



# Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage

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## Ottawa Parks: translating social movements into green spaces

By Edwinna von Baeyer



*Central Park, Ottawa, ca. 1911*

Today we take our city parks for granted, not realizing that just 120 years ago, a public park was regarded as a bold, new idea. Until city officials began reserving lands for public use, Ottawans used public squares, military parade grounds, church plazas, or cemeteries (Beechwood was a favourite) as proto-parks. Public parks, as we know them today, only

began appearing in the late 1800s in Ottawa, as a result of three major social movements.

The first was the reform movement, which began in Europe, fueled by a concern over social problems arising out of the Industrial Revolution and the Romantic movement's belief in the healing power of nature.

Photo: William James Topley, PA-009988, Library and Archives Canada via Wikimedia.

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

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## Ottawa Parks: social movements cont'd.

Nineteenth century British and North American cities were often dirty, congested, and polluted, which affected the health of their residents, especially the poor. Reformers promoted urban parks as "breathing spaces," where the working poor could revive and, instead of heading to a bar, participate in wholesome physical activities.

The second influential movement, the City Beautiful movement, which began in the 1890s, promoted cities adorned by parks, trees, boulevards, and stately buildings. In Ottawa, the Horticultural Society led many City Beautiful projects, such as planting flower beds around city buildings. As part of this movement, the City created Ottawa's first large, landscaped park, Major's Hill Park, located across the canal from Parliament Hill.

The third movement was the playground movement, which was closely connected to the reform movement. Because many children of the working poor were unsupervised while their parents were working, concerned social workers promoted supervised, organized play as yet another way to improve the lives of the poor. Playground parks were slow to appear in Ottawa; however in many cases, such as Sandy Hill Park on Somerset Street East, they were the precursors of many public parks. Championed by the Ottawa chapter of the National Council of Women, the earliest playground was established in 1912 on the corner of Bronson and Gladstone avenues, then named Gladstone Park, now McNabb Park. By 1913, the Ottawa Playgrounds Association, successfully petitioned the City to agree to use Plouffe, Anglesea, and Bingham squares for playgrounds.

The other influential factor in the rise of Ottawa's city parks was the activities of the Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC), the precursor of the National Capital Commission (NCC). Beginning under the OIC, the federal government became responsible for developing and maintaining federal lands and buildings in what is now known as the National Capital Region. As part of the OIC's beautification programs, such as developing Rockcliffe Park, it hired Frederick Todd in 1903 to create a city beautification plan. In his report to the OIC, Todd suggested that a system of parks connected by parkways be established in Ottawa. This seminal decision continues to echo in Ottawa park planning and subsequent city plans up to the present day.

By 1908, Ottawa had seven parks (built by the OIC and the City), including Major's Hill, Central, Somerset Street, Rockcliffe, and King Edward Avenue parks. As the city expanded, the public demand for more municipal parkland increased. By the First World War, however, park promoters had divided into two factions: those who wanted parks devoted to recreation or sports, and those who wanted parks designed for aesthetic enjoyment.

With the return of normal times in the 1920s, parks were no longer seen as "instruments of reform," but more as recreation spaces, with playgrounds as essential elements. Obviously, the recreation faction had won the day. Ottawa, by now, had a parks board, which was tasked with responding to the public's belief that parks and playgrounds were not luxuries, but necessities that governments should provide.

By 1925, Ottawa's recreation facilities had increased to 10 skating rinks, 4 hockey rinks, 1 figure skating rink, 1 speed skating rink, 2 toboggan slides, 12 playgrounds, 4 athletic fields, 4 swimming pools, 4 bowling greens, and 4 tennis courts. Between 1927 and 1939, Ottawa's park area had grown to 900 acres.

The federal presence in Ottawa's park building surfaced once again with Prime Minister Mackenzie King's invitation to Jacques Gréber, a French town planner, to undertake the fourth city plan for Ottawa. Gréber presented his report in 1950. Building on Todd's report, he recommended the continued integration of parks and parkways and to further beautify the city with greenbelts.

The 1950s were marked by the steady creation of new parks and playgrounds and the improvement of older parks. By this decade, 90 centres were under the City's jurisdiction including 2 indoor swimming pools,

4 beaches, 11 wading pools, 23 playgrounds, 6 recreation fields, and 33 hockey rinks.

As the parks and recreation department grew, the need for a coordinated official plan for development intensified. That plan would not be realized until 1957, at which time parkland was divided into three jurisdictions:

- city owned, operated by Department of Public Recreation and Parks, 232 acres
- city owned, federally operated, 130 acres
- federally owned, federally operated, 150 acres

Park planning began to routinely consider installing not only playgrounds and playing fields, but picnic grounds, walking paths, and natural areas. Park components and layouts slowly became more standardized and functional with a

greater use of asphalt, fewer trees, and approved styles of benches and fencing. By the 1960s, parks were being described (and designed) as open spaces devoted to recreation.

Throughout the 1970s and up to present day, municipal departments devoted to park building and maintenance were continually restructured until in 2018, park planning was included under the Public Works and Environmental Services Department.

Today, the City of Ottawa boasts that it operates and maintains about 10,625 acres of parkland at over 1,300 sites. The NCC oversees 12 federal parks in the greater Ottawa-Gatineau area, with its newest park, Pindegen Park (celebrating Indigenous cultural heritage) to be built on LeBreton Flats.

*Edwinna von Baeyer, guest editor of this newsletter issue, is a landscape historian.*

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## ICOMOS Canada — Over 40 years of innovation and impact

*By Christophe Rivet*

Born in Ottawa in 1975, the Canadian committee of the International Council on Monuments and on Sites (ICOMOS) responded to national and international awareness of the significance of heritage for communities across the world. The visionary work of Canadian pioneers in heritage conservation led to founding ICOMOS Canada, along with the Heritage Canada Foundation (now the National Trust for Canada), the Association for Preservation Technology, and other now well-established institutions.

ICOMOS itself was founded in 1965 to bring together professionals from

around the world, in such disciplines as architecture, archaeology, history, and engineering, to develop the terms of good theory and practice. ICOMOS advises UNESCO on cultural heritage matters in the context of the *World Heritage Convention*. While it is best known for evaluating and monitoring World Heritage sites, the organization continues to develop good theory and practice now through a network of over 10,000 professionals in over 100 countries.

Canadians have been pivotal in leading the international organization and in influencing the way heritage conservation is understood and practiced. Our members had an active role in developing guidance in urban

conservation, cultural landscapes, architectural surveys, archaeological conservation, cultural tourism, and training. Today, Canadians continue to participate actively in over 20 scientific committees, UNESCO missions, World Heritage evaluations, international panels, and as advisors to world governments.

Nationally, this extraordinary expertise has translated into tools that many of us are now familiar with, such as archaeological conservation guidance, a Canadian register of historic places, standards and guidelines for the conservation of historic places,

*Continued on page 8.*



# Qualicum: A Mid-century Modern Style jewel

By Andrew King

Photos: Google Street View



*One-storey Mid-century Modern house in Qualicum.*

Tucked off Ottawa's busy 417 highway is an enclave of residential homes that seem to have eluded recognition that deserves a closer study. However, I am hopeful that it will soon catch the eye of heritage conservationists for its unique architectural design that reflects the Mid-century Modern Style.

Mid-century Modern architecture in Ottawa is slowly being recognized. As with many heritage buildings, they do not seem to gain value until it is too late to save them, which is why we must act now to preserve this crucial era of Ottawa's history. The Mid-century Modern movement became popular between 1947 and 1970. The style was inspired by the works of designers such as Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Influenced by the work of Brazilian and Scandinavian architects, Mid-century Modern's design style was characterized by a clean simplicity that integrated structures with their natural surroundings.

The style began to seep into the post-war suburbia boom, including Ottawa. Many Mid-century Modern

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*Named after Qualicum Beach in Vancouver, most of the neighbourhood streets in the development were named after areas of the West Coast.*

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homes use an architectural design that emphasized structures with open floor plans and plenty of windows, eliminating interior support walls to create airy living spaces using post-and-beam construction.

One budding architect, who was caught up in the Mid-century

Modern style, was a young man from Manitoba — William Teron. William, or Bill as he was known, won a national competition in 1951 for a job as a federal government draftsman. Teron moved to Ottawa at the age of 18 to take the job, but soon left the civil service to join Ottawa home builder Charles Johannsen. The post-war boom in Ottawa saw a rapidly expanding capital with suburbs being created on all sides. Bill Teron saw an opportunity on the outskirts of Nepean, a place he would later call "Qualicum."

Building on the former Bruce family farmlands, Teron started designing custom homes for clients on large lots, near the picturesque Graham Creek, between 1961 and 1967. These unique homes would look more at home in Los Angeles or Palm Springs rather than wintry Ottawa. Yet they work, and are a stunning addition to Ottawa's interpretation of Mid-century Modern design. Using a style that incorporates nature and open-concept living, Teron's homes are special in that they are one-of-a-kind custom homes that resemble individual art



*Note the extensive windows and natural materials on the facade.*

pieces rather than the cookie-cutter homes that are built today.

Named after Qualicum Beach in Vancouver, most of the neighbourhood streets in the development were named after areas of the West Coast. Teron built his homes in a clean and aesthetically pleasing style, focussing on the horizontal elements that blended with the natural landscape. Teron's designs also incorporate natural

materials on their exteriors such as cedar shingles instead of asphalt, natural stone instead of brick, and using expansive windows that blend nature and architecture in pleasing harmony. Most of Teron's Qualicum design elements were used in his future Beaverbrook suburban development in Kanata.

It is disappointing that even after Mr. Teron's passing last year that his other remarkable contributions

to Ottawa's Mid-century Modern landscape have eluded recognition, most notably his impressive Talisman Inn on Carling Avenue. Built in 1963 as Ottawa's premier business convention centre and hotel, it has sadly been deconstructed from its original form due to unsympathetic renovations. Perhaps we can follow the example of Ottawa's other Mid-century Modern enclave, Briarcliffe, an area that is the newest



*Above: A playful Mid-century Modern Style design*

*Left: Qualicum houses blend into their surroundings.*

*Below left: One-storey Mid-century Modern house in Qualicum.*



Heritage Conservation District, the first in Canada that recognizes Mid-century Modern architecture. Qualicum is yet another special place awaiting appreciation for its significant addition to Ottawa's Mid-century Modern scene, which contributes greatly to this city's heritage landscape.

*Andrew King is an Ottawa-based artist and amateur historian.*



# Heritage Inventory Project team completes its rural fieldwork

By Cass Sclauzero

The Heritage Inventory Project team completed its fieldwork in the rural study area in December 2018, which also concludes its fieldwork. The Project team surveyed all 26 of the City's official villages, travelling as far as Galetta to the west, Burritt's Rapids and Marionville to the south, and Cumberland to the east. They also surveyed the concession roads and forced roads between the villages, and discovered many of the City's smaller hamlets and crossroads along the way.

The team photographed over 1,500 buildings for assessment. About one-third of these buildings were located within the boundaries of the official villages, while the remaining two-thirds were from the surrounding rural area.

Conducting the rural fieldwork in November and December was advantageous because the dense foliage that would have hidden many of the rural buildings had disappeared for the winter. Visibility of farmsteads from the end of long driveways was also much improved.



*Farm landscape on Fallowfield Road.*

Throughout the rural area, the team saw a wide variety of buildings that reflected Ottawa's rural history, from log cabins to Ontario Gothic cottages to stone churches. Each of the villages displayed a distinct character through its built heritage and setting. Evidence of the industry and resources that prompted the creation of these villages was clear, adding important context to the team's understanding of them.

The Project team and heritage staff are now reviewing the photographs from the rural fieldwork and evaluating each building using the Heritage Inventory Project's assessment criteria. Assessment for other study areas across the City is ongoing.

The Project team anticipates that a report recommending additions to the Heritage Register from all study areas will be presented to the City's Built Heritage Sub-Committee by early summer.



*Rural heritage buildings under assessment on Mansfield Road.*

If you would like to suggest a building in the rural area that the Heritage Inventory Project team should evaluate, or for more information about the Heritage Inventory Project itself, please contact us:

**Email:** [heritageinventory@ottawa.ca](mailto:heritageinventory@ottawa.ca)

**Phone:** 613-580-2463

**Website:** [ottawa.ca/heritageinventory](http://ottawa.ca/heritageinventory)

*Cass Sclauzero is a member of the Heritage Register Project team in the Right of Way, Heritage and Design Services Program of the City of Ottawa.*



*Wooden heritage fence along Jock Trail Road.*

# Carleton University architecture students get creative

By Peter Coffman

For two days in December, Ottawans got a glimpse of what an addition to the Château Laurier might have looked like in an alternative universe – one in which harmonizing with the historic building was the top priority. The alternative designs were the work of 3<sup>rd</sup>-year students at Carleton University's Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism. The exhibition, *Outside the Box*, was organized by Heritage Ottawa at the Hintonburg Community Centre on December 8-9.



*One of the eight exhibits*



*Envisioning Château Laurier exhibits.*

The project began when Professor Mariana Esponda asked her 3<sup>rd</sup>-year students to envision an addition to the Château Laurier that would have a visual “dialogue” with the historic and iconic hotel. This challenge lies at the heart of the Château Laurier project. This challenge also refers to what it means to live in a modern city that cares about its built heritage. Working in groups, the students came up with eight different designs, showing remarkable creativity, resourcefulness, and variety in addressing a vexing architectural challenge.

Ottawans were never meaningfully consulted on the design of the Château addition. Instead, they were given a series of designs – narrow variations on a theme – and a sales pitch on the alleged merits of each. This exhibition offered a glimpse of what could have resulted from a genuinely open discussion that challenged assumptions.

*Peter Coffman is Supervisor of the History and Theory of Architecture Program at Carleton University, Past President of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, and a board member of Heritage Ottawa.*



*Creative exhibits of Château Laurier addition ideas brought out the crowds.*



## ICOMOS Canada cont'd.

cultural resource management policies, architectural standards, and the concept of cultural landscapes.

As our discipline constantly evolves, ICOMOS Canada is setting the stage for the next generation of thinkers and practitioners. Building on the knowledge and expertise of generations of heritage experts, our committee has now focused on expanding the discussion on the definition and conservation of cultural landscapes, Indigenous heritage, and on heritage in the context of climate change.

Over the past five years, our members have led a national conversation on cultural landscapes; explored the presence and definition of Indigenous heritage in cities; and contributed to international discussions on sustainable development, climate change, cultural tourism, the relationship between nature and culture, and urban strategies. We have been active with government departments on cultural diplomacy and heritage conservation matters, and provided our perspective to the House of Commons and the Senate on sustainable development, impact assessments, federal responsibilities in heritage, and cultural diplomacy.

This heavy but rewarding work is entirely accomplished by volunteers, continuing a tradition of thinking about our country's needs for improving the well-being of communities through heritage conservation. As we look forward to the future, ICOMOS Canada welcomes individuals who will continue this tradition by becoming active members.

Next General Assembly: Whitehorse (Yukon) May 2019

For more information, contact: [canada.icomos.org](http://canada.icomos.org)

*Christophe Rivet, president of ICOMOS Canada, is principal of Cultural Spaces Consulting.*

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## From the President

*By David Jeanes*



I hope you all enjoyed a peaceful and safe holiday period.

### Federal heritage

Heritage Ottawa has identified the federal government role in heritage preservation as one of our priorities. (see "The Government of Canada Should Step Up to Protect our Heritage" *Heritage Ottawa Newsletter*, vol. 45 no. 2, May 2018). We will monitor the 2019 budget and the minister's response to the important recommendations in "Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow."

We recognize that there is no federal protection for national historic sites like the Château Laurier, even when it is framed by three classified federal heritage buildings and is also part of the Confederation Square National Historic Site. We remain disappointed with the lack of engagement by the NCC and Parks Canada as adjacent property owners and custodians of Confederation Boulevard and the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site.

We recently met with the owner and architects for the Château Laurier to discuss their latest proposal which will be made public in late February. We continue our engagement with the Central Experimental Farm and planning for the new Ottawa Hospital. In response to media inquiries, we stated our position strongly on 24 Sussex Drive, demanding its restoration as the Prime Minister's official residence, and have written to the prime minister and other party leaders.

With the NCC we helped organize an Urbanism Lab and Ideas Forum on heritage on February 14-15. Other federal issues we are tracking include the redevelopment of the former Natural Resources Canada Booth Street complex, and the temporary move of the Supreme Court to another classified federal heritage building, the West Memorial Building, from 2023 to 2028.

Heritage Ottawa has been participating in the Ottawa Cultural Alliance which will propose a new community-driven Cultural Roadmap for Ottawa's cultural sector (including heritage) for the next four years.

### Programmes

We held exceptional lectures to full houses— Robert Smyth on Ottawa's Department Stores in December, and elder Ron Bernard in January on the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan. We are pleased to be engaged with this First Nations Community and look forward to further collaboration.

*David Jeanes, President, Heritage Ottawa / Patrimoine Ottawa*