mary Anne were members of a small committee tasked with beautifying the capital for the centennial celebrations to be held that year. By the year-end, the committee had increased its membership and regrouped under the title, *A Capital for Canadians* and its heritage committee assembled monthly in the Phillips' living room.

Under Bob's chairmanship, the committee was instrumental in saving for posterity, the Billings House, the Nicholas Street Jail, the Armstrong House and the East Block of the Parliament Buildings. The last was to be gutted and its interior modernised and reconfigured into offices. Bob Phillips' team organised tours of the East Block alerting the public to the value of the east Block's historic fabric.

Among other local area landmarks that Bob Phillips played a considerable part in saving, are the former Union Station, slated for demolition to create a parking lot, the Fraser School House, the Byward Market and the Aberdeen



The Nicholas Street Gaol



Union Station

Pavilion a sketch of which is the motif in the Heritage Ottawa logo.

Bob Phillips also played an important role in formulating the policies and principles that have guided heritage conservation, not just in Ottawa, but at the provincial and federal levels as well. He worked on the creation of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Mayoral Committee on Heritage in 1972; and the founding of the Heritage Canada Foundation, of which he became the first Executive Director.

In the year 2000, Heritage Ottawa, in response to a request by the City of Ottawa for nominees for a Civic Officiation Award, recommended R. A. J. Phillips. We were happy and proud to learn that Bob was the recipient of the award.

Former LACAC chair and long-time friend of Bob Phillips' Mark Brandt, recently shared the story

of Bob's last built heritage conservation dream. It was to see the Eddy Digester Tower across from Parliament Hill restored and reused as a micro-museum of our industrial history. He saw it as a magnificent observation tower, that would give visitors a wonderful and unequalled view of Parliament Hill, the mighty Ottawa River and the beautiful Gatineau Hills. It remains a worthy project and one hopes that his successors in the field of heritage preservation can bring it to fruition.

Although I met him only once in person, I had the pleasure of working with Bob Phillips when he wrote a wonderful article reminiscing about the founding of the Heritage Canada Foundation 30 years ago previously (See *Heritage*, Spring, 2003). He was engaging and amusing while revealing a sharp memory for certain unquotable recollections.

As per the Phillips family's wishes, Heritage Ottawa made a donation in support of *Les amis du parc* Mary Anne Phillips located in Cantley on land donated by the Phillips family in her honour some 10 years ago.

We will miss Bob's inspiring speeches and his deep enthusiasm for causes such as those of Heritage Ottawa

We are indebted to him for showing us the way.

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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Canadian Architect and Builder, 1888-1908 (Part 2)

by Elizabeth Krug

In 1888 the periodical, Canadian Architect and Builder, appeared and was published until 1908. It reported on important architectural activities in major Canadian cities, and included illustrations and advertisement for the trade. Possibly inspired by the British The Builder, it showed extensive American-Canadian influences in architectural practice, design, education and competition. The influence of the American architect Henry Hobson Richardson (d. 1886), and of his neo-Romanesque style, in buildings of the late nineteenth century, is shown in many of the excellent illustrations and articles.

From its inception, Canadian Architect and Builder had as its purpose to be "a journal of public works" and a medium of communication between "architects and municipal or other corporations"²¹. It was strongly committed to the advancement of the profession, and to the formation of an Ontario Association of Architects, as well as to the Ottawa Institute of Architects, documenting the benefits and progress of each.²²

November 1888:

Ottawa: A committee, consisting of the two city Engineers and the Chief of the Fire Department, along with architects Hodgson, BOWES, and Alexander, was appointed by the city council to draft a bylaw for the guidance of a building inspector to be appointed.²³

December 1888:

Ottawa: The following is a report of the building operations for 1888: Architect James R. BOWES reports:

- four separate schools, total cost \$ 24,100; St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's, Notre Dame, New Edinburgh school.
- central police station, cost \$14,000; Congregational church, cost \$10,500;
- tenements, total cost \$13,500;
- two brick residences, total cost \$ 7, 700;

- additions to Hams (Harris?) and Campbell factory, cost \$5,000;
- nine brick cottages, total cost \$ 26,000;
- interior improvements to St. Patrick's church, cost \$3,500;
- Rideau Skating and Curling rink, cost \$10,600;
- (Theodore St., later Laurier St.) St. Bridget's church, \$75,000; .
- R C church Gate(?)ville, cost \$3,000; (St. Thomas Aquinas, Billings Bridge, rebuilt)
- church at Vinton, \$14,000. (St. Elisabeth of Hungary, burned down 1896²⁴.)

March 1889:

Ottawa: On the evening of January 15th, the architects of Ottawa held a meeting for the consideration and adoption of the constitution and by-laws of the proposed Ottawa Institute of Architects. Eighteen architects signed the roll binding themselves to adhere faithfully to the constitution and

by-laws of the Institute. The election of officers resulted as follows: President, Thos. Fuller; Vice-President, K. Amoldii; Secretary A.M. Calderon, Treasurer, J.R Bowes; Executive Council: H.H. Horsey, D. Ewart, K. Amoldi, R. Surtees, J.R. Bowes, A.F. Alexander and AM. Calderon.²⁵

May 1889:

Ottawa: The principal work let out by the different architects since last report is: J. R BOWES, architect,

- residence for O. R. Smith, \$4,500;
- improvements to By Ward market building \$3,500;
- fittings for a new police station.
- store for R. Sholdis \$4,500;
- store for R. Steckel, \$3,000;
- warehouse for J. Martin, \$4,200;
- Buckingham public school.²⁶

June 1889:

Ottawa: The City Council proposes erecting a new fire station in Dalhousie ward Architect BOWES has called for tenders for the same.²⁷



Fig. 1. Public Works staff, c.1866. Parliament Buildings Construction site. L-R: J. Lebreton (Lebrett?) Ross (?), Engineer; René Steckel; Chas. Baillargé; William Hutchison; G.B. Pelham; F.P. Rubidge, Assistant Chief Engineer; John Bowes; J.H. Pattison (Patterson?); J. Larose; Arnoldi; T. Fuller; Kelly (?). National Archives of Canada copy neg.: PA-124244, Acc. 1965-049. N.B. Also in City of Ottawa Archives, copy neg.: CA-0161, Mrs. Montague Anderson Collection. Names in caption are taken from both sources. Additional information from City Archives' caption: Architects, Superintendent, Draftsmen of 1st Parliament Bldgs. Photo taken at Temporary Office in Old Barracks....

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Canadian Architect and Builder continued

Bowes, 1890 and beyond.

Finally, on August 3, 1890, St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church opened to the public, with an inaugural mass, fully reported in The Ottawa Journal and the Ottawa Citizen.²⁸ Still standing today, this work of James R. Bowes shows a melding of Romanesque revival style, featuring limestone exterior, bossage in gables, rounded arches and eclectic towers, with a Gothic revival interior, featuring "fan" vaulting. The three altars, also designed by Bowes, echo the exterior bell towers. Whether they are Gothic or Romanesque, or Eclectic, is left to the visitor to decide. The 1949 history of the Archdiocese described the bell towers as "russo-byzantin"²⁹. Unfortunately, the bell, also named "Bridget", was sold in the 1960s. Other budgetary necessities of the 1960s obliterated the interior painted decoration.

But the architecture of Bowes needs further mention. James had presumably apprenticed with his father John, who, in the late 1880s was still working for the Department of Public Works, under Thomas Fuller. It is not inconceivable that James' medievalising exterior shows the influence of the Dept of Public Works, as well as the American neo-Romanesque architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. As for the Gothic fan-vaulted interior, if one wishes to look for influences, notice should be taken of the fan vaulting of the Rideau Convent Chapel (Convent of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart), built in 1887 by the architect priest of Notre Dame Cathedral, Canon Georges Bouillon, who also designed the fan vaulting of Saint-Francois-de-Sales Church. Its fan vaults are much more elaborate than those in St Brigid's, and have the decorative tracery characteristic of the English style. Nevertheless, it would appear possible that Bouillon influenced James R. Bowes' design for St Brigid's, if one considers the proximity of



Mrs. Bowes

St Brigid's church to Notre Dame Cathedral, where Bouillon was parish priest from 1876-1883, and bursar of the diocese of Ottawa from 1884-1888, promoted to secretary to Msgr. Duhamel and canon of the cathedral in 1889.³¹ Be that as it may, Bowes' vaulting in St Brigid's may have required exterior buttressing. Concrete buttresses were added c.1968, when the walls facing Cumberland St started to lean. The ground underneath the church had, by then, also undergone some trauma, which may have contributed to this structural problem.

After the opening of St Brigid's, not much is known of the work of James R. Bowes. The city directory of 1889-90 gives a new address for James, 278 Metcalfe. While the house is no longer standing, those remaining in the neighborhood suggest this was an affluent

address and that the architect had become successful. Then, in 1892, when Bowes was only 40 years old, tragedy intruded. Fire, the nemesis of 19th century North American architecture, took the life of one of Ottawa's most prominent architects.

His obituary:

The Ottawa Citizen, Thursday, January 14, 1892: DEATH OF J.R. BOWES, One of the Victims of a Fire in Hanford, California. Very great regret was expressed in Ottawa yesterday when it became known that Mr. Jas. R. Bowes, architect, of this city, had met with his death in Hanford, California. From the information received it appears that Mr. Bowes was boarding in a house where fire broke out, resulting in four men being burned. Mr. Bowes hoping to escape, jumped from his bedroom window and was so seriously injured that he died the next day, January 4th. Deceased was well known in Ottawa as a first class architect, and his professional reputation was not confined to this city, but spread throughout the Dominion. During a brief residence in Winnipeg he designed some of the most prominent buildings there and throughout the west. In Ottawa his principal works were the present St. Bridget's Church, the Police Station and the Central Fire Station. He leaves a childless widow to mourn his loss. The remains were buried by the Catholic Mutual Benefit Society, of which he was a member.

His father, John Bowes, architect with the Department of Public Works, continued working. His residence was given in the City directory of 1892 as 235 Wilbrod. One final achievement of John (or James) is mentioned in the history of the Archdiocese of Ottawa. Our Lady of Good Counsel (Notre Dame de Bon Conseil de Bayswater), also known as St. Mary's, a western offspring of St. Patrick's parish, Ottawa, described as a wood structure with brick, and attributed to J.J. Bowes, was blessed by the archbishop in 1891.³² It burned down c.1946. Presumably either James

or John could have taken credit for this church, but it is mentioned in John's obituary:

**Ottawa Free Press. Monday
September 10 1894 5:00 PM. Death
of Mr. John Bowes**

A Resident of Ottawa for 35 years to the Grave.

Through the death of Mr. John Bowes on Saturday, Ottawa loses one of its oldest and most respected citizens. The deceased was a native of Ireland, been born in the county Kilkenny seventy-four years ago. At a very early age he came to Canada and settled in Kingston city. Thence he removed to Ottawa where he has resided for more than thirty-five years. Being an excellent draughtsman, he adopted the architect's profession, and was called upon many times, to superintend the building of many of Canada's public institutions. Amongst others that might be mentioned are the Parliament Library, St. Mary's Cathedral (sic) and the Custom house at Kingston. In addition, he had charge of the construction of one of the first Methodist churches in Montreal. By his first wife, who was a Miss Delaney, of Kingston, he has several children living, amongst them being Mrs. O'Gara, wife of our esteemed Police Magistrate, Denis and Patrick, who are residents of Chicago, Alex, a dentist of Chatham, and Edward, who is engaged in the medical profession in the Western States.

As an evidence of the great architectural skill of the deceased, it may be mentioned that when plans for the parliamentary library arrived in Ottawa it was found that they were unworkable and impossible of construction. After the government had failed to obtain any assistance from numbers of architects, Mr. Bowes was the only man who could point out the way to erect the buildings. He was the watchdog of the government in the erection of the parliament buildings and fought the contractors throughout constantly preventing much that would have been a loss to the country. One of his prized documents was a certificate of his excellent work in these matters.

The late Hon. C.F. Fraser greatly desired him to accept a similar position under the Ontario legislature, but he remained true to his position under Sir John Macdonald.

The Funeral Took place this morning from his late residence, 235 Wilbrod Street, to St. Joseph's church. A grandchild, The Rev. Father John O'Gara, sang High mass, assisted by brothers Charlebois and Henault as deacon and subdeacon. The absolute was pronounced by Father Constantineau. The pallbearers were Messrs. P. Harty, Horsey; Grist, J () Brophy, J.J. McGee, of Ottawa and James Devlin, of Kingston. Among the prominent citizens present were Hon. R. W Scott,

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Martin O'Gara, H. Robillard, M.P., P. Baskerville, Ex-M.P.P., Wm. Kehoe, Martin Battle, J.L. Dowlin and Geo Stockand. Mr. Bowes had a brother in the Northwest, a member of the Oblate order. He also is an excellent architect, and has been often called upon to prepare plans for some of the most beautiful churches in that far-off country.

The funeral was in charge of Messrs. Brady and Harris. A handsome cross adorned the casket, being the gift of Mrs. Bowes, while the family of Magistrate O'Gara contributed a wreath. A daughter of Mrs. Dr. O'Rourke, from Detroit, was among the mourners.

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Growing up in Lower Town *(Conclusion)*

by J.W. Guy Fortier

The War

We didn't spend all our time playing games. When the Second World War broke out, things really changed. We collected scrap metal and other materials to help the war effort, sometimes going from house to house in search of donations.

Before the war started, there was a gang of about 15 or so grown ups who used to hang around the park near the Black Bridge. They were poor and had no jobs and were looking for any kind of work so as to survive. Although we were not rich, my mother used to make sandwiches which I would take to them. A few days after the war started all had left. They had enlisted in the Army which gave them a place to sleep, clothes on their backs and food in their mouths.

Our games changed as we grew up. The older boys, that is those 18 or over, started to appear in uniforms and we teenagers, too young to enlist, started to practise military drilling so as to be prepared for the time when we were old enough to enlist. There were many war casualties on our street. One that remains in my memory is that of two

of the three sons from one family, while in the air force, died within weeks of each other. One drowned somewhere in Western Canada, and the other was killed in a road accident in England. Both were under 21, and we knew them well.

Economically, things changed drastically in Lower Town. Suddenly there were jobs, and anyone, man or woman, could find one. Thousands of people in uniform came to Ottawa and many were stationed in or near Lower Town and had to find a place to stay and a place to eat. Many homes were turned into boarding houses that provided full lodging to these people.

Because of this, business was booming and many working men got into the habit of stopping at a beer parlour to have a drink with friends before going home to supper. This habit grew more expensive as time went on, and many squandered their pay. This led to some bad consequences as many families saw only some of the benefits from the working head of the house. Since this type of behaviour was happening in other parts of Ontario, this led to the provincial government passing a law that stopped



The old Synagog

all beer, wine and liquor selling establishment from selling alcohol between 6.30 to 8p.m.

The war made us grow up very quickly. Most of us started getting part-time jobs and going our own way. My two older brothers were in the service. One in the air force, and one in the navy. We seldom heard from the one in the navy. It was the same for everyone else with a relative in the navy. Our sailors spent weeks at sea unable to contact us, and when they did, we received a whole bunch of letters at the same time. They couldn't say where they were or where they went, and mostly told us not to worry, that they were all right.

The war turned Lower Town into a beehive of activity. Beer was rationed and there were many hotels, probably more than anywhere else in the city, that sold beer. They could only open for a few hours a day as they quickly exhausted their supply. Crowds of service men, women, and civilians soon evolved a pattern of going from place to place and drinking beer as each hotel opened at a different hour. If I recall correctly, there were at least eight hotels within a two block area on York and Clarence streets between Sussex and



Bakery, circa 1930.

Dalhousie streets. I vividly remember three hotels practically next to each other on Murray Street. They were frequented by many ladies of questionable character. At night military police patrolled the area looking out for Servicemen entering these hotels. On Sussex Street, opposite the cathedral was Laurentian Terrace a hostel which housed nearly 400 young women who had come to Ottawa to work for the war effort.

Many of these women had servicemen as husbands or boy friends. One of the saddest things to see as the war wore on, was to observe a wounded serviceman, still dressed in bandages walking with his female partner.

As we grew older, the gang members progressively grew distant from each other. We went to different High Schools. Some went to LaSalle Academy on Sussex Street to continue their education in a French-Catholic environment. The problem for those coming from the less fortunate families, was that although grades 9 and 10 at LaSalle were free, grades eleven onwards had to be paid for since the government only supported Catholic high schools up to grade 9. Others went to English high schools such as Glebe to follow an academic education. Some of us, myself included, went to Ottawa Technical High School. At this school, there was both an academic and a technical stream. Either gave you a taste of the other. I learned the basics of electricity, printing, car mechanics, sheet metal and others including music. The school was organised so that upon reaching Grade 11, students had to select the route of their choice. Many opted for academic, but were ever thankful for the basic technical training, which came in very useful later in life as they began to own homes and automobiles.

Then, as suddenly as it had begun, war ended: some of my friends came home, some didn't. Life for them was no more and they sleep for ever in places, that in Lower Town they had never even dreamed of seeing.

For me and my contemporaries Lower Town would never be the same again.

Masson's Heritage Railway Station

by David Jeanes

The Canadian Pacific Railway, on 16 June 2003, announced its intention to sell one of its oldest stations. Masson - Buckingham Junction was opened in 1877 by the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway, which was built by the Quebec government. The station is located just within the eastern boundaries of the new city of Gatineau, Quebec and the National Capital Region. The new owners, a local organisation, "Station agrotouristique du Basse Lievre", which is supported by the City of Gatineau, plans to restore the building. The line still carries freight on the Quebec-Gatineau Railway.

The building is a fine example of a 19th century small-town station, with separate men's and ladies' waiting rooms, operator's office with bay window, and express and freight rooms. Of wooden construction, the building is almost unmodified since 1877. Its style was "Tuscan Villa", common to many Quebec regional railways of that era and

to earlier stations in the United States. The style was characterized by a low-pitched roof, wide eaves, ornamental brackets, side gable, bay window and strongly contrasting white walls and dark-painted door and window frames and quoins. The original roof ornaments have been removed and the station was repainted in the CPR's standard Tuscan red.

In 1995, it was designated by the federal government as a heritage railway station. Almost all others of its style have been lost, except Canada's oldest railway station at King City, Ontario and the small Barrington station built by Ottawa's J.R. Booth, now at the Canadian Railway Museum, St. Constant, Quebec. Masson was on the first direct Montreal-Ottawa railway. It saw the first Montreal-Toronto CPR train in 1884 and the first transcontinental train to Vancouver in 1886. VIA Rail's last train ran in 1981 but a Swedish high-speed train made an Ottawa-Masson demonstration run in 1993.



Masson Station

President's Message continued...

Development News

On September 3, City Council approved two zoning by-law amendments which may have set the tone for future development in the city. The two-year battle to have Ashcroft Homes propose a development for 320 McLeod Street which would conform to the existing zoning by-law and heritage plan for the area has been lost. Despite concerted opposition from Heritage Ottawa and various community groups, City Council approved a plan for a nine-storey building on the site. Although the current zoning and heritage overlay provisions limited the height to two to four storeys, most of those who opposed the development would have agreed to a compromise, six or seven storey building. The developer refused to accede to this request and city staff recommended that Council approve the zoning amendment.

A similar application for a new development at 560 Rideau Street was also approved by Council on September 3. The developer, Richcraft Homes, sought a by-law amendment which would permit the construction of a nine storey building whereas the current

zoning only permitted six. This proposal was also contrary to the vision for the south side of Rideau Street as recommended by the Rideau Street Redevelopment Working Group.

Of course, the nine-storeys approved for each of these sites could easily be increased to 13 or 14 storeys should the developers decide to apply for a minor variance from the city's Committee of Adjustment. Decisions of the Committee of Adjustment are not subject to Council's approval and the only way to challenge them is by applying to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Those in favour and opposed to these proposals both quoted the city's new Official Plan to bolster their arguments, with one side emphasising the need to provide adequate housing in the already-serviced sections of the city and the other stressing the Plan's emphasis on preserving the scale and density of existing neighbourhoods. This will be an ongoing problem as developers test the limits of both the Official Plan and, what is more important, the political will of municipal politicians to create a liveable community.



Enlarged detail of Sparks Street mural.

Heritage Ottawa will be working with other groups to make zoning amendment applications an issue in the upcoming municipal election. Besides preserving examples of existing built heritage, it is important that new developments do not destroy the historic fabric of the city neighbourhoods. Heritage Ottawa members and others are urged to publically question both mayoralty and council candidates on their stand on these important issues to ensure that the new Council has the political will to defend our city's built heritage.



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