



# Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

*Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage*

Fall 2009 Volume 36, No. 3

## Ottawa's House is our (Cattle) Castle: Let Heritage Live at Lansdowne

By Brigid Janssen

**T**he Aberdeen Pavilion is symbolic in so many ways. Of course it is *our* symbol – the graphic in the centre of the Heritage Ottawa logo that depicts the silhouette of turrets, domes and the grand sweeping expanse of our beloved Lansdowne Park structure affectionately known as the “Cattle Castle”.

More than a decade ago, the Pavilion became a symbol of the victory of heritage over destruction of our history, of citizens' voices over misguided municipal plans. It was refurbished in 1994 after nearly falling prey to the wrecker's ball.

Today again, the Aberdeen Pavilion is about to symbolize... something.



*The Horticulture Building, another designated heritage building, was the 1914 creation of Francis Sullivan.*

The developers behind the Lansdowne Live project would certainly have us believe that the Aberdeen Pavilion will be the centrepiece of their plans to transform Lansdowne Park into a hub of shops, a hotel, stadium and some open space. It will serve as the focal point of the Park, with vistas of the Pavilion preserved from Bank Street to the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Rideau Canal and along the boulevards within the reconfigured Park. They promise a “special, unique and appropriate use” for installations inside “this architectural landmark heritage building” and wax eloquent at their presentation meetings alongside city officials about their respect for this designated heritage building.



*Our “Cattle Castle” or the Aberdeen Pavilion as it proudly stands today.*

## Let Heritage Live ...

Yet the developers are cannily imprecise about the use to which the Aberdeen Pavilion will be put. At the time of the recent public information sessions, the tentative thought was to populate the lower part of the great Pavilion with glass boxes which would house boutiques and restaurants snuggled at the foundations. The protective enclosures would leave little sense or regard for the wonderful reach and height of the structure that was an engineering feat of its time, with no centre supports – only the grandeur of voluminous space. It seems – although clarity is not a strong suit in this project – that the plan for the interior is now being reconsidered in light of protests that enclosed boxes shielding the people from the architecture was hardly special, unique, appropriate or even vaguely imaginative.

Skepticism about real commitment of the developers to heritage can be forgiven with a glance across the way to the next-door neighbour of the Aberdeen Pavilion, the Horticulture Building, another designated heritage building. The Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired flat façade and prominent overhang, is the 1914 creation of Wright's protégé Francis Sullivan. But for the Lansdowne Live scheme, it's in the wrong place. That's where the cars need to go, into underground parking, and where the commercial development needs to extend in order to make it big enough to be commercially feasible.

So the plan is to move the Horticulture Building. Never mind that this is a clear violation of the city's



Photo: Lansdowne Live web site

Aerial view in Lansdowne Live's proposal.

policy that a heritage-designated building can only be moved if "relocation is the only way to conserve the resource". Never mind the ever-louder protests of farmers who demand that the Horticulture Building be left where it is, and by the way, that they be left where they are to sell their fresh produce in their current market area and not (as the plans would have it) to move the farmers to two smaller, separate spots that might provide a touristy attraction but would kill the market.

At the time of publication, Heritage Ottawa was preparing to intervene before city council to state our firm opposition to relocating the Horticulture Building and our strong encouragement of a much more appropriate and imaginative use of the Aberdeen Pavilion.

In a press release (see [www.heritageottawa.ca](http://www.heritageottawa.ca)) we stated: "Heritage Ottawa has not taken a position on any particular plan for the development of Lansdowne Park, but believes it is in the interests of taxpayers for development plans to revolve around the natural and heritage treasures that exist

on the site. Heritage Ottawa has consistently supported a transparent procurement process and open international competition for the design of Lansdowne Park."

Our deepest wish and that of many Ottawa citizens, is that the intrinsic natural and historic value of Lansdowne Park should anchor its future. Its commercial value should be sustained – as in so many wonderful history-based developments in Ontario, across Canada and in tourist magnets of Europe such as Paris, Copenhagen, Rome and London – by the fascination, charm, and capriciousness of its history.

Our deepest wish is for the Aberdeen Pavilion to once again be a symbol – this time, of enlightened development. ♦

*Brigid Phillips Janssen is a member of the Heritage Ottawa board and chairs the committee on Lansdowne Park. She is President of the Grange of the Gatineau, a not-for-profit organisation that promotes heritage from a refurbished 200-year-old barn in Cantley, Quebec.*

## Lansdowne History

The area bounded by Bank Street, the Glebe and the Rideau Canal was acquired in 1868 to hold agricultural exhibitions and in 1888 the City bought the land to become the home of the Central Canada Exhibition. Its 140-year history as a centre for agricultural shows, fairs, sports, recreation, farmer's markets, and the like should be the core of development plans in the image of other world capitals that have reaped popular and financial returns by developing sites around culture, entertainment and public recreation.

The Aberdeen Pavilion, dubbed the "Cattle Castle", was opened in 1898 and has always been the centrepiece of Lansdowne Park and a landmark of the city skyline with its fanciful domes and imposing structure. The Pavilion, named for the seventh Governor General of Canada and nicknamed for the exhibitions it housed celebrating progress in agriculture and livestock, was refurbished in 1994 after a long campaign by Ottawa citizens who refused to see such an historic and splendid building demolished. It is now a national historic site that boasts a proud

history, from serving as one of Ottawa's first community skating rinks and hosting the 1904 Stanley Cup, to housing troops during the Boer War, the First and Second World Wars, and more recently as the home of the Cameron Highlanders and Princess Louise Dragoon Guards.

The adjacent Horticulture Building was designed by Francis C. Sullivan (1882-1929) a protégé of the great American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The simple 1914 building has trademark Wright features, such as an unadorned façade with overhanging eaves, a band of casement windows tucked under the eaves and terracotta capitals either side of the entrance.

The Aberdeen Pavilion is a federally designated national historic site. It has been protected by a federal-municipal cost-share agreement since 1994 which requires the city to retain the building in its restored condition without significant modification for a period of 42 years. The Pavilion is also protected by an easement with the Ontario Heritage Trust, which in perpetuity preserves the heritage attributes of the building and its features.

Both the Aberdeen Pavilion and the Horticulture Building are also municipally designated as heritage buildings under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The adjacent Rideau Canal is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a designation that can be removed if the site and its value and character are damaged. ♦



Aberdeen Pavillion, Circa 1896.

Photo: City of Ottawa archives

## Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

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

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# Kanata Set to Lose Historic Church

By Ken Elder

Saint Isidore, one of the last remaining churches in Ontario designed by noted priest-architect, Canon Georges Bouillon, lost a bid for designation at city council last June and faces imminent demolition. While it may be too late to save the historic Catholic church in old South March, we may still learn a few lessons from a heritage standpoint for dealing with possibly similar cases in the future.

## What triggered this threat to a 122-year-old building which has served its congregation faithfully for so many years?

Simply put, the expanding suburbs of Kanata now extend into what was once a rural parish. Today, the church cannot accommodate the number of parishioners wishing to attend Sunday mass. The building lacks both washrooms and space for comforting babies and suffers from several liturgical shortcomings such as the absence of a gathering space (narthex), a baptismal font for immersion, and a chapel for the reservation of the Eucharist.

## What steps were followed to find a solution to this dilemma?

As early as 2005, a task force comprised of parishioners and clergy was established to make recommendations on expanding the church. An architect was engaged and a number of options proposed. The first option involved the incorporation of approximately one-half of the existing church into a new expanded worship space. A construction cost estimator priced this out at \$7.1 million which far

exceeded the congregation's fund raising capabilities of \$1.5 to \$3.5 million. An option to phase in the work was estimated even higher at \$9.0 million. By 2007 the option to demolish the existing church and build a new church on the same site was approved at a cost of \$3.5 million.

## Designation of St. Isidore Catholic Church

In July 2008, a request to designate St. Isidore Catholic Church was received by the city's heritage staff. They recommended that the building be designated. On 26 May 2009, the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) unanimously proposed that Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee recommend that Council approve the designation. However, two days later, the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee recommended: *That Council approve in lieu of the recommendation for the heritage designation, that the expanded church include: the stonework, the*



Principal elevation of St. Isidore Church with demolished steeple, June, 2009

Photo: Kevin Smith



Photo: Ken Elder

St. Isidore Church showing memorial windows and pressed metal interior, May, 2009

*stained glass windows and the bell that forms part of the existing church as well as a replica of the former steeple.* On 10 June, 2009 city council rejected a motion for designation and carried the recommendation (Report 41) of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

## What are the lessons learned?

The options presented to the parishioners of St. Isidore did not include a single genuine conservation option such as the rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the existing building. The cost estimates for the initial option are excessively high suggesting a lack of knowledge about the original craftsmanship and durability of materials. An intervention during this part of the process might have informed parishioners on the importance of the site and why the building merited designation. Further, a discussion on architectural conservation could have helped the congregation understand the implications and recognize how preservation need not be expensive

One would expect that the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee would be concerned about the preservation of this outstanding surviving rural parish grouping which includes St. Isidore church (1886-1887), the cemetery (1898), and church rectory (1898-1899) on seven acres of land. But, like any political body, this committee is not immune to

lobbying pressures. The appearance of numerous parishioners, Des Adam (Deacon and former Mayor of Kanata), the Archbishop of Ottawa, and other objectors to designation at the meeting had its effect. If we are to make an adequate case for designation in the future we will need to assemble community members with a heritage sensitivity and interest, knowledgeable local historians and preservation experts.

Priest-architect Canon Georges Bouillon designed six church or chapel projects (excluding interiors) in Ontario. Two of the churches were destroyed by fire, one chapel

was demolished and another so heavily modified as to be unrecognizable as his work. Two churches remain: Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel in La Passe, Ontario, a Gothic Revival style building dating from 1886 and St. Isidore in Ottawa, a French Classical style building, designed in 1885 but completed in 1887. St. Isidore is therefore a rare surviving example of the work of Canon Georges Bouillon in Ontario and the only example of his use of the French Classical style in the Province. The heritage staff at the city and LACAC agreed to designation, but the politicians who should have been considering the proper administration of the *Ontario Heritage Act* listened instead to cost arguments and token gestures masking as preservation.

Ada Louise Huxtable, architectural critic at the *New York Times* got it right when discussing the preservation efforts for the Grand Ole Opry House/Union Gospel Tabernacle of 1892: "In the name of reasonableness, the company has sponsored studies that have come up with the not surprising news that preservation is 'economically unfeasible' due to extraordinary costs for rehabilitating the old building. This is par for the course. There is probably no landmark rehabilitation that was not called economically unfeasible before it was successfully done." ♦

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



## From the Vice-President...

Heritage Ottawa continues our mission to conserve and interpret Ottawa's heritage buildings, districts, and landscapes through a range of advocacy activities and programs.

Doors Open in June was a big success, though once again the old Registry Office was not available for Heritage Ottawa to host our information display. Three Heritage Ottawa board members serve on the Doors Open Advisory Committee. We contributed a special Doors Open walk to Jane's Walk days in May, led by Heritage Ottawa board member Ann Farouk.

Our summer-fall neighbourhood walking tours were very successful, with 13 tours by our expert volunteer guides. Participation this year has been the second highest ever; Mark Brandt's new Chaudière industrial tour broke records with 104 participants. Board members Richard Belliveau created the program and Ian Ferguson, (with the help of Martin Rice), supervised a team of volunteer co-ordinators.

Heritage Ottawa's winter lectures, organized by board member Leslie Maitland, was launched in September, with an excellent talk by Robert Moreau, (stepping in for Dr. Larry Ostola), on Canada's National Historic Sites. Our October lecture is the first we have offered in French, by Francis Beaulieu about Vanier's Muséoparc.

During the Rideau Canal Festival and Colonel By Day weekend, we contributed a walking tour of architecture and engineering along the Canal's first mile, led by David Jeanes, a Lowertown West tour by Hagit Hadaya and an information booth beside the canal.

During the summer, we employed two students to research the buildings of Old Ottawa South. This was made possible by four grants, from the Young Canada Works program administered by the Heritage Canada Foundation, Canada Summer Jobs Program, Ontario Summer Experience Program, a city of Ottawa grant and private donations. John Calvert primed the grant applications and project and Julie Harris contributed the workplace and supervision for the students.

Heritage Ottawa nominated the New Edinburgh Community Alliance for a Heritage Canada Foundation national achievement award.



David Sacks, President of the New Edinburgh Community Alliance, receives a Heritage Canada Foundation Achievement Award from Carolyn Quinn, Director of Communications for HCF (right), and David Jeanes, Vice-president of Heritage Ottawa (left), at the New Edinburgh Heritage Forum on 2 October 2009.

Photo: Louise Imbeault

It was announced at the HCF awards night in Toronto and presented to David Sacks, president of NECA, at the annual New Edinburgh Heritage Forum on 2 October.

A major effort led by board member Brigid Janssen, with website support from board member Heather Perrault, has created bilingual content for our brochures and website and is extending our outreach.

We are moving forward with training our heritage keepers who will maintain a watch on heritage issues in different areas of the City. Heritage Ottawa secretary Bill Price and board member Ken Clavette are organizing this. Brigid Janssen is leading our response to the controversial Lansdowne Park development proposal. Demolitions and alterations in heritage conservation districts continue; while we accept some, such as 10 Bolton St. in Lowertown, we are concerned at the impact of others on heritage districts, such as 545 Springfield in Rockcliffe Park.

Designation is proposed for 114 Wellington, the 100-year old Soeurs de la Visitation convent, which has just been sold to Ashcroft Homes. The 3-story convent, its frescoed chapel and large garden are not well known, as the cloistered order has been hidden behind high walls. If designated, it may still be adaptable as multiple residences. One corner incorporates a much older stone house, built in the 1860's as a country mansion and occupied successively by prominent Ottawa businessmen James Dyke, George W. Eaton, Senator James Skead, (the founder of Westboro), and the Holland family. ♦

David Jeanes, Vice-president

## Heritage Ottawa 2009 – 10 Lecture Series

Once again Heritage Ottawa is proud to present its annual lecture series. Come join us for a varied and rich range of topics relating to Ottawa's built heritage.

- Admission is free and all are welcome
- Light refreshments are served afterwards
- Except where otherwise noted below, all lectures will be held at the Ottawa Public Library Auditorium, 120 Metcalfe Street, corner of Laurier Ave, at 7 pm.
- Call 613-230-8841 for further information

### Heritage Porches: Sow's Ear or Buried Treasure

Paul Denys, Renovator, DENYS BUILDS DESIGNS

Date & Time: Wednesday, January 20, 2010, 7pm



Photo: Jan Soetermans

This lecture will celebrate some of the styles of porches and how they transform a home's curb appeal. Paul Denys is a designer who has built, restored and renovated homes

since 1984. Paul will be discussing porch composition, tools and techniques, and he will also be showing photos of some of his favourite styles.

This lecture will be in English

### Heritage Ottawa's Fifth Annual Bob and Mary Anne Phillips Memorial Lecture

#### The Rideau Street Convent Chapel: Saving the Most Beautiful Room in the Nation

Leslie Maitland, architectural historian and heritage consultant

Date & Time: Thursday, February 18, 2010, 7pm,  
National Gallery of Canada

The Rideau Street Convent Chapel has been called the most beautiful chapel in Canada. It is an extraordinary creation, a nineteenth century Gothic Revival chapel built for the Rideau Street Convent, completely in wood. In the early 1970s, plans were made to demolish the Convent and its exquisite chapel. An epic battle to save the chapel ensued. While the Convent is lost, the Chapel is now one of the centrepieces of the National Gallery of Canada. This lecture will be in English.

### Terra incognita: Unknown Landscapes

John Zvonar, Heritage Landscape Architect, Public Works and Government Services Canada

Date & Time: Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 7pm

The ancients used the term *Terra incognita* to describe regions that had not yet been mapped or documented; today it is used to describe any unexplored subject or field of research. Ottawa has a rich landscape heritage, with examples both obvious and less so. Join Conservation Landscape Architect, John Zvonar, for a tour of some of the Capital's less familiar, and consequently under-appreciated, landscapes. He will provide the context for understanding and appreciating these places.

This lecture will be in English

### Landmarks Not Landfill: New Ideas for Old Buildings

Natalie Bull, Executive Director, Heritage Canada Foundation

Date & Time: Wednesday, April 21, 2010, 7pm

"Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings." When urban thinker Jane Jacobs wrote those lines in *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* in 1961, her vision of old buildings as assets instead of problems resonated with heritage advocates. Jacob's timeless message underpins Heritage Canada Foundation's Landmarks Not Landfill campaign – a recent chapter in the longstanding call for federal heritage incentives for Canada.

This lecture will be in English

*“We have to get organized,”  
said Mary Roaf*

## A reminiscence

By George Wilkes and Norman Dahl

One could reminisce long and lovingly about Mary Roaf and all she has meant to the Ottawa community and to the whole concept of citizen participation in community planning, including the vital issues surrounding heritage preservation. On a visit with her in her beautiful apartment in Vancouver just a few years ago, everything seemed as usual with Mary, even with the passage of years, as she launched into animated talk about politics, and, of course, community planning. Mary at the time was pushing for more tunnels to ease the traffic problems in Vancouver! And after a time she donned her jaunty driving cap and drove expertly to places she wanted us to see including her former home in Shaughnessy Heights, a fine old area which had been in danger of unplanned “re-development” and for which she had fought City Hall, successfully, to enshrine in law its heritage status. And she talked, as we drove, of her work with Nicholas Goldschmidt in planning and executing the spectacular Vancouver International Festival, and of the trees lining streets of downtown Vancouver. “Those are my trees,” she joked.

But of course our truly heart-warming and vivid memories of Mary are those days in Ottawa when she worked with us on community planning and heritage issues. We’ll never forget her arrival with her husband Bill at our house at 369 Daly when they had just decided to buy the house two doors down in Philomène Terrace. Mary talked animatedly about all the things she saw that needed doing in preserving the splendid architecture and neighbourhood ambience of Sandy Hill, a neighbourhood they had chosen because of its history, still redolent of a colourful past. “We have to get organized,” she said at last, as she extended her hand and fixed us with those shining eyes as she and Bill took their leave. Well, the creation of Action Sandy Hill and countless briefs to City Council and the Ontario Municipal Board were the result.

Mary Roaf led many forays, with us and countless others, into the field of sound community

planning, often tangling with city councillors who in those days resented this “interference” into affairs they regarded as their sole domain. In addition to her work with Action Sandy Hill, she lent her energies to organizations and initiatives such as Heritage Ottawa, A Capital for Canadians, the Local Architectural Conservancy Advisory Committee, and Development Sandy Hill, which morphed into Sandy Hill Community Health Centre. Mary joined others in the memorable battle to save the Rideau Street Convent from demolition, including writing letters and attending meetings and vigils. And in the end she was able to gain some satisfaction in the fact that the chapel, thanks in part to the intervention of the indomitable Jean Boggs and the efforts of the Friends of the National Gallery, is now ensconced in the heart of the National Gallery of Canada.

There were other battles, failures and successes, which readers of this piece can add to. And those stories have come to us, and will come to many, with news of Mary’s passing at age 95 still planning, still trying to make it right.

Mary and Bill Roaf filled deep places in the hearts of many, and the thoughts of their warm and glowing humanity stay with us.

### Guide Book with a Difference

Quentin Gall, a geological consultant and teacher, has written an out of the ordinary guide book of Ottawa titled *A Walking Guide, Ottawa’s Building and Monument Stones*.

Gall, a long-time resident of the city, takes the reader on a tour of 115 locations and describes the type of stone used in each building. He includes a brief historical note for most of the older buildings as well as colour photographs of each site and close-ups of the actual stone used. In addition, the author provides an overview and geologic history of the region, five simplified location maps and a list of quarries in the Ottawa area along with the types of stone quarried. He also includes a glossary and bibliography.

Amateur geologists, historians or anyone interested in stone will enjoy using this guide to see Ottawa from a new and different perspective.

Heritage Ottawa is pleased to have contributed funding for the publication of this guide.

#### **A Walking Guide: Ottawa’s Building and Monument Stones**

**Quentin Gall**

**Geological Association of Canada Miscellaneous  
Publication 7, 2009**