



Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage

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Heritage News Now

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It's Time to Fight for the Château Laurier

By Peter Coffman

Time is running out to prevent the most disgraceful act of heritage vandalism of our generation. If the proposed addition to the Château Laurier goes ahead, it will forever disfigure one of the most iconic and important heritage sites in the country.

The saga, you may recall, began back in September of 2016 when Larco Investments (and their architect Peter Clewes) unveiled plans for an addition to the north side of the Château Laurier that was met with near-universal horror and revulsion. A "revised" version unveiled two months later turned out to be nearly indistinguishable from the first. Finally, this February, we were shown a substantially altered design – one that managed to look completely different, while still repeating all the fundamental mistakes of the first two versions. (See <https://heritageottawa.org/news/heritage-ottawa-remarks-revised-design-for-proposed-addition-chateau-laurier>)

So what are these fundamental mistakes? The details are many, but they all fall under the broad umbrella of a failure to understand,



Photos: Peter Coffman

and to work with, the architectural "language" of the existing building. That language is one of romance and what is known as the "picturesque" – a playful, varied and intricate aesthetic meant to surprise us and excite our curiosity. The Château Laurier is meant to seduce and delight us. Its silhouette changes constantly as we walk around it; light and shade play dramatically off its complex surfaces. It is rich in historical allusion, evoking the French tradition

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

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It's Time to Fight cont'd.

that is fundamental to our history. It conjures visions of Tennyson's "many-towered Camelot." It also evokes the opulence and romance of the Gilded Age, and the kind of unimaginable luxury of buildings like George Vanderbilt's "Biltmore." It is an invitation to dream.

The proposed addition is none of this. It is rectangular. It is flat. It is a grid. It has neither curves nor diagonals. It evokes nothing. It offers no surprises. It is as romantic as a mathematical formula, as lyrical as a telephone book. And from Major's Hill Park, or the mouth of the canal, or from the Ottawa river, it is all you will see of the Château Laurier.

Contrary to some of the claims circulating in mainstream and social media, there are no regulations or bylaws requiring that the addition to

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a heritage building be fundamentally incompatible with its historic partner. This misconception is probably rooted in the Ontario Ministry of Culture's "Eight Guiding Principles" for heritage conservation, one of which states that "New work





should be distinguishable from old.” This can be interpreted – and misinterpreted – in several ways, but given that five of the eight provincial Guiding Principles begin with the word “respect”, it obviously isn’t an exhortation to build incompatible additions. No heritage laws or guidelines, anywhere, would encourage this – in fact the mother of all heritage guidelines, the Venice Charter, states: “Additions cannot be allowed except in so far as they do not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings.”

It’s clear that this is a matter of choice: either the architect is uninterested in showing the required respect and sensitivity, or the client is forcing his hand, or some

But adding a wing to a building of such historical importance as the Château Laurier, on such an important site beside Parliament Hill, brings special responsibilities.

combination of both. Whatever the reason, we have to conclude that after three attempts over nearly two years, this owner and architect have proven that they are not up to the job. The problems with the design are fundamental to their approach, and no amount of tinkering can fix them.

The Château Laurier is not just another hotel. All three of the proposed designs, if built as

freestanding hotels in LeBreton Flats, would be just fine. But adding a wing to a building of such historical importance as the Château Laurier, on such an important site beside Parliament Hill, brings special responsibilities. Both the building and its setting are uniquely significant. The ensemble of hotel, canal and Parliament has been commemorated on our currency and our postage stamps. It is as iconic for Canada as the Palace of Westminster is for Britain, or Washington’s Capitol is for the USA. What is being contemplated here would be unthinkable elsewhere. As Dr. John Goodall, an internationally renowned architectural historian and Architectural Editor of *Country Life* magazine in the U.K., observed: “That this national view should be sacrificed to a clumsily designed



The Château Laurier is meant to seduce and delight us. Its silhouette changes constantly as we walk around it; light and shade play dramatically off its complex surfaces.

hotel extension — literally a massive glass box — ought to provoke a national outcry.”

That outcry needs to happen right now. The City’s Built Heritage Sub-Committee (BHSC) and Planning Committee will hold a joint meeting soon to consider the proposal. Citizens can make a 5 minute presentation at this joint meeting. The recommendation passed at this meeting will go to City Council, who will vote on whether to allow this addition to go ahead. The City invites public input, and it is crucial that they get it.

Perhaps most importantly, it is time to write to your member of City Council. Not all of them care about heritage, but you can be sure that every single one of them cares about votes. In this election year especially, we need to send the message that the wanton destruction of our built heritage will cost votes. If that message comes through loud and clear, we can still save the integrity of the Château Laurier and the Parliamentary Precinct beside it. The ball is in our court. If we want to protect our heritage, now is the time to fight for it.

Peter Coffman is an architectural historian in Carleton University’s History and Theory of Architecture program. He is a member of the Board of Heritage Ottawa, and Past President of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada.

The Château Laurier Hotel – a few interesting facts

The Château Laurier is one of Ottawa’s most beloved buildings and an exceptional Canadian railway hotel. For over 100 years, the elegant Château Laurier has been the setting of much of Ottawa’s important social, cultural and political life, yet always open to the general public.

- Built for \$2 million by the Grand Trunk Railway between 1909 and 1912, it is connected to the former Union Station by an underground tunnel under Wellington Street.
- Luxurious materials include Indiana limestone, Tiffany windows and Belgian marble.
- The opening planned for April 26, 1912 was postponed until June when GTR president Charles Melville Hays, who oversaw the hotel’s construction, perished aboard the RMS Titanic. Paul Chevré, who sculpted the bust of Prime Minister Laurier that stands in the hotel lobby, was the only male member of the party to survive.
- In August, 1914, Major Raymond Brutinel enrolled the first recruits for the Canadian Automobile Machine Gun Brigade at the hotel.
- In 1924, the CNR radio network station first broadcast from the sixth floor of the Château. Taken over by CBC Radio in 1937, the station operated from there until 2004.
- In 1929, the Canadian National Railway (which had absorbed the GTR in 1923) built an east wing along Mackenzie Avenue. Designed by architects John Archibald and John Schofield, the seamless addition provided 240 rooms, a new state-of-the-art kitchen and featured the renowned vaulted-ceiling ballroom.
- In 1930, the hotel added a stunning Art Deco style indoor pool and offered spa-like “therapeutic” treatments.
- While serving as Prime Minister, R.B. Bennett made a specially created 17-room suite at the Château his official residence.
- Many important events with visiting dignitaries were hosted by the hotel, including the month-long First Imperial Economic Conference in 1932 and the 1939 visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.
- During the Second World War years the hotel hosted a number of clandestine conferences with military and industrial leaders quietly entering the hotel by the tunnel from Ottawa’s Union Station and meeting behind closed doors.
- Master photographer Yousuf Karsh maintained his studio and residence in the Château Laurier from 1973 to 1989.
- In 1981, the Château Laurier Hotel was designated a National Historic Site of Canada.
- The CNR hotel chain was purchased by Canadian Pacific Hotels in 1988 and a year later changed its name to Fairmont Hotels and Resorts.
- In 2000, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada chose the Château as one of the top 500 buildings constructed in Canada during the last millennium.
- The hotel was purchased by Larco Investments in 2014.
- Over the decades, the Château Laurier hosted a star-studded guest list, including visiting royalty, international heads of state and other dignitaries.

The Government of Canada Should Step Up to Protect Our Heritage

By Leslie Maitland

Many Canadians would be shocked to learn that there is no legislative protection for national historic sites or other federally-designated heritage properties. -- Really!?

But the Government of Canada has an opportunity to fix this. Recently, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development issued “Preserving Canada’s Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow” (hereafter cited as the Parliamentary Report). The report is an analysis of the federal government’s failings in heritage conservation, with recommendations to rectify them. You can read the full report here: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/ENVI/report-10>

The recommendations fall into three broad categories: 1. Getting the federal government’s house in order; 2. Financial incentives; and 3. Support for the heritage of Canada’s Indigenous peoples. The Minister for Environment and Climate Change has 120 days to respond, right about the time this article goes to press.

The Government of Canada Should Get its House in Order

Currently, there is no legislative or procedural protection for the nearly 200 national historic sites owned by the government of Canada.¹ And there is no protection for the hundreds of properties designated by the Federal Heritage Review

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Board Office (FHBRO). Indeed, crown agencies and other arms-length federal entities are not required to submit their properties to the FHBRO for assessment of their potential heritage status.

That’s right: there is no legislative protection for the Parliament Buildings, or 24 Sussex, or Rideau Hall, or the Central Experimental Farm (CEF). Or even the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site.

Financial Incentives

Federal funding over the years has been very hit and miss, which is a shame, given the tremendous achievements which can be made with relatively small amounts of money. In the past, a cost-share program administered by Parks Canada helped hundreds of property owners across the country. Currently federal funding for heritage conservation programs sits at 10 million dollars, but that will now return to its base funding of \$1 million. The Parliamentary Report calls for base funding of \$10 million. Compared to the billions injected into infrastructure

spending, this is peanuts. But we’ll take the peanuts.

The successful Commercial Heritage Properties Incentive Fund, which provided matching funding for heritage properties with a commercial purpose to restore and rehabilitate them, should be re-launched. This program was enormously successful in reviving main streets in smaller cities and towns. In Ottawa, the Parkdale Fire Station, now housing several businesses and a catering company, was a beneficiary of this program.

The big funding recommendation is the creation of tax incentives for the restoration and preservation of heritage buildings. In the United States this has resulted in the conservation of over 40,000 heritage properties, with benefits to urban and rural areas, businesses, and employment opportunities in construction.

Recognition of Indigenous Heritage

The Parliamentary Report recommends measures to identify and protect places important to Canada’s Indigenous Peoples; to enhance the capacity of Indigenous communities to protect their sites themselves; and to give Indigenous communities a stronger voice on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

In support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Report recommends adding



Photo: Linda Hoad

Parkdale Fire Station

First Nations, Métis and Inuit representation to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board; integrating Indigenous history, heritage values and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history; commemorating residential school sites, and the contributions of Indigenous peoples to Canada's history; and commissioning and installing a Residential Schools National Monument in the city of Ottawa to honour those children who were lost, as well as the survivors.

Heritage Ottawa's Role

This is an ambitious suite of recommendations which Heritage Ottawa supports. The National Trust has launched a Year of Action, focused on the financial incentives, seeking tax credits by the time the 2019 federal budget is ready to be launched.

Why does this matter, especially to Ottawa and to Heritage Ottawa? As the National Capital, Ottawa has an abundance of nationally significant structures. To protect them, the

Government of Canada must get its house in order. We shouldn't have to battle the Government to protect the heritage places significant to the entire nation.

As well, Ottawa is of particular importance to Indigenous Peoples. We are on the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Peoples, and Ottawa is additionally home for other First Nations communities, Métis and Inuit. We should do what is within our capacity to contribute towards Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The Parliamentary Report's Recommendations

- protect heritage features of federal heritage buildings to prevent demolition by neglect; statutory protection for federal heritage buildings;
- require FHBRO review of Crown corporation buildings; federal protection for archaeological resources on federal land and in waters of federal responsibility;
- legislation to protect national historic sites and FHBRO-designated properties belonging to the federal government;
- owner departments to invest 2% of asset replacement value for the maintenance and restoration of federally-owned heritage properties;
- give precedence to heritage properties where federal accommodations are sought;
- ensure federal actions do not threaten heritage properties owned by others;
- create statutory protection for Canada's World Heritage Sites;
- give statutory recognition to the Canadian Register of Historic Places and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.



Photo: Carolyn Quinn

Booth Barn, built 1867, Central Experimental Farm Barn.

We need to work for meaningful progress in the protection of our national heritage in this Year of Action. ... Heritage Ottawa encourages its members and supporters to write to the Minister responsible for National Historic Sites and the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office, and to the Minister of Finance, to support the Parliamentary Report's Recommendations.

Heritage Ottawa has reached out to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, responsible for national historic

sites. We have worked closely with other federal departments, such as the National Capital Commission, on individual heritage properties. We have engaged with the media time and again.

We need to work for meaningful progress in the protection of our national heritage in this Year of Action. To that end, Heritage Ottawa encourages its members and supporters to write to Catherine McKenna, the Minister responsible for National Historic Sites and the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office, and to Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, to support the Parliamentary Report's Recommendations. Please visit <https://heritageottawa.org/> for draft letters and addresses that you might use.

Leslie Maitland is a member of the Board and Co-Chair of Heritage Ottawa and Co-Chair of the Advocacy Committee.

¹ Another nearly 700 are owned by other levels of government or private individuals, and their protection varies depending upon the jurisdiction within which they are located, and only if they are also locally designated.

From the President

By David Jeanes



By the time you read this, we will have held our Annual General Meeting where we will say farewell to some board members and welcome several new directors.

This issue includes the first in a series of interviews about the pleasures and perils of undertaking the adaptive re-use of a heritage building. Re-use is the best remedy for Demolition by Neglect.

Students and Young Professionals

An important aspect of our commitment to renewal is Heritage Ottawa's support for the involvement of students and emerging young professionals in the heritage sector. We hope that these initiatives foster an increased interest in heritage conservation.

In April we provided judges and an award for elementary school pupils at the Ottawa Regional Heritage Fair, as we have for several years.

We are a co-sponsor of the Carleton University Heritage Conservation Symposium, run by graduate students in the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies.

We are again offering subsidies for up to two students to attend the Ontario Heritage Conference to be held in Sault Ste. Marie in June.

We are encouraging younger volunteers to assist with our

summer-fall walking tour program and our next lecture season will again feature an evening of talks by several emerging scholars presenting their research. For the past several years we have actively sought a young professional to sit on our board.

The Louise Fox Internship funds a one year part-time management position which provides a learning and development experience for a young heritage professional.

Finally, we encourage students to apply for the Gordon Cullingham Research and Publication Grant.

Upcoming Heritage Events

We encourage you to enjoy Doors Open Ottawa on June 2 and 3 and Welcoming Ottawa Week in June which will once again make important contributions to public awareness of the importance of our built heritage. See our website for more information: <https://heritageottawa.org/>

David Jeanes, President, Heritage Ottawa / Patrimoine Ottawa



Become a donor and support Ottawa's great built heritage!

Donations over \$10.00 will receive a receipt for income tax purposes. Heritage Ottawa is a Registered charity: 893096776RR0001.

Devenez donateur et soutenez le patrimoine bâti d'Ottawa!

Des reçus pour fin d'impôt sur le revenu seront émis pour les dons de 10.00\$ et plus. Le numéro d'enregistrement en tant qu'organisme de bienfaisance de Patrimoine Ottawa est : 893096776RR0001.

Adaptive re-use of heritage buildings in Ottawa – a conversation with a practitioner

Adaptive re-use of heritage buildings does not seem to get the attention or uptake in Ottawa that it deserves. Adaptive re-use can be the answer to “Demolition by Neglect,” still a critical on-going issue in our city.

In an attempt to understand the motivation and challenges involved in adaptive re-use, Heritage Ottawa is approaching a number of people who have undertaken such projects. These conversations will form the basis of articles over the coming months in the *Newsletter*.

The first of the conversations is with Leanne Moussa, developer of *allsaints* Event Space in Sandy Hill.

1. Why undertake an ambitious adaptive re-use project?

allsaints is in my neighbourhood. I share the concerns of neighbours about the need to preserve this distinctive, important building which is significant not only in Sandy Hill but in the city of Ottawa. It will be an important part of the Prime Ministers’ Row initiative that looks to transform Laurier Avenue East. I’m not new to this; I had experience with the conversion/re-use of a building for the Betty Hyde Day Care just around the corner.

2. What is key about the building that needs to be saved?

The exterior of the building is protected through a heritage designation. Many interior features are an important part of the appeal of the building in its new life as

an event space. The key interior heritage elements, such as the wood panelling, stained glass windows and the volume of the former church hall, though not protected by a designation, create the distinctiveness of the adapted space. But there are challenges also in protecting these features while upgrading to support new uses and to conform to current building code requirements. The striking stained glass windows in the former church worship space are particularly noteworthy.

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3. Financial considerations influencing conversion decisions?

People who invested in this project did so because they believe in preserving the heritage building. They also placed high social value on creating a community facility as well as jobs during the conversion and then its operation as an event space. That is the case for our business investors and for our

community investors, which are split approximately 50% – 50%. The potential for real estate development on a portion of the property was key to making it possible to preserve and adapt the main heritage structure of the church.

4. Who are the key people making the adaptation possible: architects; craftspeople; suppliers; community?

Community support has been and continues to be very important. I have “invested” heavily in consultation and communication with immediate neighbours and with the community as a whole. Some neighbours have gone so far as to become investors in the project. There is an advisory design group that we are just in the process of establishing which also includes heritage specialists and architects. But this is not a zero or low-cost element of the project; it will require considerable time and money but will help to shape the project. For the moment, availability is good for skilled trades and architects with the necessary skills, but who knows what may happen as the Parliament Buildings restoration project gets going.

5. The adaptive re-use proposal involves a multi-storey building on the site. What is the impact of proposed change to the heritage building/site?

Combining the new structure with the heritage building is key to the financial viability of the entire project ...

The plan to use a portion of the site, now occupied by Bate Hall, which is not designated, to construct a medium rise residential structure (hotel, condos or rentals) is the most challenging part of the project. Combining the new structure with the heritage building is key to the financial viability of the entire project, but represents the most visible change to the site. As mentioned earlier, continued consultation with neighbours/the community is essential to persuading them to accept the final plans. Our credibility is key in relations with the community.

6. What actions can governments take to make adaptive re-use more feasible and attractive?

Funding for the project from all levels of government has been minimal.

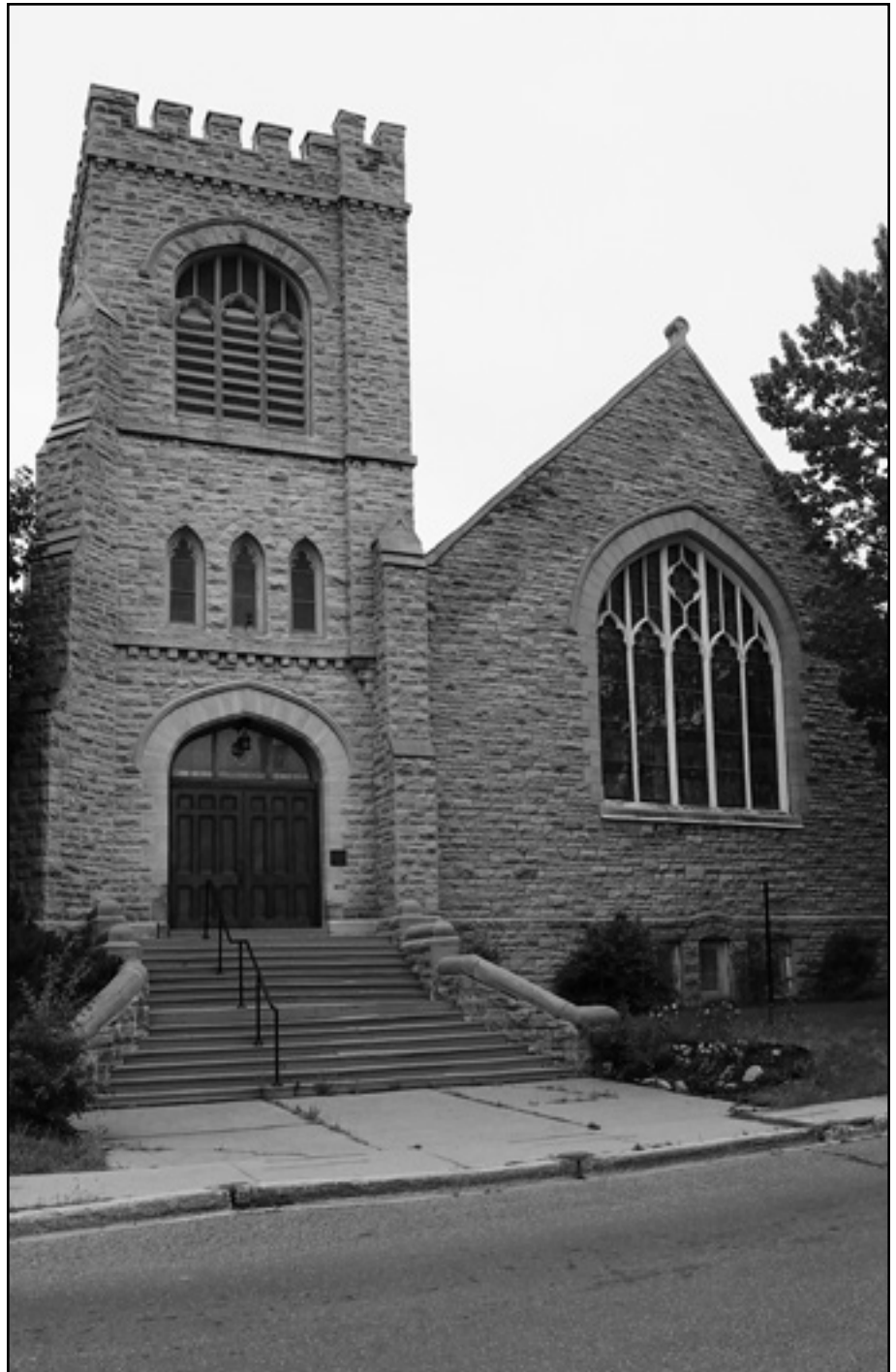
The federal government had a program to offset restoration costs of heritage buildings, the Commercial Heritage Properties Investment Fund; this needs to be revived. At the municipal level, opportunities to off-set restoration costs against property taxes, as is done in other municipalities, would be tremendously helpful.

On the other hand funding from the federal government to improve accessibility to the adapted structure has been critical for us to install an elevator.

7. Are adaptive re-use projects of interests to clients and tenants?

Yes, based on the response from investors and initial signals from “the market.” But the answer re *allsaints* is still to come.

This interview has been condensed from the original conversation.



allsaints Event Space

Photo: Caroline Ross

Some recent publications about Ottawa's history.

Obscure Ottawa, by Ray Corrin. Ottawa: Reprive Press, 2018, 284 pages, \$40.00, hardcover.

Ray Corrin, a long-time Ottawa resident, has published this personal view of the city. A collection of black-and-white photos taken over several decades it “is a book about the arcane sights of Ottawa, the odd, the unwanted, the lonely and lamentable” to quote the author. For the fan of Ottawa's built heritage, however, *Obscure Ottawa* will remind us of important features, some lost, some still in place, which add to the charm of the city. In case you wondered what happened to the Rideau Street covered bus mall, a noteworthy

municipal fiasco of the 1970s, it is the first photo in the book.

Further information: <http://www.reprivepress.com/>

The Art and Passion of Guido Nincheri, by Mélanie Grondin. Montreal: Véhicule Press, 2018. 240 p. \$24.95, paper.

Guido Nincheri, a prolific Montreal artist of stained glass windows and frescoes, also lived and worked in Ottawa. St. Anthony of Padua Church at Booth and Gladstone is an important example of his frescoes and stained glass windows.

Further information: <http://www.vehiculepress.com/q.php?EAN=9781550654851>

L'architecture dans une vie – Louis J. Lapierre, architecte.

Andrée Dupuis et Marie-Dina Salvione. Montréal: Éditions Carte Blanche, 2018, 170 p. \$34.95.

Voici un nouveau livre sur un important architecte moderniste canadien, Louis J. Lapierre, né en 1924. Il est de la première génération d'une école d'architecture totalement modernisée.

La deuxième partie est une analyse originale de huit œuvres choisies parmi ses réalisations, incluant l'édifice Union du Canada sur la rue Dalhousie à Ottawa, malheureusement démoli en 2014.

Disponible en ligne à: <https://boutiquecarteblanche.ca/>

Demolition by Neglect No More

Heritage advocates concerned by the deteriorating condition of the vacant Bradley-Craig barn were pleased to learn recently that the prominent landmark won't be moving to Saunders Farm after all. The barn's owner, Richcraft, now plans to keep the heritage barn on Hazeldean Road and renovate it for commercial use.

On February 4, about 40 “Friends of the Bradley-Craig Farm” assembled for a community photo. We were joined by friends young and old, some in costume, some with musical instruments. The freshly fallen snow and lots of smiling faces made for a charming picture.



Bradley Craig barn

Photo: Rob Hamby