



# Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

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## Werner Ernst Noffke: Ottawa's Architect

By Shannon Ricketts

**W**erner Ernst Noffke (1878 - 1964) was arguably one of Ottawa's most influential and prolific architects. Of the scores of industrial, commercial, institutional and domestic buildings he designed, many survive, continuing to successfully fulfill their originally intended function. Taken together, they illustrate the evolution of mainstream architectural styles during the first half of the twentieth century. Rooted in tradition, they are well-crafted examples of the accepted norms of their time.

Noffke set up his own practice at the beginning of the new century, building homes for middle- and upper-level civil servants in the growing residential area of Sandy Hill as well as designing commercial structures such as the Ogilvy Department Store on Rideau Street and the Blackburn and the Hope office buildings on Sparks Street. He is best known, however, for the Colonial Revival-style houses he



Photo: City of Ottawa

*Champagne Bath, 321 King Edward Avenue (1922).*

built in the Glebe, in the teens and twenties. At that time, the area was rapidly developing as a result of the extension of the tramcar lines and the beautification of the Rideau Canal. By 1908, the Ottawa Improvement Commission (antecedent of today's National Capital Commission) had begun to remove railway tracks and industrial structures from along the banks of the canal, creating a linear park that wound its way through the city. A real estate boom ensued, with the area bordering the beautifully landscaped Central Park at Patterson Creek becoming one of the most desirable properties in town. Noffke became one of the primary influences in the development of this area, adopting a fresh approach by utilizing Colonial Revival-style visual motifs within an Arts and Crafts-inspired aesthetic. These houses offered Ottawa residents novel visual delights within his



*Ottawa South Fire Station/Ottawa South Community Centre, 260 Sunnyside Avenue (1920).*

## Ottawa's Architect...

already well-established format of well-crafted structures graciously set on leafy lots.

Noffke continued to build in Ottawa up until the 1950s. He explored most of the major stylistic trends and designed for institutional, commercial, religious and domestic purposes. His houses can be found in most of Ottawa's central residential neighbourhoods: Sandy Hill, the Glebe, Rockcliffe Park, Westboro, Britannia, and Alta Vista. His institutional and commercial designs show his ability to respond to client requirements in a variety of formats. He designed the charming Spanish Colonial Revival style fire station (now a community centre) in Ottawa South; he built churches, both for the Lutheran as well as for the Roman Catholic Church; and in the Byward Market area, he built a synagogue (now demolished) as well as the Champagne Bath, one of two public indoor swimming pools built by the City in the 1920s. The Medical Arts Building, constructed on Metcalfe Street in 1928-1929 was both a new functional type – a building devoted exclusively to rented medical suites – and one of a relatively few Noffke designs to exhibit Art Deco motifs. This stylistic influence can also be seen in the extension to the General Hospital (now the Elizabeth Bruyère Health Centre) which he undertook around the same time.

Through the Depression years, Noffke was busy with commissions from the federal government, designing residential schools as well as much of the complex on Booth Street for the Department of

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**Visit Heritage Ottawa on line – [www.heritageottawa.org](http://www.heritageottawa.org)**

*Heritage Ottawa acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa and the Ontario Ministry of Culture.*



Photo: City of Ottawa

*Bruyère St. (1930) General Hospital extension (now Elizabeth Bruyère Health Centre). Noffke and Lucien Leblanc designed a fourth storey, which was added in 1935-37.*

Mines. In the late 1930s, he undertook one of his most important works, the postal station at Sparks and Elgin streets, facing the newly developed Confederation Square. This grand building complemented the neighbouring Langevin Block and respected its formal setting, while incorporating Art Deco influences, modified in this case by the Chateau-style roof reputedly imposed by Prime Minister Mackenzie King.

By the end of World War II, Noffke was in his seventies but showed little inclination to retire. According to his younger partners, he continued to exert the primary design influence within his architectural firm, moving with the times into a modernist stylistic vocabulary for both domestic and institutional designs. One of his last and best known works, the 1956-57 Embassy of the then-U.S.S.R., was designed to strict specifications set out by the Soviets. A late example of the stripped classical style popular in the West during the 1930s and 1940s, this rational classicism continued to be the preferred style (derogatorily dubbed Stalinesque Brutalism) for the duration of the Soviet regime.

Noffke made his last entry in his job book (now in the National Archives of Canada) in 1960 at the age of 82. When he died four years later, he left an enduring legacy of some 200 buildings in and around the nation's capital. ♦

*Shannon Ricketts has worked for many years as an architectural historian with the Parks Canada Agency. She is also co-author of A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles.*

# Some Noffke Buildings in Ottawa

Heritage Ottawa members can refer to the following list to explore some of Noffke's buildings in their own neighbourhoods or to visit all of them for an overview of the work of this important Ottawa architect.

## **Sandy Hill**

203 Chapel St. (1927) Dr. A. Charlebois Residence

209 Wilbrod St. (1904) W.E. Noffke Residence

395 Daly St. (19) The Ranger Residence

443 Daly St. (19) J.J. Codville Residence  
(The Polish Embassy Residence)

18 Range Rd. (1920) Col. D. R. Street Residence

32 Range Rd. (1930) Embassy Residence

285 Charlotte St. (1956-57) Embassy of the  
U.S.S. R. (now the Russian Embassy)

Rideau St at Nicholas (1906-13) The Ogilvie  
Building

## **Glebe**

85 Glebe Ave. (1913) W.F. Powell Residence

1 Clemow Ave. (1915) F.X. Plaunt Residence  
(now Ghanian High Commission Residence)

11 Clemow Ave. (1915) B.C. Beach Residence

20 Clemow Ave (1914) W.E. Noffke Residence

26 Clemow Ave. (192) L.W. Crannel Residence

27 Clemow Ave. (1929) W.F. Powell Residence

245 Clemow Ave. (1927) H.A. Plant Residence

12 Allen Place (1913) E.C. Powell Residence

515 O'Connor Ave. (1913) Austin Blount Residence

517 O'Connor Ave. (1913) G.F. Hodgins Residence

## **Centertown**

Sparks St. at Metcalfe (1910-13) The Blackburn  
Building

Sparks St. near Elgin (1913) The Hope Building

315 McLeod St. (1927) Hulse and Playfair Funeral  
Parlour

180 Metcalfe St. (1928-29) Medical Arts Building

Cartier Ave. at Somerset (1929) Ste. Theresa's  
Roman Catholic Church

Sparks St. at Elgin (1938-39) Postal Station B.

Argyle St. at Bank (1929) Christ Le Roi Roman  
Catholic Church

## **Lower Town**

Bruyère St. (1930) General Hospital extension  
(now Elizabeth Bruyère Health Centre)

Anglesea Square (1921) Ste. Anne's Rectory

King Edward Avenue (1922) The Champagne Bath

## **Dow's Lake**

Booth Street (1929-52) Department of Mines Complex

## **Rockcliffe**

540 Acacia Ave. (1928) Dr. F.W.C. Mohr Residence  
(Korean Embassy Residence)

## **New Edinburgh**

326 Mackay St. (1915) St. Luke's Evangelical  
Lutheran Church

## **Ottawa South**

Sunnyside Ave. at Fairbairn (1920) Fire station  
(now Ottawa South Community Centre)

## **Ottawa West**

124 & 126 Ruskin Ave. (1935) Greenberg brothers  
residences

140 Ruskin Ave. (1935?) A.W. Patterson Residence

255 Harmer Ave. (1935/6?) W.E. Noffke Residence

842 Tavistock Rd. (1952) C.P. Mahoney Residence

715 Roosevelt Ave (1954) Our Saviours Lutheran  
church

303 Cunningham Ave. (1956) J. R. Linn Residence

## **Alta Vista**

933 Smyth Rd. (1956) Mount Calvary Lutheran  
Church

# From the President....



Although we organized the 2005 walking tours to avoid the uncomfortably hot days of July, we were surprised by the early arrival of torrid, humid weather in June.

Despite the high temperatures, an almost equal mix of members and non-members attended the first four tours which included two new additions to the roster: David Jeanes's walk through Ottawa's historic financial district (co-sponsored with Doors Open Ottawa) and Katharine Fletcher's tour of the Central Experimental Farm.

Our new four-colour walking tour brochure has already been sent to our members and has also been distributed throughout the city. Thanks go to John Arnold for managing the production of the brochure and to the team at Iridium for their handsome design, the first change to its look in seven years. We especially recognize our long-time tour sponsor, Sussex Capital Inc., who doubled their financial support this year, enabling us to produce the new brochure.

Recent changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* have provided municipalities with the ability to better protect their built heritage resources. Nevertheless, property owners continue to apply regularly to demolish buildings in heritage conservation districts throughout the city. Applications to demolish seven buildings in Lowertown West and Sandy Hill East have been considered by Planning and Environment Committee over the past two months. Heritage Ottawa adamantly opposes these applications, particularly when the owner has failed to propose a replacement. We also recommend that the city take pre-emptive action by ordering repairs to these buildings and charging the costs to the owner. This would prevent the all too common occurrence of owners allowing their properties to deteriorate to the point that a Fire Marshall's order to repair or demolish, supersedes any protection for a building under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

We have recently heard of a recommendation from the city's Real Property Asset Management Division to sell March House, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century building owned by the city and designated under

Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* less than two years ago. It is rumoured that if the sale is approved, the building would be moved to a nearby golf course and would lose its heritage designation. This would set a dangerous precedent that would not go un-noticed by other property owners who would wish to sell designated properties. I have already expressed Heritage Ottawa's concern about this proposed sale at a recent LACAC meeting and I will be following this case closely over the next few months.

Best wishes for a happy summer and remember we still have nine more walking tours scheduled for this year. I hope to see you on a Sunday afternoon, appreciating examples of our city's built heritage as you follow our expert guides on our well planned historic walks. ♦

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## Mapping Out Ottawa's History



A new archival exhibit that celebrates the City of Ottawa's 150th anniversary opened mid-June at the City Hall Art Gallery.

*Ottawa Emerges: Images through Time* explores the development of Ottawa through rarely seen maps, documentary art, photographs, and computer imaging. The exhibit includes original and reproduced versions of maps and illustrations of Ottawa dating as far back as 1613, from the collections of the City of Ottawa Archives and of Library and Archives Canada.

The exhibit will be on view until September 5, 2005. The gallery is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Admission is free.

For more information, call 613-580-2424, ext. 28425 or visit [ottawa.ca/heritage](http://ottawa.ca/heritage).

# President's Report

*David B. Flemming, President of Heritage Ottawa, presented the 2004 report to members at the Annual General meeting held at Rockcliffe Park Recreation Centre Hall, 380 Springfield Road, Wednesday, May 11, 2005*

A warm welcome to our members and their guests and those of you who are yet to become members of this 30-year old organization. April 17, 2005 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Heritage Ottawa and we shall be celebrating this milestone with a birthday cake later in the evening.

This marks my third president's report to a Heritage Ottawa annual general meeting. It has been an honour to serve another year as your president. Before reporting on activities in 2004, I would like to ask our current board members to stand and for you to join me in thanking them for their hard work over the past year.

Four of our members, Carolyn Quinn, Edwinna von Baeyer, Bruce Elliott and Helmut Schade, were recipients of 2004 Ontario Heritage Foundation Heritage Community Recognition Program Awards in four of the five categories. In October, I was honoured with an Ontario Museum Association Award of Merit for Advocacy on behalf of the Strong Voice for Heritage Coalition, a group which fought the proposed cuts to the arts and heritage budget during the 2004 City of Ottawa budget debate. These awards recognize the efforts of our members in preserving our City's heritage.

Our membership has increased by 40 members or 25% over the past year. I hope that we shall soon be able to find a volunteer to take on the job of membership secretary so we can work on achieving an even greater increase in membership over the coming year.

For the second consecutive year we produced four editions of the *Heritage Ottawa Newsletter*. Veronica Vaillancourt succeeded Gordon Cullingham as editor of the *Newsletter* in January. Many thanks to Gordon for his work as interim editor and to Veronica for taking on this task.

Our webmaster, Peter O'Malley, continues to ably manage our website which attracts an average of 800 visits per month. I have received numerous compliments about our website which was featured last year on the Ottawa Smart website.

I would like to give a special thanks to David Jeanes, our vice-president, for his efforts over the past year. Despite his numerous other duties and responsibilities he continues to be an articulate and eloquent advocate for our built

heritage. A special thanks to Gabe Ready for his efforts as secretary and as chair of the program committee. Gabe is leaving the board to concentrate on family matters; we shall miss him and hope he will continue to serve the organization in other ways.

Heritage Ottawa continues to provide education and outreach programs in support of our built heritage. Last year's 11 walking tours, organized by David Jeanes and Ken Elder, attracted 268 participants and generated over \$2400 in revenue. I would like to thank our tour guides, many of whom volunteer every year to participate in this important fundraising and educational activity. They are: David Jeanes, Gouhar Shemdin, Jennifer Roseburgh, Judy Deegan, Carolyn Quinn, Michel Prévost, Hagit Hadaya, Bruce Elliott, Linda Hoad and Martha Edmond. Thanks also to those members who helped co-ordinate these tours and to Sussex Capital Inc., for their seventh year of sponsoring our tour program.

This year, David and Ken organized a record 13 tours. Thanks to the work of John Arnold, we shall soon be unveiling a new design for our walking tour brochure. A schedule of the 2005 tours has been posted on our website and each member will receive a copy of the new brochure by early June. This year's program begins on May 29 with David Jeanes's tour of *Ottawa's Historic Financial District*, a special tour co-sponsored by Heritage Ottawa and Doors Open Ottawa.

For the first time in seven years, Heritage Ottawa presented a lecture series, which began in January of this the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday year of the City of Ottawa. We had four lectures, including this evening's, each of which has drawn an average of 35 participants. In June we shall begin planning for the fall/winter lecture



*Doors Open Ottawa: for the third year in a row, Heritage Ottawa volunteers welcomed visitors to the former Ottawa Registry Office on Nicholas Street. (left to right) Gabe Ready, Denise Jacques, Gordon Cullingham, Wilna Clark.*

Photo: City of Ottawa

series, a minimum of eight presentations at various locations across the city to be highlighted by the first annual Bob and Mary Anne Phillips Memorial Lecture scheduled for February 2006, Heritage month.

Last year, Heritage Ottawa mounted displays at Bytown Days, Heritage Day, Museums' Day and at the Ottawa Regional Heritage Fair.

Heritage Ottawa continues to play a lead role in Doors Open Ottawa. We oversee the two-year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant awarded in 2004 and our members serve on the Advisory Council and on the Buildings Committee. Last year we interpreted the former Ottawa Registry Office on Nicholas Street during Doors Open Ottawa 2004 and will do the same during this year's event on June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the Trillium grants, we also received an operating grant of \$11,147 from the City of Ottawa and a \$1,100 grant from the Ontario Ministry of Culture for the year 2005. We acknowledge with thanks both levels of government for their ongoing support for our activities on behalf of the people of Ottawa.

The past year has seen much activity in our role as an advocate for our built heritage. We were involved in negotiations with the Archdiocese of Ottawa over their decision to demolish two buildings on Parent and Guigues Avenues. We are currently involved in efforts to convince the Archdiocese not to undertake proposed extensive interior renovations to Notre-Dame Cathedral-Basilica, one of the few building interiors designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Speaking of the Act, we also lobbied for amendments to the legislation which were finally proclaimed last month and we shall soon be involved in the consultation sessions concerning the establishment of Regulations under the amended Act.

The emphasis on intensification of development in older sections of Ottawa, have proved a special challenge for the preservation of our built heritage and the fabric of existing urban communities and neighbourhoods. Despite the amendments to the *Ontario Heritage Act* older buildings are still under threat by owners who neglect their properties to the point where they become the target of the Ontario Fire Marshall's repair or demolish order. The only way to save these building is to convince City Council that it is for the benefit of the community

to order repairs to these buildings and add the cost to the tax bill of the owners. We have also supported efforts to have the City of Ottawa adopt a tax relief program for heritage properties.

Property owners continue to apply for demolition permits for some of our fine old buildings. Last month, one developer applied for demolition permits for five buildings in the Lowertown West Heritage Conservation District. Heritage Ottawa opposed these requests at the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC), the Planning and Environment Committee and most recently at City Council.

On a positive note, one only has to look at the many excellent projects which receive Heritage Conservation Awards each year to feel that the efforts of the past 30 years have not been in vain. The city through its Heritage Designation Program continues to designate new buildings at the rate of about ten per year. The Heritage Section of the Department of Development Services recently undertook studies which will eventually result in the designation of two additional heritage conservation districts.

There is still much work to be done and over the past few years there have been fewer members of Heritage Ottawa to do it. When I agreed to serve as your president in 2002, I said that I would serve for a maximum of three years. Having been involved in numerous historical and heritage organizations, it has been my experience that a healthy organization should be able to change its leadership every three years. Despite efforts to renew our organization, we have been unable to recruit a sufficient number of new members to allow the board or committee chairs to grow and develop at a pace required by the exigencies of the times. If it is the will of the new Board of Directors, I shall serve for a fourth year as president but no longer.

As in my past two presidential reports, I urge those of you who have not been active in Heritage Ottawa's activities to consider doing so today. Many of those who have been actively involved over the past few years are growing tired. I fear that our failure to regenerate leadership will result in the loss of much of what we have gained over the past few years. As we enter our fourth decade, it is essential that we recruit more active members, if for no other reason than to find a new president a year from now. ♦

# La Basilique-Cathédrale Notre-Dame d'Ottawa : Un joyau du patrimoine national menacé

par Michel Prévost

Un Comité pour la préservation de la cathédrale Notre-Dame d'Ottawa a été créé l'hiver dernier afin de dénoncer des travaux prévus dans le sanctuaire de la magnifique basilique-cathédrale qui est non seulement un des joyaux du patrimoine religieux et architectural de la région de la capitale nationale, mais aussi un trésor national.

Au cours des dernières semaines, 10 000 cartes postales pré-adressées à Mgr Marcel Gervais, archevêque d'Ottawa, ont été distribuées afin que Monseigneur renonce à ce projet de démembrement du maître-autel du célèbre sculpteur Louis-Philippe Hébert (voir encart) et du tabernacle. De plus, une lettre ouverte signée par 100 organismes et personnes du patrimoine, des arts et du milieu artistique a été envoyée aux grands journaux canadiens. Nous reproduisons pour Héritage Ottawa le contenu de cette lettre.

Malgré tous les appels, lettres au rédacteur et les cartes postales, Mgr Gervais ne semble toujours pas vouloir renoncer à ce projet de démembrement.

La basilique-cathédrale Notre-Dame d'Ottawa est l'un des joyaux du patrimoine religieux et architectural du Canada. Des travaux de modernisation menacent toutefois l'intégrité de son intérieur. Devant un projet imminent qui dénaturera le sanctuaire de cette cathédrale d'une valeur inestimable, nous désirons soulever des questions de fond qui doivent être débattues publiquement, pour faire la lumière sur une intervention irréversible projetée par Mgr Gervais, archevêque d'Ottawa.

Le démantèlement du maître-autel et du tabernacle aura pour résultat de défigurer un ensemble architectural remarquable et d'altérer la perspective qui organise le tout. Point central d'une composition ascensionnelle conçue au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle par le prêtre-architecte de renom, le chanoine Georges Bouillon, et exécutée par l'un des plus grands sculpteurs canadiens, Louis-Philippe Hébert, le maître-autel soutient et orchestre tout le sanctuaire de style néo-gothique.

Le projet de modifier l'autel pour l'avancer, d'entreposer le tabernacle et de substituer des statues de femmes pour actualiser les représentations religieuses du chœur témoigne d'une compréhension informée malheureusement par une rectitude politique qui abolit la dimension historique éprouvée de cet ensemble. L'entreprise vise à morceler, pour des raisons qui ne sont pas clairement expliquées, une oeuvre architecturale et artistique cohérente et significative. En la traitant comme une somme de pièces détachables susceptibles d'être recomposée selon une volonté ancrée dans l'immédiat et dont on ne connaît pas les références, cette vision veut substituer une interprétation personnelle au plan d'ensemble initial qui fonctionne dans sa totalité.

Il est inquiétant de constater que la dernière décoration intérieure toujours intacte dessinée par le chanoine Bouillon dans la région de la capitale fédérale pourrait être détruite, quelques années à peine après une restauration complète et très réussie de la cathédrale. L'opposition exprimée ici ne relève pas d'un attachement passéiste à un décor mais du désir de préserver l'expression vivante d'une vision



Le Comité de préservation de la cathédrale Notre-Dame a fait imprimer 10 000 cartes postales pré-adressées à Mgr Marcel Gervais. Le contour en noir indique ce qui va être enlevé, soit le maître-autel de Louis-Philippe Hébert et le tabernacle. Voici le texte de la carte postale : Monseigneur, Nous vous demandons de ne pas démanteler le maître-autel et le tabernacle, chef d'oeuvre du sanctuaire de la basilique-cathédrale Notre-Dame d'Ottawa, patrimoine de tous, et d'intégrer la vision désirée (bas-relief de femmes de l'église) à un nouvel autel.

d'artiste exprimée à travers une synergie de moyens: sculpture, ébénisterie, architecture et décoration. Trop d'interventions mal guidées ont déjà compromis le patrimoine religieux national et régional en s'attaquant à la pièce à de grands ensembles qui finissent par perdre leur cohérence.

Le patrimoine religieux est un bien collectif. Il importe de rappeler la responsabilité qui incombe aux autorités de préserver et de mettre en valeur les trésors nationaux dont ils ont la charge, pour les léguer dans leur intégralité aux générations à venir. Nous enjoignons par conséquent l'archevêque d'Ottawa de renoncer publiquement dans les plus brefs délais à ce projet. S'il le faut, il pourra intégrer à un nouvel autel contemporain toutes les représentations symboliques qui incarneront la vision recherchée pour le temps présent.

Les membres d'Héritage Ottawa qui désirent appuyer le comité pour préserver l'intégrité du

sanctuaire de la cathédrale-basilique Notre-Dame d'Ottawa peuvent signaler leur opposition en envoyant un courriel à l'archevêché à : [gouellette@ecclesia-ottawa.org](mailto:gouellette@ecclesia-ottawa.org) ou en appelant au (613) 738-5025. ♦

*Michel Prévost est l'archiviste en chef de l'Université d'Ottawa et le président de la Société d'histoire de l'Outaouais. Il s'implique activement depuis près de 30 ans à la préservation et à la diffusion du patrimoine de la région de la capitale nationale, de l'Outaouais et de l'Est ontarien. M. Prévost a reçu plusieurs reconnaissances dont le Prix d'excellence du patrimoine de la Ville d'Ottawa et le Prix Roger-Bernard du patrimoine du Regroupement des organismes du patrimoine franco-ontarien. Il a été choisi cette année Personnalité de l'année LeDroit-Radio-Canada Ottawa-Gatineau dans la catégorie arts et culture et il a été nommé Membre émérite pour l'année 2004-2005 de l'Association des archivistes du Québec.*

# Ottawa's Notre Dame Basilica-Cathedral: A Jewel of Our National Heritage Threatened

By Michel Prévost

A committee for the preservation of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Ottawa was created last winter to oppose proposed changes to the sanctuary of this magnificent basilica-cathedral. The building is not only one of the jewels of religious and architectural heritage in the national capital region, but indeed a national treasure.

Over the last few weeks, 10,000 pre-addressed postcards were distributed to people concerned with the fate of the main altar. Once signed, they were mailed to Monseigneur Marcel Gervais, Archbishop of Ottawa, requesting that he abandon plans to cut and remove parts of the historic main altar, the work of the celebrated sculptor, Louis-Philippe Hébert. In addition, a letter signed by 100 organizations and

individuals dedicated to arts, culture and the preservation of our heritage was sent to a number of leading Canadian newspapers. The contents of this letter are reproduced below.

Ottawa's Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica is one of the jewels of architectural and





religious heritage in Canada. Unfortunately, a modernization project is threatening the integrity of the interior. Faced with the imminent prospect of substantial transformations that will alter the sanctuary of this invaluable cathedral, we wish to raise fundamental questions and call for a public debate to shed light on the irreversibility of the project planned by Mgr. Marcel Gervais, Archbishop of Ottawa.

The dismantlement of the main altar and the tabernacle will result in the disfigurement of a remarkable architectural ensemble and will alter the perspective organizing the whole. As the central point of the composition elaborated in the nineteenth century by the renowned architect-priest Georges Bouillon, and executed by one of Canada's greatest sculptors, Louis-Philippe Hébert, the main altar upholds and organizes the whole neo-gothic sanctuary.

The project to modify the altar and move it forward, to warehouse the tabernacle and to substitute statues of women with a view to modernizing the existing religious representations presently in the sanctuary testify to an unfortunate political correctness that abolishes the proven historical dimension of this ensemble. For reasons that are not clearly explained, the undertaking seeks to cut up in pieces an artistic and architectural masterpiece that is coherent and significant. By treating it as a series of detachable pieces that can indifferently be recomposed in accordance with a plan that has no discernable references, this vision seeks to substitute a personal interpretation for the original and clearly conceived plan.

It is unacceptable that Chanoine Bouillon's interior decoration (the last in existence in the national capital region) could be destroyed at all, not least a few years after a complete and successful renovation of the cathedral. The opposition expressed here does not reflect a nostalgic attachment to the past, but the desire to preserve the living expression of an artistic vision embodied through a synergy of means: sculpture, woodworking, architecture and decoration. Too many misguided attempts have already compromised national and regional religious heritage by modifying bit by bit large ensembles which end up losing all coherence.

Religious heritage is a common good. It is important to underline the responsibility of authorities entrusted with national treasures in preserving and promoting this heritage, and to bequeath it integrally to coming generations. Consequently, we ask the Archbishop of Ottawa to renounce his plan as soon as possible and, if necessary, integrate all symbolic representations bearing the desired vision for present times into a new contemporary altar designed for the purpose.

Heritage Ottawa members who wish to support this campaign to preserve the integrity of the sanctuary of the basilica-cathedral of Notre-Dame in Ottawa are invited to express their opposition to the dismantling of the main altar by sending an e-mail to: [gouellette@ecclesia-ottawa.org](mailto:gouellette@ecclesia-ottawa.org) or by calling (613) 738-5025. ♦

*Michel Prévost is chief archivist of the University of Ottawa and the president of the Société d'histoire de l'Outaouais. He has worked for almost 30 years to encourage and preserve the heritage of the national capital region. He has received numerous awards for his work and was recently named Membre émérite for 2004-2005 by the Association des archivistes du Québec.*



*The committee for the preservation of Notre-Dame Cathedral had 10,000 postcards printed and pre-addressed to Mgr. Marcel Gervais. The black outline indicates those parts scheduled for removal, viz., sculptures by Louis-Philippe Hébert and the tabernacle. The message reads: Monseigneur, We ask that the main altar and tabernacle, masterpieces of the sanctuary of the basilica-cathedral Notre-Dame in Ottawa, not be dismantled. Rather, the new proposed plans can be incorporated in a new altar.*

# Ottawa's Fourth Annual Doors Open Attracts Thousands to City's Built Treasures

Over 55,000 people visited some of Ottawa's most architecturally and historically significant buildings this past weekend. 117 buildings—many of which are normally closed to the public—swung open their doors and welcomed citizens to celebrate their local architecture and history.



Photo: Roger Lalonde, City of Ottawa

*The French Embassy is always a popular Doors Open destination.*

“People who have lived in Ottawa for years tell me that, after participating in Doors Open Ottawa, they see the city like they’ve never seen it before,” said Mayor Bob Chiarelli, Honourary Co-Chair of Doors Open Ottawa. “You think you know your neighbourhood and through Doors Open Ottawa you find treasures that you never knew existed.”

At Earnscliffe, the British High Commissioner's Residence, more than 2,100 people waited in line to explore the immaculately preserved grey stone Victorian-gothic mansion. His Excellency David Reddaway, the British High Commissioner, braved the warm and humid weather to welcome guests to his home.



Photo: Roger Lalonde, City of Ottawa

*Over two thousand people waited patiently in the hot sun to tour Earnscliffe, the Official Residence of the British High Commissioner.*

Visitors to the Embassy of Algeria marveled at the rich, historic interior. A breath-taking exhibit of Algerian art was on display. Residents also toured the Britannia Water Purification Plant, one of several City of Ottawa facilities open for the event. At the water purification plant, visitors learned how water is treated.

## About Doors Open Ottawa:

Doors Open Ottawa is a collaborative effort between the City of Ottawa, Heritage Ottawa, and the Ottawa Regional Society of Architects (ORSA). Since its inaugural year in 2002, Doors Open Ottawa has attracted over 160,000 visitors during the annual two-day event.

Doors Open Ottawa received financial support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture of Ontario. With \$100 million in annual funding from the province's charitable gaming initiative, the Foundation provides grants to eligible charitable and not-for-profit organizations in the arts, culture, sports, recreation, environment and social service sectors. ♦

# Bytown Days Are Back

For 10 action-packed days, September 9 to 18, Bytown Days will celebrate Ottawa's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and pay tribute to the people and events that made our city. The festival, which takes place in the popular Byward Market, will offer a range of bilingual activities that include history, music and dance for the whole family.

The program opens with the Irish Festival on Friday, September 9. Performances of Irish music, theatre and readings will take place in various locations throughout the Irish Village until Sunday, September 11. Other festival events include a French Folklore night, art classes at the Ottawa School of Art, interactive demonstrations of 19<sup>th</sup> century trades and crafts and much more. Special activities are planned for children such as rides in horse-drawn wagons and a chance to see antique fire and police vehicles. The festival will offer visitors 10 days of fun and education. Don't miss it. For more information please see [events@byward-market.com](mailto:events@byward-market.com).

If you would like to get involved in or volunteer for Bytown Days, please contact Brenna Morell, Event Coordinator, at the ByWard Market Business Improvement Area, telephone: 613.562.3325 or online at [events@byward-market.com](mailto:events@byward-market.com). ♦



Photo: ByWard Market BIA

*Wagon rides are one of the highlights of Bytown Days.*

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## Crucial Vote for Museum Sustainability Plan

CHOO/COPO recently launched a campaign urging members and the public at large to write the mayor and their city councilor asking him/ her to vote in favour of the Museums Sustainability Plan.

The Museums Sustainability Plan will provide our municipal museums with the funding necessary to better serve the citizens of Ottawa through the preserving and interpreting of our civic heritage. Failure to provide additional funding would probably result in the closure of at least two of the ten museums and sites currently being funded by the City of Ottawa and will prevent any significant growth or development in the others.

The \$2.3 million increase being proposed would be provided over four years with \$700,000 recommended for the first year of the Plan (2006).

There have been six public consultations on various aspects of the Plan held over the past two months and details of the Plan should be posted on the City of Ottawa website on June 30. Public delegations will be received by the Health, Recreation and Social Services Committee at their July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and the final report will be considered by City Council at its July 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Without a groundswell of public support, it is likely that the Plan will not be approved.

Heritage Ottawa members are encouraged to write the mayor and council urging them to vote "yes" for the Museums Sustainability Plan. ♦

# Book News:

Katharine Fletcher's latest books featuring the natural and human history of the National Capital Region were published last May by Fitzhenry & Whiteside and are available at many bookstores including Chapters, Leishman's Books and specialty shops such as Mountain Equipment Co-op, The World of Maps, Arbour Environmental Shoppe in Ottawa; and Gerry and Isobel's in Old Chelsea.

Katharine Fletcher, freelance writer, columnist, and author, won the 2005 Ottawa Tourism Media Award for her trilogy. But tourists are not the only ones to benefit from these handy books; Ottawa's residents, armed with Fletcher's guides, can also spend many hours strolling and driving in and about their city, discovering its history, heritage and natural wonders.

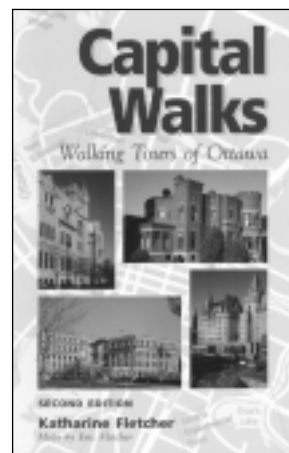
**Capital Rambles, Exploring the National Capital Region:** 1st edition. Using Ottawa as hub, Katharine's 12 heritage drives, enhanced by heritage and contemporary photographs as well as tales of the Valley, reveal our region's rich history. Favourite hiking, horseback riding, canoeing and skiing routes are recommended.

**Capital Walks, Walking Tours of Ottawa:** 2nd edition, includes two brand new walks (Central Experimental Farm and Ottawa River Parkway). Social and architectural history of Ottawa revealed through ten neighbourhood strolls.

**Historical Walks, The Gatineau Park Story:** 3rd edition. Read about the pioneers who lived "up the mountain," plus the flora and fauna of this beautiful sanctuary, then hike Katharine's favourite trails.

Hot off the press: Just out this year (March, 2005, The Globe Pequot Press) is Katharine and Eric Fletcher's **Quebec Off the Beaten Path**, 4th edition, containing the most comprehensive guide to West Quebec (Outaouais) and the couple's home region of Pontiac.

For more information about Katharine's and Eric's books, go to [www.chesleyhouse.com/Books/OurBooks.htm](http://www.chesleyhouse.com/Books/OurBooks.htm) or contact Katharine Fletcher, 4316 Steele Line, Quyon, QC J0X 2V0, tel.: 819-458-2090



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