



Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage

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HERITAGE OTTAWA
FREE
LECTURE
SERIES

Exploring Ottawa's Historic Places and Spaces

Our lecture season is underway with a series of free monthly talks on a range of interesting topics, from the conservation of modern heritage in a global context to the changing architectural landscape of Vanier.

Join us in the auditorium of the Main Branch of the Ottawa Public Library (unless otherwise indicated).

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A Brief Encounter with a Historic Artwork

By Jean Palmer

Heritage Ottawa has a combative history, but sometimes, between battles, there is an opportunity for self-congratulation. Such an occasion came in May 2019 when Ugo Chyurlia's fresco, "Madonna and Child over Ottawa", was displayed in Notre Dame Cathedral.

The story begins in 1998 when the Franciscan Monastery of St. Vincent de Paul in New Edinburgh was slated for demolition and then was bought by local developer, John Doran. The monastery contained works of historical significance such as "a fresco commemorating the consecration of Canada to St Joseph in 1624", and a treasury of frescoes and mosaics by Ottawa painter, Ugo Chyurlia.

Frescoes and mosaics are, by their nature, embedded in a building's



Ugo Chyurlia painting
"Mary at the Cross."

fabric and are difficult to remove. But before tackling this challenge, there was an issue with rescuing the fresco. Heritage Ottawa's mandate is built heritage, not frescoes and mosaics. The monastery was not a designated heritage building, yet the historically significant artworks were part of the building. After initial reluctance, the board of

Heritage Ottawa joined the fight to save the artworks.

John Doran agreed to delay demolition while Ian Hodkinson, Professor Emeritus of Art Conservation at Queen's University and a local restoration firm, Craig Enterprises, removed all the frescoes and mosaics. Doran, who rescued the St. Charles School in New Edinburgh and turned it into award-winning, upscale condominiums, also contributed generously to the cost of removing the frescoes and mosaics.

Photo: Courtesy of the Chyurlia family

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

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A Brief Encounter with a Historic Artwork (contd.)

Frescos require delicate treatment

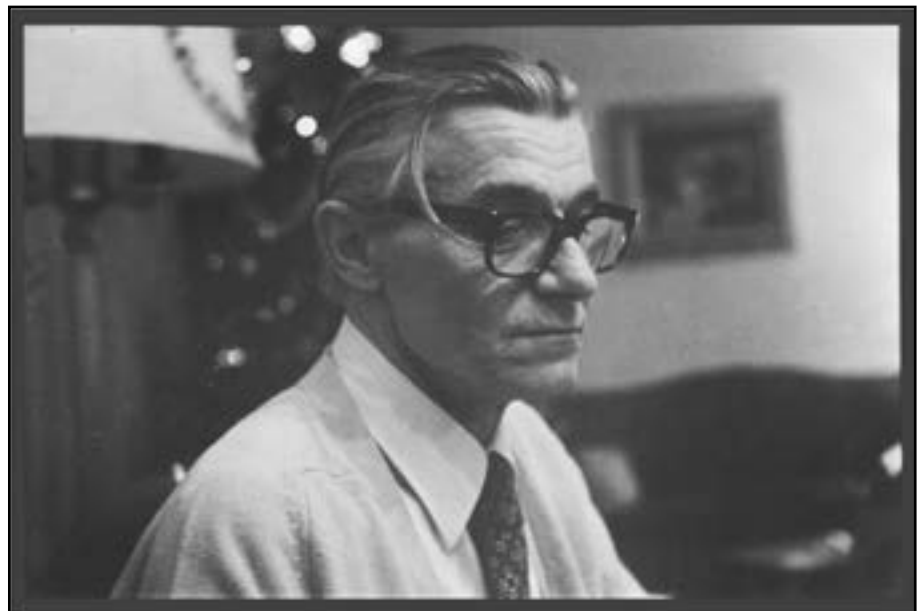
Fresco paintings are very rare in Canada. This Italian technique is very exacting, involving painting on wet plaster. Only enough wet plaster is laid for the day's painting. Once it dries, it cannot be retouched. The effect is radiant and the skill lies in drawing the "cartoon" to scale on paper, tracing the outline onto the wet plaster, and mixing and painting on the colour before the plaster dries.

Removing a fresco for conservation is even more challenging. First the color is consolidated, and then a water-soluble, enzyme-based adhesive is applied to the surface, which is covered with a linen canvas. When dry, the linen and fresco come off in one piece for storage. On a new site (in this case, a 10-foot concrete panel), wet plaster is applied, and the fresco is quickly installed against it. When dry, all that remains is to remove the canvas and soluble adhesives and reveal the original fresco.

Some of the rescued panels went to local churches, some were stored by Jerome Chyurlia, the artist's son. Some of them went to what is now the Canadian Museum of History and were stored in fresco limbo for 20 years.

Chyurlia fresco displayed

Enter Catharine Carroll, a PhD candidate at St. Paul's University, who was browsing through Heritage Ottawa's old newsletters and encountered an article "Fate of the Frescoes," and felt 20 years without a viewing was long enough. She struck a committee to help her display at least one of the frescoes, and chose, "*Madonna and Child over Ottawa*," a 10-foot panel showing the Madonna and Child hovering over the Parliament buildings and the Chateau Laurier. The project needed funding and a venue for display. Catharine sought the support of Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, who had recently allowed Kumo, the mechanical spider of La Machine to crawl off the roof of Notre Dame



Ugo Chyurlia.

Photo: Courtesy of the Chyurlia family



Photo: Catharine Carroll

“Madonna and Child over Ottawa” on display at Notre Dame cathedral.

Cathedral to mark Canada’s 150th anniversary. The Archbishop gave his support to briefly display the fresco in Notre Dame Cathedral, which was further supported by a \$5,000 grant from the City of Ottawa. The Canadian Museum of History agreed to transport and mount the fresco panel for exhibition.

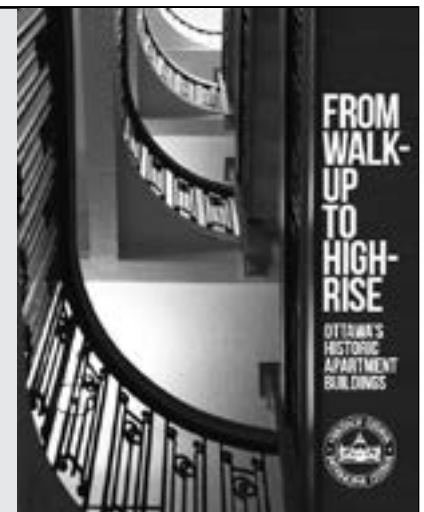
While floods were ravaging the shores of the Ottawa River, and Larco Investments was pushing through their plans for a dismal block-like, multi-storey addition to the Château Laurier, the Madonna was forlornly dropping roses over the Peace Tower and the beautiful old Château Laurier.

Congratulations to Catharine Carroll and her committee for their successful efforts to display the fresco, and to Heritage Ottawa whose efforts helped save it in the first place.

A BOOK MAKES A GREAT GIFT!

Looking for a gift idea? Here’s something special for the person who wants to know more about Ottawa’s unique heritage. ***From Walk-Up to High-Rise*** is the first book published about the evolution of Ottawa’s historic apartment buildings. Beautifully illustrated, it’s a must-have on the coffee table. Wrap it yourself, or have Heritage Ottawa send it directly to the recipient, FREE of charge within Canada. At \$20 you might want to think about buying two!

Purchases can be made online at heritageottawa.org/books, or by sending a cheque to Heritage Ottawa, 2 Daly Avenue, Ottawa ON, K1N 6E2. Please specify “Apartments Book” and include the mailing address. If you want the book mailed as a gift directly to the recipient, include the message you would like us to send with it.



Area Specific Zoning Applied to Island Park Drive

By Paul Forster

In 2018, the City of Ottawa amended its Zoning By-law to protect the front setbacks of residences along Island Park Drive, Island Park Crescent, and 320 and 321 Harmer Avenue South (hereafter IPD/IPC). This “Area Specific Zoning” proved to be an uncomplicated and effective tool, one that may have useful applications elsewhere.

The Island Park Community Association (IPCA) began investigating ways to protect the character of IPD/IPC in 2015. The impetus was the pending expiry of “covenants” that have regulated development on the street since it began. In 1921 Robert Cowley paid the Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC—now the National Capital Commission) \$1.00 for the right to build houses along Island Park Drive. In an effort to ensure that this development was befitting a national capital, the OIC attached a series of 99-year covenants to relevant parcels of land. (Copies of these covenants are available at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ekhr0xhm3bas2qm/AAAJ0CHz5vfkP5ggoh6kr1O2a?dl=0>) These covenants limited construction to detached residential buildings worth at least \$4,000. Houses, fences, and “out buildings” were prohibited within 25 feet of the street. Where possible, servicing (water, sewer, etc.) was to be located at the rear of the lots. Ten-foot wide driveways onto Island Park Drive were permitted, but commercial vehicles were prohibited from driving on the street and had to access houses using rear laneways. The exterior design of any new construction was subject to review by the OIC’s chief architect and had to be “in keeping” with previous development.



Examples of setbacks on Island Park Drive.



Photos: Paul Forster

Under these covenants, IPD/IPC has become a unique community of stately homes and diplomatic missions along an expansive tree-lined boulevard. The houses' architectural and historic interest contribute to the heritage of this scenic driveway.

Options for replacing covenants

Once it became clear that the covenants could not be extended past 2022, IPCA began looking for tools to replace them. Residents did not want to restrict the style of homes on the street, nor did they want to impede the reconstruction or replacement of any homes lacking heritage value. They did, however, want to ensure the continuity of new construction with the

neighbourhood's long-standing character. To this end, IPCA asked the City about designating IPD/IPC as a Heritage Conservation District.

As discussions with City staff proceeded, residents expressed concern about the complexity of the process; the time and money involved; the additional approvals that modifications to houses might require; and the difficulty of getting a consensus on a heritage plan. Having noted that preserving front yard setbacks was a high priority for residents, City staff raised the possibility of using Area Specific Zoning to achieve this. When it was explained that regulating setbacks would not preclude pursuing further protection, that the process would take only a matter of months and be

completed before last fall's municipal election, IPCA embraced the idea. Residents were overwhelmingly in favour and the by-law amendment passed easily. The result was to add a required setback of 7.6 metres to the existing R1 Zoning and Mature Neighbourhood Overlay. (Existing properties with less than the required setback are legal, but non-conforming.)

The new package of zoning regulations on IPD/IPC falls short of the protections afforded by the covenants, but it is more robust than if the covenants simply lapsed. It also provided a significant, inexpensive, and straightforward means of preserving one of the drive's most distinctive features.

Ottawa's Official Plan Update

By Sally Coutts

The City of Ottawa has embarked on an ambitious plan to produce a new Official Plan, prepared in accordance with provincial requirements. An Official Plan provides the policy framework to guide the city's physical development. It describes how and where the city will grow, where infrastructure will be located, and provides guidance for the development of new communities and for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage resources.

The new Official Plan will make a number of significant policy changes to make Ottawa the most liveable mid-sized city in North America. To achieve this, "Five Big Moves," that represent significant high-level policy proposals were developed and

tabled in August 2019. Continuing to protect and honour its cultural heritage resources is a big part of building a liveable city and is included in Big Move 3, "Urban and Community Design." Since tabling, there have been consultations on the "Five Big Moves" and in December 2019, a more detailed set of draft policy directions will be brought to committee and Council with the recommendation that staff be directed to prepare a draft Official Plan for tabling in June 2020. Consultation will then ensue. It is anticipated that the final Official Plan will be adopted in March 2021.

The new Official Plan will be very different than the current one. Where once heritage policies were

found in two parts of the official plan, and were often very detailed, the new plan will have a limited number of very high-level policy directives. One of these will be to develop and implement a Heritage Management Plan that will feature many of the Official Plan's current policies and will be a comprehensive document outlining strategies for the identification, conservation, and management of the city's cultural heritage resources.

There are ample opportunities to comment and participate in the development of the new Official Plan and to promote heritage interests. Please go to the link below to subscribe for notifications of dates of public meetings, and to see how you can participate in the public consultation as the plan moves from draft to final: https://engage.ottawa.ca/the-new-official-plan?tool=survey_tool#tool_tab

Celebrating the Modern Heritage

By Zeynep Ekim



Photo: Mario Santana

Jeff Cody speaking to participants at the Create Heritage Program workshop.

On November 8 and 9, Carleton University's Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Create Heritage Engineering Program held its fifth annual forum and workshop. The program's objective is to produce a cohort of trainees with technical and professional skills relevant to Canada's built heritage industry. This workshop focussed on sustainability, heritage in the microscale, maximizing the energy efficiency of historic buildings, and, Jeff Cody's keynote, conservation of modern heritage. Cody noted that conserving buildings created in the 20th century can be controversial, but can focus on the social, economic, or cultural values of places rather than on their age.

GCI's framework presented

Cody, who works at the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), added that the Institute has been creating a thematic framework to guide identifying and assessing modern heritage places. This framework identifies 10 social, technological, political, and economic drivers of change that shaped the 20th century: rapid urbanization and the growth of large cities; accelerated scientific and technological development; industrialized and mechanized agriculture; world trade and global corporation; mass communication and transportation systems; internationalization, nation states

and human rights; preserving the natural environment, buildings and landscapes; popular culture and tourism; religion, mass education and cultural institutions; and war and its aftermath. The workshop participants were challenged to look at a list of Ottawa buildings (such as the Main Branch of the Ottawa Public Library, the Old Ottawa City Hall, the Carleton Architecture Building, the East and West Memorial Buildings, and the Garden of the Provinces and Territories) through this framework, see if and where they fit, and identify conservation strategies.

Challenges to restoring modern heritage

A number of questions arose: is it too early to deem these places important and as heritage? Are they important in the larger context of Canadian history? Will they remain important in the next century? How can we restore materials, forms, and constructions found in modern heritage buildings such as curtain walls, steel windows, precast concrete, and plastics? And do these materials have as "high" a value as say stone, brick, or timber? Cody also noted that climate change, as always, adds another complication to the discussion.

The jury is out on these questions until we have consensus on how we value modern era places and how we apply our heritage mindset to these places. A necessary starting point is to develop the tools, techniques, and policies that will help us protect these places before they are fundamentally changed or lost forever.

Que signifie au juste une désignation de lieu historique national du Canada?

Par Julie Dompierre

Depuis cent ans, le gouvernement du Canada œuvre à reconnaître, et dans certains cas à protéger, ses lieux historiques nationaux. C'est en 1919 que le gouvernement de l'époque créa la Commission des lieux et monuments historiques du Canada pour le conseiller dans l'évaluation et la désignation des lieux, des événements ainsi que des personnages d'importance historique nationale et depuis ce temps, il y a eu plus de 2000 désignations d'importance historique nationale. Mais que signifie au juste une désignation de lieu historique national du Canada? Suite aux débats engendrés par les travaux proposés au lieu historique national du Canada du Château-Laurier à Ottawa, beaucoup de gens s'interrogent sur la valeur de cette désignation. À tort, on peut penser qu'une telle désignation confère

automatiquement une protection quelconque. Une désignation en tant que lieu historique national est honorifique et sert d'une part à reconnaître et à documenter la valeur historique et patrimoniale d'un lieu et d'autre part à attirer l'attention du public à ces valeurs.

Contrairement à beaucoup de pays au monde, le Canada n'a toujours pas adopté une loi pour protéger les lieux historiques nationaux. Présentement, le gouvernement du Canada a une obligation légale de protéger uniquement les lieux historiques nationaux gérés par Parcs Canada. Nous pensons ici aux centaines de lieux historiques nationaux tels le lieu historique national de la Forteresse-de-Louisbourg en Nouvelle-Écosse ou le lieu historique national du Phare-de-Fisgard en Colombie-Britannique.

Sachez toutefois que ces lieux ne représentent qu'une fraction des lieux historiques nationaux désignés par le gouvernement du Canada depuis maintenant cent ans, la plupart étant des lieux appartenant à différentes instances gouvernementales (municipalités, provinces), à des collectivités ou à des particuliers. Tel est le cas du lieu historique national du Canada du Château-Laurier, désigné par le gouvernement du Canada en 1981 et appartenant à des particuliers. Certes, une désignation provinciale ou municipale peut également conférer une certaine protection mais en attendant une législation fédérale pour protéger les lieux historiques nationaux, la mobilisation des citoyens demeure la meilleure façon d'assurer la protection de ces joyaux patrimoniaux.

Seeking articles for Newsletter edition on Heritage and Sustainability

Climate change is the leading issue in Canadian society today, and will affect every aspect of our lives. How will it affect our built heritage, and how can we conserve our built heritage with climate change issues in mind? The impact will range from how we renovate to how we plan our cities. How do we convince decision-makers that the greenest building is the one that is already there?



We are looking for articles on this topic: articles of about 500 words in length, and a couple of images. If interested, please contact Heritage Ottawa with a short outline of your proposed article. Contact us at info@heritageottawa.org, or 613-230-8841.

From the President A Turning Point in Heritage?

By Richard Belliveau



In July this year, a slim majority of Ottawa City Councillors voted with the Mayor to just plough ahead with the last and worst of the design proposals for an inappropriate addition to the Château Laurier. They granted site plan approval to Larco Investments.

To the Mayor's shock, and one presumes horror, a huge wave of outrage at the Council decision surged up from the people of this city. Heritage Ottawa, which has been active for three years in urging good sense and good design in the plans for an addition, teamed up with an amorphous group of citizens, known as the Friends of the Château Laurier, and led a campaign to challenge the decision in the Committee of Adjustment.

A huge online fundraising campaign was launched to build a legal fund to prevent this project from going through. The campaign quickly achieved the original target through the donations of hundreds of concerned citizens. And the

country spoke up. Canada's foremost architectural advocate, Phyllis Lambert, founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, spoke out vehemently against the design. Four of Canada's best-known historians published an open letter defining the key place the Château holds in our history and iconography. A group of eminent Canadians – former politicians, public servants and business people – signed an open letter to leaders at every level of government urging them to influence the outcome.

In September, the non-political panel of the Committee of Adjustment showed better judgment than the Council, and ruled that one "minor adjustment" sought by the builders was in no sense minor, and that the request was "not desirable for the appropriate development or use of the lands".

When the crisis came, the people reacted. And while the struggle is far from over, there might even be a happy outcome.

In this effort to save the Château Laurier, we discovered that preservation of our most cherished built heritage is a huge and sensitive issue among Canadians. We are not yet ready to admit, as some councillors suggested, that since the Château Laurier is private property, the owners can do what they want with it. Wouldn't that be nice? Does the government allow you to do whatever you want with your private property?

In broadening the campaign, we were reminded that there is no federal legislation that can effectively protect designated national historic sites and monuments. But because of the Save the Château Laurier campaign, this issue – probably for the first time in living memory – intruded into the federal campaign, appearing in various forms in some national party platforms during the federal election. We cannot miss this opportunity to demand real action from our lawmakers.

Citizens need to be listened to. Heritage Ottawa – which after all is but a volunteer organization – has been front and centre on this issue for months. The battle for the Château is not over, but already, we have to consider how our organization can thrive and continue to provide expert and experienced leadership on the various heritage issues that present themselves. This is a challenge for us, but we have been massively encouraged by the outpouring of support – moral, financial and political – from the citizens of Ottawa.

We thank you, our members and contributors, profoundly for this support, and we will continue to look for it in the future as we undertake to carry on the good fight.

And to all of you, best wishes for your wellbeing in the coming year.

Richard Belliveau is president of Heritage Ottawa.