



# Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

*Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage* Spring/Summer 2007 Volume 34, No. 2

## The Oldest House in Vanier, the future Workers' Heritage Centre

By Ken Clavette

**T**he oldest known building in Vanier will soon become the home for Ottawa's workers' history. The small home at 306 Cyr Ave. and known as Gamman House was owned by the City of



Vanier and was destined to become the home of the Vanier Museum until amalgamation opened up space in the former City Hall (which is where Museo parc Vanier is now located). The result of the change was an empty building with no city budget for maintenance.

*The Nathaniel Gamman family. Circa 1870s.*

So a partnership was formed between the Ottawa and

District Labour Council and the City to have the Workers' Heritage Centre (WHC) established and use the building as a museum and interpretation centre.

The Gamman House is a modest one-and-a-half story, mansard-roofed, wood frame cottage constructed in 1875 by Nathaniel and Mary Gamman, early residents of the area.

The house was part of the community of Janeville that developed along Montreal Road from the Cummings Bridge in the 1870s. Its boundaries were the Rideau River to the west, Deschamps to the north, the former Vanier/ Ottawa municipal boundary to the east and McArthur to the south. Assessment rolls show that many large land holdings in this area were divided up into smaller ones in the 1870s and houses were built on the new lots. Most of the new inhabitants were listed in the rolls as labourers, clerks, or farmers, including farm labourers. Janeville was a predominantly Anglophone village.



*Gamman house, 306 Cyr Ave., Vanier as it looks today. It is an unusual remaining example of a small mansard-roofed structure.*

## Gamman house...

The home has survived several phases of development in the community and has become an isolated example of what Janeville once looked like. Small workers' homes were constructed on large lots that provided space for gardens and out buildings – including a privy at Gamman House in use into the late 1940s. In 1913 Janeville amalgamated with Clarkstown to the north and Clandeboye to the east to become the village of Eastview and eventually the City of Vanier.

The original owner, Nathaniel Gamman, was born in 1848 in Lowertown, making his family very early inhabitants of Ottawa. His father, Thomas Gamman, had emigrated from England while his mother, Mary-Jane Close, had been born in Cumberland Township. In 1873 he married Mary Ann Mulligan and that same year they acquired the land upon which their house was to be built. They had a family of seven children in the home and raised five to adulthood. Gamman worked as a brick maker, janitor and a labourer and served very briefly as a councillor in the town of Eastview shortly after it was incorporated in 1913. Nathaniel lived there until his death in 1917 and Mary Ann until 1921. Nathaniel's twin brother, Thomas, bought the adjacent lot at the same time but never built on it and today it serves as the Royal Canadian Legion parking lot.

## Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Heritage Ottawa is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Ottawa's built heritage.

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

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



Photo: Ken Clavette

*The large side yard is an important example of the 1870s era and contributes to the character of the property; it is also preserved in the designation.*

The City of Ottawa working with the WHC had the building designated heritage in 2004. It was during this research that the WHC discovered that the building was a decade older than St Margaret's Anglican Church, which was believed to have been the oldest surviving Vanier building.

The designation report by staff stated that, "...the house is significant as a remnant of Janeville, and as an unusual remaining example of a small mansard-roofed structure." It noted that, "The building's heritage attributes include the wood siding, mansard roof, decorative wood details such as the pilasters and porch details, the finials, dentils and brackets." The large side yard is an important example of the 1870s era and contributes to the character of the house; it is also preserved in the designation.

The WHC is currently in a development stage and undertaking some long overdue repairs with the target of opening to the public in 2010. The goals will be preserving, interpreting and sharing the history of Ottawa's working people. Using exhibits, educational sessions, community events and school programming, the WHC will raise the awareness of what working people have contributed to the City's heritage. ♦

*Ken Clavette is a board member of Heritage Ottawa and the Secretary-Treasurer of the Workers' Heritage Centre Museum. He served on the City of Ottawa Heritage Advisory Committee.*

# Looking Up

## Light standards in and around historic areas in Ottawa

By Stuart Lazear

It is easy to take for granted the beautiful light fixtures in and around historic areas in the City. What is not widely known, however, is the care taken by the National Capital Commission (NCC) and the City of Ottawa in restoring, reproducing and adapting them for new contemporary designs. Take time this spring or summer to “look up” during your walks about town to enjoy the City’s unique light fixtures – good examples of Ottawa’s engineering heritage.



Photo: Stuart Lazear

*This five-globed Sussex Fixture on Sussex Dr. is based on an early design found in various historic areas in the City.*

The “Sussex Fixture” is the most widely used light standard in Ottawa’s historic areas. It is a five-globed cast iron fixture designed by the NCC in the early 1960s and based on the original five-globed light fixtures in the By Ward Market and Lowertown. There are also three-globed versions. They can be found in the By Ward

Market Heritage Conservation District, the Lowertown West Heritage Conservation District and the Centretown Heritage Conservation District along Somerset. They are also used in other older and historic areas such as Rideau Street between Sussex and King Edward, Dundonald Park and MacDonald Park. This fixture is currently manufactured by Stittsville Foundries.

The design of the Sussex Fixture was adapted by the City on the Sparks Street Mall, a designated heritage conservation district, during the Mall’s last makeover in the early 1990s. The Sparks Street Mall features the light standard on its website as part of its corporate identity.

The NCC was also inspired by the Sussex Fixture in developing a contemporary design along Confederation Boulevard which accommodates metal halide street lighting for the taller lights and compact fluorescent pedestrian lighting for the lower lights.



Photo: Stuart Lazear

*The contemporary design of the tall light standards along Confederation Boulevard complements the style of the lower pedestrian light standards nearby.*

While the Sussex Fixture is a relatively recent light standard design based on early precedents, the cast iron light fixture located at 50 Guigues at the north entrance to Notre Dame Basilica is an early fixture. The original fixtures in the By Ward Market /Lowertown/ Centretown area, as seen in historic photos, were similar to this design with straight arms extending from the central pole and more globes.

The fluted concrete aggregate single column with globe and cast iron “basket” luminaire was an early 20<sup>th</sup> century design by the Federal District Commission, the NCC’s predecessor. It is used in the Laurier Avenue Heritage Conservation District in Sandy Hill in front of Strachcona Park, in the Minto Park Heritage Conservation District,



Photo: Stuart Lazear

*This straight-armed fixture on Guigues Street outside the north entrance of Notre Dame Basilica is closely related to early fixtures found in the By Ward Market, Lowertown and Centretown.*



*The fluted concrete aggregate single column with globe is one of a series which line the north edge of Strathcona Park in Sandy Hill.*

light fixtures in the manner of the Confederation Boulevard pedestrian units.

The City has also adapted this design in new light standards on the Cummings Bridge and next to Strathcona Park at the south end of Charlotte Street.

The decorative iron light standards along the Minto Bridges next to the New Edinburgh Heritage Conservation District and in front of the Fleet Street Pumping Station were reproduced in the 1990s from the original design and one remaining original light standard. These two sites are designated individually under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. The University of Ottawa recently installed new lights in their historic quarter and gateway entrance to the campus along Séraphin Marion at Waller in the Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District. These new fixtures were patterned on early fixtures used on the campus.

Older light fixtures are an important part of the City's cultural landscape and in many ways the story of their retention parallels that of larger components of the cultural landscape, i.e., the built environment. As with heritage buildings, you need

along Ottawa parkways, heritage driveways and in parks such as Dundonald Park abutting the Centretown Heritage Conservation District, MacDonald Park, Confederation Park and Hampton Park. The NCC has also adapted the fluted concrete aggregate pole and globe lighting along Dows Lake to accommodate new lighting types (compact fluorescent). The NCC core urban parks such as Major's Hill Park and Confederation Park retain the heritage globe luminaire and pole as an inspiration for its new contemporary pedestrian



*This standard in Confederation Park is a variation of the single globe aggregate design.*

to look up to appreciate older light standards. Light fixtures must be kept up-to-date to respond to new demands related to safety, energy efficiency and even the ability to gaze at the stars. It is easy to dismiss their retention as not being cost-effective and to adapt the fixtures in inappropriate ways, but these old light poles represent a unique aesthetic. They also preserve a record of fine craftsmanship and tell a story. As with heritage buildings, their loss happens one at a time and incrementally until we suddenly wake up to a changed landscape. A large team of people behind the scene helps preserve and retrofit as many light fixtures possible. A lot of credit is due to the NCC and City of Ottawa, and many experts such as lighting consultants Philip Gabriel and Martin Conboy, landscape architects, Gérald Lajeunesse (NCC) and Cecilia Paine, architects Barry Padolsky and Julian Smith, engineer Vinni Sahn. I hope this article and accompanying images will inspire someone to delve further into this topic. Term paper theme, anyone? ♦

*Stuart Lazear is Coordinator of Heritage Planning, City of Ottawa. The author thanks Gérald Lajeunesse and Johanne Fortier of the NCC for their assistance.*



*This decorative light standard outside the Fleet Street Pumping Station was reproduced in the 1990s from an original design used on the Minto Bridges.*



*The unique multi-globed light standards outside Ottawa's train station were re-located from the Great Hall in the former Union Station downtown.*

# From the President....



The past few months have witnessed the establishment of the King Edward Precinct, a specially zoned area in Sandy Hill incorporating much of the land owned by the University of Ottawa. Heritage Ottawa

opposed giving the University what is essentially a *carte blanche* to develop the area along King Edward Avenue south of Laurier Avenue East, given its past record in dealing with historic properties. We shall continue to monitor their stewardship of these buildings as development proceeds, speaking out where necessary to preserve the last vestiges of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the area.

The decision by the Archdiocese of Ottawa to sell St. Brigid's church and rectory resulted in the establishment of the St. Brigid's Heritage Coalition, an organization whose aim is to assure that the heritage designations of St. Brigid's are recognized in any plans for an adaptive use of the building. Heritage Ottawa has been an active participant in the Coalition and continues to support the St. Brigid's parishioners in their efforts to reverse the Archdiocese's decision to close the church and disband the parish.

Although our work on development and zoning issues is ongoing, with the coming of spring, we welcome the opportunity to appreciate our city's built heritage and landscapes.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, the sixth Doors Open Ottawa will provide the public with an opportunity to visit nearly 120 buildings, including 15 new buildings.

As usual, Heritage Ottawa has adopted the former City Registry Office on Nicholas Street. Besides providing an interpretation of the building, it also enables us to highlight our activities over the past year and recruit new members. We always need volunteers for this fun activity. If you are interested in volunteering for a three-hour shift, please call the office and leave a message. As a volunteer, you will receive a nifty Doors Open Ottawa T-shirt and have the satisfaction of promoting one of Ottawa's unique heritage buildings.

The 2007 walking tour schedule has been finalized and among this year's dozen tours are two new additions: Fern Mackenzie's walk on Parliament Hill on September 16<sup>th</sup> and David Jeanes' and Glenn Lockwood's tour, the Cathedral to Nanny Goat Hill walk on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Gouhar Shemdin's popular Glebe tour on October 7<sup>th</sup> will this year focus on the architecture of Werner Noffke, one of Ottawa's most influential architects. Heritage Ottawa members get a 50% reduction in the cost of each tour and volunteers who help coordinate the tours pay nothing. Call the office if you would like to volunteer to help with the tours.



Photo: Jant Soetermans

*The Rideau Canal celebrates 175 years.*

This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ottawa's designation as a "capital city" in 1857 and the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Rideau Canal in 1832. What better way to celebrate our rich history than to visit some of our 12 municipal museums and historic sites. From the elegance of Billings Estate to the rowdy origins of Ottawa as depicted at the Bytown Museum, our local museums and historical societies offer visitors a unique opportunity to reflect on the domestic and working life of the diverse community of people who contributed to Ottawa's civic history. For more information on Ottawa's museums, check the Council of Heritage Organizations' website which provides links to the websites of its member institutions: <http://www.choocopo.ca>

Best wishes for a great summer.

*David B. Flemming,*  
President

# Heritage Study for Sandy Hill

By Stuart Lazear and Susan McLeod O'Reilly

A new heritage study of Sandy Hill was approved by Ottawa City Council at its meeting of February 8, 2006. The funding for this consultant study came from the Nicholas Waller Settlement following the unauthorized demolition of heritage houses at the construction site of a new high rise apartment building at 50 Laurier Avenue. The disposition of the \$250,000 settlement for the Sandy Hill Heritage Study and other heritage projects was approved by City Council on April 26, 2005 after prior discussion with Action Sandy Hill, LACAC and Heritage Ottawa.

A very rigorous Request for Qualification (RFQ) and Request for Proposals (RFP) process was carried out following Council's approval of the study Terms of Reference. The consultant team selected for the Sandy Hill Heritage Study brings together three main collaborators – Rosanne Moss, Herb Stovel and Dana Johnson – each with recognized expertise in research, management, planning and conservation of heritage properties and districts. They began work on the project in October 2006.

## The Consultant Team

Architect Rosanne Moss, the leader of the consultant team, is a partner in the architectural firm of Fournier Gersovitz Moss & Associates Architects. FGM has been working in heritage conservation for over 21 years. For the Sandy Hill Heritage Study, Moss has developed an innovative computerized system of inventory and research data collection that will be easily accessible to City staff and community members alike. The system will provide comprehensive information on each individual property as well as a data base useful for comparisons across properties.

Herb Stovel, Director of the conservation program at the School of Canadian Studies at Carleton University, oversees the research work on individual properties carried out by four graduate students in the program: Christopher Wiebe, Carolyn Van Sligtenhorst, Ha Nguyen and Ron Roy. Stovel will also participate in the process of



Photo: Jan Soetermans

*Philomene Terrace, 363-383 Daly Avenue, an eight-unit row built in 1874-5, was one of the first properties designated by the City.*

heritage evaluation of individual properties and in the synthesis of the material gathered in the study.

Architectural historian Dana Johnson is conducting research of the area and will prepare a report on the development of the Sandy Hill neighbourhood from the early 1800s to 1950.

## Background

Ottawa's first heritage conservation districts were designated in the Sandy Hill neighbourhood in 1982. The driving force behind these designations was a strong community desire to protect and maintain the historic character of the neighbourhood as represented by its high concentration of older buildings and streetscapes.

Alarmed by the demolition of heritage houses during the 1960s for new construction of apartment buildings, the community lobbied for a neighbourhood planning exercise in the early 1970s which expressed heritage preservation as a fundamental goal. This initiative resulted in the Secondary Plan within the City of Ottawa's Official Plan and provided specialized heritage zoning to stabilize and enhance the heritage character of the neighbourhood. In addition, it led to the creation of five heritage conservation districts.

## Today

After nearly a quarter century, the time has come to study these districts and the areas around them with a view to the following :

- research and document the properties constructed in the area prior to 1950 which have not been examined previously;
- identify buildings and groups of buildings, beyond those already designated, which could be designated as new heritage conservation districts under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act or as individual heritage properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act; and
- prepare a Heritage Conservation District Plan in order to manage the existing five heritage conservation districts and any new districts that might be identified as part of this study.



Photo: Jan Soetermans

*The 1875 Toller House, 229 Chapel Street was designed by architects Henry Horsey and J. Sheard in a vernacular version of the Gothic Revival style.*

## Heritage Study Outline

The boundaries of the study extend from Osgoode Street on the south (both sides) to Besserer on the north (both sides) and from King Edward on the west to the Rideau River on the east. The west side of Range Road, east side of Henderson Street, Nelson Street (both sides) to Somerset Street are included as well as the west side of King Edward between Laurier and Osgoode/Thomas More.

### Phase I

Investigate the heritage character of the area and the history of development and construction in Sandy Hill. Photograph and conduct research of all pre-1950 buildings and complete City of Ottawa Heritage Survey and Evaluation Forms.

### Phase II

Evaluate data gathered in Phase I in concert with representatives from the LACAC, Action Sandy Hill and the City's Heritage staff. Present the findings at a public meeting.

### Phase III

Prepare a Heritage Conservation District Plan which will recommend boundaries for any new heritage conservation districts, identify properties for individual heritage designation and establish guidelines for the management of the area's heritage resources. It will also discuss general planning recommendations, which may include zoning recommendations. The general planning recommendations will ensure that the heritage aspects of the study area are not isolated from the more global planning issues which affect this area. Present these recommendations at a public meeting.

### Where are we now in the process?

The consultant team is currently carrying out Phase 1 of the study which involves documenting and researching properties in the study area. Once the documentation and building evaluation phases are completed there will be notification of a public meeting in Image and Ottawa newspapers.

If you have any questions about this study please contact Stuart Lazaar, Coordinator of Heritage Planning at 613-580-2424 ext. 13855

The complete Council report can be found on-line at:  
<http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/occ/2006/02-08/pec/ACS2006-PGM-APR-0005.htm>

The disposition report can be found at:  
<http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/occ/2005/04-27/pec/ACS2005-DEV-APR-0091.htm> ♦

*Stuart Lazaar is Coordinator of Heritage Planning, Department of Planning, Transit and the Environment; Susan McLeod O' Reilly is Chair of Action Sandy Hill Heritage Sub-Committee*

# Heritage Ottawa's 2007 Walking Tours

**Date: June 10, 2:00 pm**

**Tour: Central Experimental Farm**

During the tour of the built heritage and cultural landscape of the Central Experimental Farm, the guide will spin tales of the farm, its residents and its history. (Wear appropriate footwear as lawns may be wet if it rains.)

Guide: Katharine Fletcher, author of *Capital Walks: Walking Tours of Ottawa*

Meeting Place: Dominion Observatory, Irving Place at Carling

**Date: June 17, 2:00 pm**

**Tour: Ottawa's Historic Financial District**

See financial institutions designed by some of Canada's leading architects which span a period of over a hundred years. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, building styles as rich and varied as Beaux Arts, Moderne and Contemporary are found on Ottawa's historic banking streets.

Guide: David Jeanes, vice-president Heritage Ottawa

Meeting place: NCC Infocentre, Wellington at Metcalfe

**Date: August 5, 10:00 am (NOTE TIME)**

**Tour: Lowertown West**

Visit Notre Dame Basilica, churches, courtyards and historic buildings of the By Ward Market and Lowertown. This area is the heart of old Ottawa where homes of canal workers and the earliest commercial buildings are found.

Guide: Hagit Hadaya, architectural historian,

Meeting place: Colonel By statue, Major's Hill Park

**Date: August 12, 2:00 pm**

**Tour: Sandy Hill East**

The historic mansions and townhouses of this early Ottawa residential district date from 1870 to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The tour will highlight the positive effect that zoning changes in the mid-1970s had on the preservation of buildings in the area.

Guide: Judy Deegan, community historian and former LACAC member

Meeting place: Laurier House, 335 Laurier at Chapel

**Date: August 19, 2:00 pm**

**Tour: University of Ottawa Campus, Historic Sector**

Discover the rich architecture and history of the University of Ottawa, established in 1848. This institution is North America's oldest and most important bilingual university. The tour begins with Tabaret Hall, based on Washington's Capitol building and one of Ottawa's finest examples of Classical Revival architecture.

Guide: Michel Prévost, University of Ottawa chief archivist

Meeting place: Tabaret Hall entrance, 550 Cumberland

**Date: August 26, 2:00 pm**

**Tour: Village of Britannia**

Discover the story of Britannia's emergence as a late-Victorian resort destination. The extension of the city's streetcar tracks westward in 1900 brought Ottawa's leisure seekers to the area, ushering in the golden years before World War I. Many early cottages have survived, some still evoking the character of the old summer resort community.

Guide: Carolyn Quinn, Director of Communications, Heritage Canada Foundation

Meeting place: Parking lot off Greenview, east side, near Carling

**Date: September 9, 2:00 pm**

**Tour: Village of Hintonburg**

Named for Joseph Hinton, a shopkeeper and civic official, the village of Hintonburg was incorporated in 1893. The tour will take you through the heart of this interesting, eclectic and socially varied neighbourhood, rich in heritage.

Guides: Linda Hoad and Paulette Dozois, community leaders

Meeting place: St. François d'Assise Church, Wellington West





*A view of Parliament Hill from Elgin Street.*

**Date: September 16, 2:00 pm**  
**Tour: Parliament Hill**

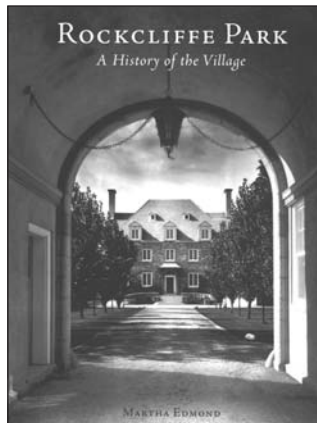
A tour that is closely linked to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the choice of Ottawa as Canada's Capital. On view are the monumental grouping of the Centre Block, Library, and East and West blocks of Parliament, as well as the buildings that form an integral part of the Parliamentary precinct, such as the Langevin, Victoria, Wellington, Confederation and Justice buildings.

Guide: Fern Mackenzie, architectural historian  
 Meeting place: Centennial Flame

**Date: September 23, 2:00 pm**  
**Tour: Village of Rockcliffe Park**

The mix of architectural styles in picturesque Rockcliffe Park range from stately stone mansions and interesting contemporary designs to remaining summer cottages. Learn about the history of the village and the role that the MacKay and Keefer families played in determining its layout and design of many of its homes.

Guide: Martha Edmond, author of *Rockcliffe Park: A History of the Village*  
 Meeting place: Lisgar Road at Princess Avenue



**Date: September 30, 2:00 pm**  
**Tour: Cathedral Hill to Nanny Goat Hill**

The escarpment at the west edge of Upper Town, overlooking Lebreton Flats, became a magnet for the homes of Ottawa's elite and for religious and educational institutions. The walk includes numerous designated heritage buildings and Ottawa's newest heritage conservation district

Guides: Glenn J. Lockwood, Anglican Diocesan Archivist, with David Jeanes, vice-president, Heritage Ottawa.

Meeting place: Garden of the Provinces, Wellington at Bay

**Date: October 7, 2:00 pm**  
**Tour: The Glebe and the Houses of Werner Noffke**

Noffke, one of Ottawa's most influential and prolific architects, is known for many industrial, commercial and institutional downtown buildings, and particularly for a number of visually delightful houses in the Glebe. His use of the Colonial Revival-style within an Arts and Crafts-inspired aesthetic strongly influenced development of the beautifully landscaped Central Park at Patterson Creek.

Guide: Gouhar Shemdin, conservation architect  
 Meeting place: Clemow at O'Connor

**Date: October 14, 2:00 pm**  
**Tour: Old Ottawa South**

In 1907, Nepean Township villages such as Ottawa South were annexed to the City of Ottawa. Improved city services soon followed, such as a new high level Bank Street Bridge over the canal. It allowed the privately-owned Ottawa Electric Railway, (OER), to extend streetcar services, stimulating housing and development of one of Ottawa's first "streetcar suburbs".

Guide: Leo Doyle, Development and Planning Committee, Old Ottawa South  
 Meeting place: Southminster United Church, Bank at Aylmer

# News and Notes

## St. Brigid's Heritage Coalition Holds a Town Hall Meeting

By Bruce McConville

On April 23<sup>rd</sup> a Town Hall meeting was hosted at the Guigues Community Center on Murray St. The purpose of the assembly was to discuss how best to preserve historic St. Brigid's Church on the corner of St. Patrick and Cumberland streets in Lowertown.

Catholic Bishop Marcel Gervais had decided to sell the church and the adjacent rectory in a call for bids that closed on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Monsignor Kevin Beech has stated that the Archdiocese is firmly committed to shutting down St. Brigid's in July of this year and wants to see the property sold off by September. Controversy was aroused because the call for purchase bids included a clause forbidding the church's use as a place of Catholic worship. The successful bidder must also guarantee that subsequent owners will also ban Catholic worship at the site.

Our Coalition came together as a result of deep concerns to preserve this iconic building and to participate in finding a creative end use that

respects the current heritage protections afforded by the City and the Province. This Ottawa landmark must not fall prey to the wrecker's ball nor be subjected to developers who would destroy protected elements of the building and plead ignorance after the fact. We have seen too many flagrant violations of our built Heritage in the downtown core and want to make St. Brigid's an example of how to do things right!

Close to 100 persons attended the meeting including stakeholders representing the political spectrum and the heritage community along with neighbours and parishioners who are worried about the building's future. At the end of the evening, the many legal heritage designations that are in place for St. Brigid's were affirmed and more broadly publicized. The meeting also provided a forum for the wider community to participate in finding ways to ensure that the transition becomes a win-win for the legacy of our built heritage and the new proprietor. Anyone with ideas or comments is invited to contact me at 613-298-1984 or [bmcon@magma.ca](mailto:bmcon@magma.ca).

*Bruce McConville, Chair of the St. Brigid's Heritage Coalition, is a former student of St. Brigid's school and altar boy at the church. He has lived and worked in the Rideau-Vanier area his whole life and is the founder and proprietor of McConville's Garage Ltd in Vanier since 1982. A community advocate, Bruce has taken two runs at becoming a city councillor.*

## Doors Open – A Year of Celebrations!

The Doors Open weekend of exploring Ottawa's rich heritage through its built landscape is Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

This year, Ottawa is celebrating two monumental anniversaries. In 1857, Ottawa was declared the capital of Canada, and in 1832, the Rideau Canal was completed. Both of these milestones have influenced Ottawa's spirit and architecture, shaping our landscape to include federal buildings, diplomatic agencies and a world-class waterway.

Doors Open Ottawa will be marking these 150-year and 175-year anniversaries through special

programming and themes. Visit [ottawa.ca/door-sopen](http://ottawa.ca/door-sopen) in mid-May for the complete list of participating buildings. The Thursday, May 31<sup>st</sup> editions of The Citizen and LeDroit will include the comprehensive Doors Open Ottawa Event Guide.

Get the inside story!

*The former home of Thomas Birkett, hardware merchant and former Mayor of Ottawa, was built in 1896. Today, splendidly restored, it serves as the Embassy of Hungary.*



Photo: Debra Beaugard

# In Memoriam

## The heritage conservation community mourns the passing of Robin Lettelier on April 20, 2007

Graduated in architecture from Laval University, Robin joined Parks Canada in 1970 to become Chief, Heritage Recording Services Division in Heritage Conservation Programme. He retired in 1997 and worked as a consultant in his field of Heritage Recording, Documentation, and Information Management.

Robin was a leading international expert; he was the International Coordinator for RecorDIM Initiative to bridge the gaps in the heritage field between information users and information providers, and the organizer of five international

symposia on traditional and new technologies in his field. He has been an active member of ICOMOS, its committee on Recording and Documentation, and its committee on Architectural Photogrammetry (CIPA) for over 20 years, and a regular lecturer at the international centre in Rome, ICCROM, for its many courses all over the world.

Robin was visionary and passionate about his mission, leaving a legacy of professionalism and dedication to advance knowledge in his field in the traditional methods and at the cutting edge of technology. Robin was in the process of publishing a book with the Getty Conservation Institute titled "Recording, Documentation and Information Management for the Conservation of Heritage Places – Guiding Principles"; it is to be printed soon.

The national and international heritage conservation community will miss a great professional and educator.

## Ottawa Fire Identified

By Ken Elder

To an avid postcard collector there is nothing so challenging and potentially satisfying as identifying an uncaptioned real photo view like the postcard shown right. It shows the outcome of a winter fire in a two storey brick block - but where? Fortunately, the postcard is postally used and from the back it can be established that the sender (and likely photographer) was N. M. Wood, living at Fire Station 8, Ottawa and the date April 6, 1913. He is writing to Miss Allison Kodym, a fellow postcard collector living in Omaha, Nebraska. In the message he is asking for newspaper clippings of the recent Dewney Hotel fire in Omaha and any photographs she can provide. Unfortunately he makes no reference to what must have been an Ottawa fire shown on the front of the postcard.

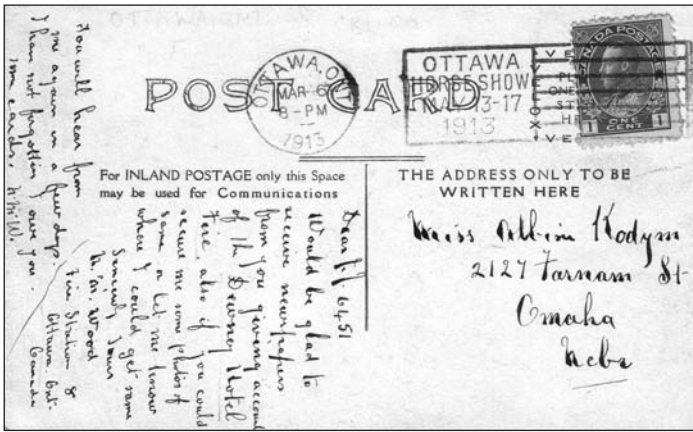
To solve this mystery I began at the Ottawa Room of the Ottawa Public Library. One book, *History of the Ottawa Fire Department 150 years of Fire Fighting*, provided two photographs of fire equipment with what looks like this building in the background. The first shows a horse drawn aerial



*Queen Street, looking north-west toward Lyon Street, evening of January 4, 1911. Burned out Laboratory, Inland Revenue Department building at right. Wellington Ward Market Building and market stalls in background.*

wagon of 1887 pattern "at scene of fire on Sparks Street." The second shows a ladder truck of 1906 pattern "on Sparks Street." The distinctive stone, gable-roofed building with 3 wrought iron finials on the gable parapet, can be seen at the far left. At the centre is the pre-fire, 2 storey brick block. At right (and out of the postcard view) is a garage with the street address 303. Using the 303 address and a fire insurance plan of 1912 it was now

Postcard: K. Elder Collection



Reverse of Inland Revenue fire postcard.

possible to determine this is the north side of Sparks Street between Kent and Lyon Streets. A search of Might directories for Sparks street, was less successful. The nagging problem was the church/public building-like structure at left.

The answer to the problem came in a subsequent visit to the Library. A look at the fire insurance plan of January, 1888 showed a distinctive footprint for Wellington Ward Market on Lyon Street, a gable roofed stone structure stretching from Sparks Street through to Queen Street. Beside it to the east were the market stalls. Now every thing came much clearer. The captions on the photographs in the fire department history were incorrect, this was a fire on Queen Street. The fire is described in the Ottawa Citizen of January 4, 1911 "Methylated Spirits Exploded and Inland Revenue Destroyed." The building at 317 Queen Street was being used by the laboratory branch of the Inland Revenue Department for the exclusive manufacture of Methylated Spirits. The fire broke out on the ground floor and spread quickly to the Dominion Analysts Branch on the second. The nine-year-old building seems to have performed well under the circumstances and everyone safely exited the building without injury. 319-321 Queen Street/the former market building, was being used as an excise warehouse and escaped the fire. The City of Ottawa Archives, while not having any photographs of the Wellington Ward Market did have a roster of the fire department of 1913. N. M. Wood is curiously absent.

And, yes, there was a Dewney Hotel fire in 1913. The Evening Journal of February 28, 1913, carries the story of a fire in Omaha in a second-

class hostelry known as the Dewney Hotel, and the death of between 25 and 75. One hopes Mr. Wood got his clippings and possibly a photograph. A subject for future research might be, "Why was the Federal Government of the time in the business of manufacturing methylated spirits?" ♦

*Ken L. Elder trained and qualified as an architect at the University of Toronto, School of Architecture in 1968 and took post graduate training in conservation architecture through participation in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Technical Services Branch in-house training program conducted from 1973 to 1975. He was employed by Restoration Services Division/Heritage Conservation Division from 1972 until his retirement from Public Works and Government Services Canada in 2002. Ken has been a board member of Heritage Ottawa since 2003.*

*Ken's interest in the collecting of postcards dates from 1970. Over 1,000 of his Hamilton postcards are accessible on the web-site [www.postcardsofhamilton.com](http://www.postcardsofhamilton.com). He is hoping to do a similar site now for Ottawa.*

*Ken Elder is a member of Heritage Ottawa's Board of Directors*

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