



# Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage

June 2021 Volume 48, No. 2

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## Federal Study Centre: Is Demolition “An Act of Violence?”

By Chris Wiebe



Photo: Peter Coffman

*View of the Chapel – 1495 Heron Road.*

*This article is an adaptation of the author’s upcoming monthly column for VISTAS, the Alta Vista community newspaper. The column examines “AV Mysteries”, responding to a new interest in built heritage, both survivals and losses, and neighbourhood character.*

The future of the Federal Study Centre raises many issues for the Alta Vista community and for the heritage community. This article considers some questions not often raised by a redevelopment such as this.

With the late March arrival in my mailbox of a glossy flyer about the future of the Federal Study Centre (1495 Heron Road), the deteriorating convent cum government training centre on the edge of Alta Vista, patiently awaiting a new vocation since 2014, suddenly snapped back into view.

“1495 Heron Road,” the Canada Lands Company (CLC) flyer reads, “A Place to Connect... Help us create a new vision for this site.” The word “site” suggested bare ground, a blank

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

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## Federal Study Centre continued...

slate, confirmed by the CLC website. “How should we commemorate this place?” read one of the feedback questions, and scanning through responses from area residents, many assumed an empty site. And then it struck me. While I could still see the complex, for others it had already vanished. That brilliantly brutalist collection of buildings had simply melted away. All there was left to do was to bolt the commemorative plaque on a cairn.

### “Never demolish”

The CLC flyer’s arrival coincided with a global thunderclap. Just days before, the 2021 Pritzker Prize – dubbed architecture’s Nobel Prize – was presented to Anne Lacaton and Jean-Phillipe Vassal, French architects whose 40-year practice has embraced the “never demolish” ethos. They’ve spent a lifetime breathing new purpose into apparently unlovable structures like 1960s social housing towers. “Transformation is the opportunity of doing more and better with what is already existing,” the architects wrote in the Pritzker’s press release. “The demolishing is a decision of easiness and short term. It is a waste of many things – a waste of energy, a waste of material, and a waste of history. Moreover, it has a very negative social impact. For us, it is an act of violence.” Here is bold language with no punches pulled. And Lacaton and Vassal are not alone. A seismic shift is reverberating through the design and public policy spheres as building reuse takes centre stage. The delete button approach is rapidly becoming a luxury.

And the Federal Study Centre, thankfully, offers beautiful bones for creative thinking. If you look past the plywood covered windows,

spalling brick, and peeling Helvetica signs, there’s a diamond in the rough not a teardown. Lisa Gregoire’s fascinating October 2017 article for *Ottawa Magazine* – “Campanile in Alta Vista Now Sits Like a Ghost Town, Its Future Uncertain” – reveals buildings still radiant within. Gregoire walks the interiors of the Notre Dame Convent Campanile Campus with its architect, Tim Murray, and talks with nuns who loved living there. The chapel and theatre remain mint-condition gems. Also online, Kathleen Chin’s Carleton MArch thesis – *The Potential of the Discarded: Creating Affordable Housing from a Vacant Modern Complex* (2018) – offers exciting insights.

### Greenest Building

Obsolescence studies show most buildings are bulldozed well before they become structurally unsound. Enter a decade-old bumper sticker-worthy phrase: “The greenest building is the one that already exists”: existing buildings represent “embodied carbon” (GHG emissions already expended) and should be reused as long as possible, helping meet our climate emergency/sustainability targets. Each brick, every roof truss, each square of linoleum at the Study Centre represents carbon expenditure: from raw material extraction, transport to the factory, fabrication, transport to 1495 Heron, and construction.

And it’s not just about carbon. The material in every building represents environmental disturbance and destruction. The UN Environment Programme warns that extractive industries (e.g. cutting forests, digging mines, dredging sandbars) are responsible for half the

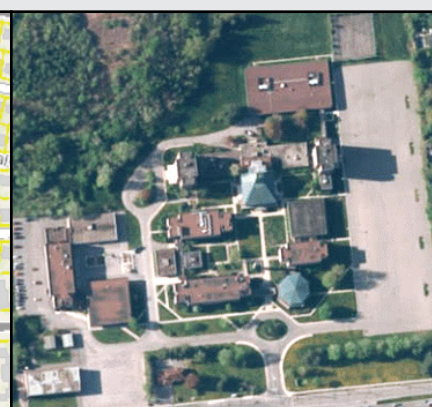
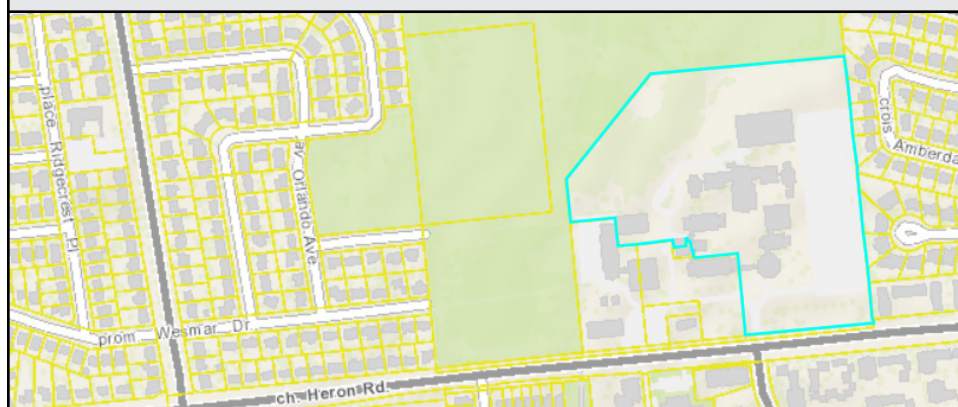
## What is it?

Opened in 1967 as the Campanile Campus of the Notre Dame Convent, this 18 acre/7.3 hectare property was sold to the Federal Government in 1974 and functioned as the Federal Study Centre until 2014.

The campus includes 12 “pavilions” – including a convent, novitiate, chapel and theatre – designed by Murray & Murray Associates and all comprised of contrasting dark, rough brick and smooth white concrete. In 2005 the campus – except for the two campus schools which remain with the Catholic School Board – was designated as a Recognized heritage site by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO).

## What’s happening?

Canada Lands Company acquired this former Government of Canada property in July 2020 and is developing a new master plan. Public consultation began in March 2021 and Heritage Ottawa submitted feedback. Read more about the site and Heritage Ottawa’s submission at [heritageottawa.org/news/](https://heritageottawa.org/news/).



Map and photo: geoOttawa

world’s carbon emissions and over 80% of biodiversity loss. And Canada? Astonishingly, it landfills 1.4 million tons of wood CRD waste (construction, renovation, demolition) each year – and that’s “estimated” as Canada does an abysmal job of tracking trash.

But, you might say, the Federal Study Centre is full of asbestos! Sorry to break it to you, but even if it’s demolished, it needs to be removed. Makes you think twice about the as yet unrecognized toxins lurking in new building materials.

It’s too far gone! Look beyond the superficial - the heat has been kept on, and the roofs have been kept up. We can’t bring it up to code! That’s what performance-based objectives are for – flexibility. It’s an energy hog! Upgrade the physical plant and caulk

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*“That brilliantly brutalist collection of buildings had simply melted away.”*

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– Chris Wiebe

the windows (don’t get me started on the window replacement industry!) – you don’t need to destroy the village to save it.

### Existing versus new

“We never see the existing as a problem,” says Pritzker-winner, Anne Lacaton. “We look with positive eyes because there is an opportunity of doing more with what we already have.” It is the exact opposite of the Marie Kondo school where if it doesn’t bring you “joy” immediately,

you discard. It also runs counter to the story we tell ourselves that “progress” and creativity are signaled by new things.

Artists and architects, in fact, will tell you constraint is good, that radical innovation comes from responding to limitation. Perhaps counter-intuitively, the blank page often leads to off-the-rack ideas or paralysis – LeBreton Flats, anyone? The Booth Street complex project that CLC is guiding, weaves old and new together in dynamic and exciting ways. The challenge for Alta Vista residents will be to see the Federal Study Centre complex in the same light – as a golden social and climate action opportunity, not an empty whiteboard.

*Chris Wiebe is a resident of Applewood Acres*



# Refreshing Parliament

## Renovation works are underway in Ottawa and London

By Brigid Phillips Janssen

Photo: © UK Parliament



*The Palace of Westminster.*

Like the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, their big sister in London needs a facelift.

The Palace of Westminster, home of the British Houses of Parliament, is in dire need of deep renovation. Falling bits of masonry, 24/7 fire patrols, roving rodents and chugging heating systems have made the case for many years. The most persuasive argument to get on with it is a hard-hat trudge through the basement where tunnels lined with skeins of IT wiring lead to occasionally spewing Victorian sewage systems.

Plans were long postponed until 2018 when Parliament voted to move out in order to undertake the works. A Sponsor Board was

named to oversee the Restoration and Renewal Programme. Unlike the Canadian project, led by the government department (PSPC) that owns the properties on Parliament Hill, the approach in the UK was to replicate the arm's-length board structure that delivered the successful 2012 London Olympics which came in on-time and on-budget (not to mention with a record haul of gold medals for Team GB).

The Restoration and Renewal Sponsor Board – consisting of eight Members from the House of Commons and the House of Lords and five appointed non-executive directors with private sector expertise – is charged with designing “R&R” and executing it through a Delivery Authority.



*Erosion and dilapidation of stonework.*

Photo: © UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor





*Cast iron roofing.*

Accountable to Parliament, the Board will deliver a multi-billion pound project to vacate the Palace of Westminster, “decant” its occupants into temporary chambers that must also be made ready, and undertake the works to restore the grandeur of a profoundly important historic site and renew it for this and future generations.

Through its membership, the Board has the objectivity and skill to deliver value for money for its vast range of stakeholders and the in-built sensitivity to account for the needs of its primary users who are also custodians of the public purse. It is a structure designed to avoid the criticism of Ottawa’s civil service-led project that, as *Policy Options* wrote, “the public has been largely absent from the conversation.”

For the Palace of Westminster, public perception and support is a critical part of the project. Well beyond London, research indicates that British people see the need for restoration because the decrepit mechanics and engineering, security, and structure need repair. But the Board’s commitment to renewal has an even higher ambition to ensure that the

Houses of Parliament are accessible and “fit for the future,” according to the Board’s vision statement.

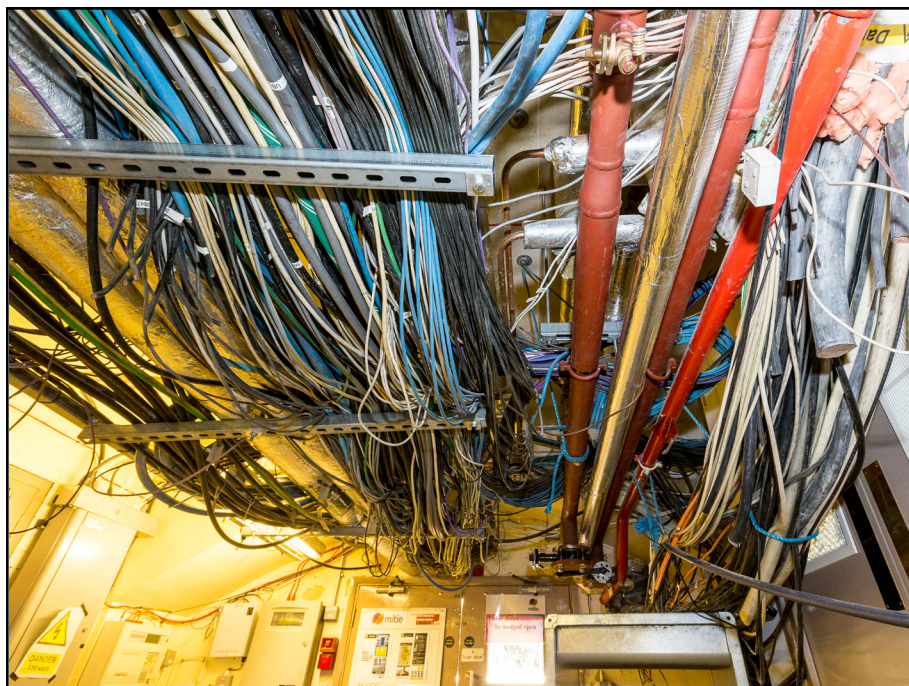
There are limits, of course. But on the occasion of re-doing Parliament the building, there will no doubt be wider debates about Parliament the institution. Accessibility does not just mean physical arrangements for disabled visitors, but also ways of welcoming public involvement in an age of higher scrutiny than when the

Victorian Palace was built after the original building burned down in 1834.

While the Sponsor Board has no role in determining how Parliament operates, the success of the restoration will depend on a spirit of renewal. The first opportunity may be in the move to temporary quarters that will mean disruption and compromises for the 3,000 occupants of the Palace, and perhaps some reflection about future ways of working.

After the equivalent trauma of vacating the Centre Block, it was remarkable that in January 2019 when Canada’s House of Commons moved to the refurbished courtyard of the West Block, the first Question Period was all housing policy and climate change—prompting a *Maclean’s* headline to ask: “What, you were expecting something different?”.

*Brigid Phillips Janssen is a former vice-president of Heritage Ottawa who now lives in London. She is a non-executive director on the Sponsor Board for Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of Parliament.*



*Inaccessible layers of electrical cabling.*

# A Farewell Message

from Richard Belliveau

This is not exactly a message from the president, because by the time you read this issue, I will have completed my term and stepped down as president of Heritage Ottawa. So, this is something of a farewell, in which I would like to touch on three things that I have learned over the years with Heritage Ottawa.

First, I learned that you can fight City Hall and sometimes even come out on top. We did this with the arduous two-year campaign to save the Château Laurier. Here is what Professor Lyette Fortin, who was one of our outside experts during the negotiations with the Château's architects to find a compatible design, said. Lyette wrote, "If it was not for Heritage Ottawa's leadership, there would not have been an appropriate solution to the impasse. You and your colleagues took on quite a gigantic challenge with this file. You went about it with due process and diligence." If we can fight City Hall, we might even be able to catch the attention of the federal government.

Then, through the many heritage walks and lectures I enjoyed over the years, I learned that Ottawa has quite a number of distinctive, charming and conservation-worthy neighbourhoods. This past spring, when a friend and I were walking along Bower Street in Old Ottawa East, whose charms I had encountered on a walking tour



organized by Heritage Ottawa, we stopped to scrutinize the massive stump of a long-felled maple that was now acting as a sort of retaining wall by the sidewalk in front of a property. The owner, who was sitting out on his porch, engaged us in a conversation – well a little lecture really – on the history of the street. Across from him were a series of houses with distinctive brick-framed doors with arches built in the 1940's, while the houses on his side of the road, dating before the Depression, were rather more plain, but with wide verandas, and built according to plans bought through Eaton's catalogue. The whole street reflected the style and whimsy of certain builders and the flare of the people who bought the houses. The thing is, there are many such charming and distinctive neighbourhoods across the city, reflecting the tastes and styles of their times and places, and all it takes to appreciate them is informed observation and a little exploring.

As the nominal head of our organization for the past two years, I learned that Heritage Ottawa achieves its vibrancy and relevance entirely through the exuberance of its members. Interesting projects get undertaken because one or more members have an idea or a cause that they are anxious to pursue, and the organization is at its best when we provide a framework or platform for this pursuit. Our small publications program arose from a desire to capture in print some of the detailed knowledge of

built Ottawa accumulated by the curiosity and research of particular individuals. Thus, we put together the book *Werner Ernst Noffke, Ottawa's Architect*, as well as the books *Exploring the Built Heritage of Old Ottawa South* and *From Walk-up to High-Rise* – on heritage apartments – from the research and enthusiasm of a few caring writers. It was exhilarating to find out that we could provide that kind of support. The same is true of the massive website project *50 Years/50 Stories*, which was inspired as much as anything by the research and postcard collections of former Board member Ken Elder – and made possible by the diligence of our editors and web managers, Carolyn Quinn, Linda Hoad and Danielle Jones.

Thank you, Heritage Ottawa, for this opportunity to learn so much more about the city that I have inhabited for more than 50 years, and for the opportunity to work with such charming and interesting people.



# Next steps for the Heritage Register

By Avery Marshall

The Heritage Register is the City's official list of properties of cultural heritage value or interest. While over 4,100 properties were recently listed on the Heritage Register through the Heritage Inventory Project and the Centretown Heritage Study, the Register is not meant to be a static document. Heritage Planning staff are looking ahead at next steps.

## Establishing standard evaluation criteria for recommending listings and removals

Since the criteria used in recent years were specific to either the Heritage Inventory Project or the Centretown Heritage Study (now concluded), there are currently no evaluation criteria for staff to use when making a recommendation to Council for adding or removing Heritage Register listings. The *Ontario Heritage Act* states that a property may be listed on the Heritage Register if "the council of the municipality believes [the property] to be of cultural heritage value or interest". Standard evaluation criteria will improve the review process by offering consistency and transparency when staff are making recommendations to Council for new



*War time houses along Viscount Avenue.*

listings on the Heritage Register. The goal is to have standard evaluation criteria in place by the end of 2021.

## Analysis of the 1946 and 1947 Veteran's Housing Projects in Carlington

A study of 1946 and 1947 Veteran's Housing Projects in Carlington will begin in 2021. A federal crown corporation, Wartime Housing Limited, built and managed houses for war workers and veterans during a nation-wide housing shortage following the Second World War. In Ottawa, houses were built by Wartime Housing Limited in several areas, including two

subdivisions in Carlington on lands adjacent to the Experimental Farm in former Nepean. The study will look at the building stock, history, streetscapes and neighbourhood context of these two wartime subdivisions. The planned layout and street names, such as Admiral, Veteran and Marshall, reflect the military heritage of the neighbourhood.

## A city-wide inventory of modern and postwar buildings

An inventory of modernist buildings is scheduled to begin in 2022. Currently, we are picturing this to be a review of modern and postwar architecture across the city, with a spotlight on planned communities and suburban development.

## Review of cultural heritage landscapes

A comprehensive review of Ottawa's parks and greenspaces, cemeteries, designed landscapes, rural landscapes and other cultural heritage landscapes is needed.



*A railway bridge over the Mississippi River near Mohr's road, southeast of Galetta.*

Photos: Image © 2021 Google

## Provincial, federal or crown corporation properties

City staff are interested in having a conversation with our Provincial and Federal colleagues about including properties that fall outside of municipal jurisdiction on the Heritage Register. Although the City would not have authority in relation to demolition of these properties,

listing on the Heritage Register would recognize the contribution of these properties to the city's history and there would be interim protection in place should the ownership change.

## The Heritage Register will continue to evolve

These projects were developed to help City staff manage change and

be accountable for Heritage Register processes and recommendations. If you have comments or suggestions, please write to us at [heritage@ottawa.ca](mailto:heritage@ottawa.ca).

*Avery Marshall is the Coordinator, Heritage Register and Business Transformation, Heritage Planning, City of Ottawa.*

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# Letter-to-the-Editor

**By Jean Palmer**

Allison Margot-Smith's enjoyable article on Moses Edey and the Aberdeen Pavilion reminded me of Heritage Ottawa's efforts to save it in the 1990s.

Derelict, with a leaking roof, the old Cattle Castle was threatened with demolition or major renovation. Most proposals for its continued use: a skating rink, an aquarium, boutiques, involved costly reconstruction, with air-conditioning and insulation requiring the destruction of much of its historic fabric.

Heritage Ottawa mounted a campaign for its survival, addressing Council, writing letters to the press, and organized a publicity event, "Hands Around the Aberdeen", inviting the community to join us in forming a protective circle around the historic building.

We were well short of enough hands to complete the circle, but the press came, and the Ottawa community became involved. Shortly after, the Watson-Hume proposal was accepted by Ottawa City Council, a "bare-bones" solution proposed by Mayor

Jim Watson and Councillor Peter Hume to restore rather than renovate the Aberdeen Pavilion. Our beloved Cattle Castle was preserved.

Relieved, the Heritage Ottawa board turned its attention to another issue: replacing our fanlight logo with a more representative image of HO's activities and goals.



The recent success with the Aberdeen Pavilion made it our choice of motif and John Arnold, prominent Ottawa designer and long-time board member, was charged with creating a new logo using elements from the Cattle Castle in his design.

John worked with graphic designer Jan Soetermans in developing a brilliant solution: a stylized image of the Aberdeen Pavilion within two protective circles. Reminiscent of our "Hands Around the Aberdeen" event, the inner circle represents community involvement.

The outer circle, the second bastion of protection, represents legislation, laws enacted to protect the built heritage. Heritage Ottawa had been working to strengthen those laws.



The new logo was at the masthead of Heritage Ottawa's next newsletter, and I wrote an accompanying article presenting the rationale and symbolism involved in the choice of the Aberdeen Pavilion and its two protective circles to embody the goals of Heritage Ottawa. (*Heritage Ottawa Newsletter*. Vol. 29, no. 2 (Autumn 2002)).

That logo, still stands at our masthead and the Aberdeen Pavilion remains on its original site, sadly diminished by an encroaching cluster of commercial buildings with chain-store occupants.

*Jean Palmer is a former Heritage Ottawa board member who also served on the board of CHOO-COPO (now Capital Heritage Connexion), and L.A.C.A.C (Local Advisory Committee for Architectural Conservation). She was presented with the Ontario Heritage Award in 2000.*



# Teaching Students How to 'Look Up' at the Rideau Street Convent Chapel

By Nicole Sammut

Photo: Nicole Sammut



*Summer Studies in the History of Art, Algonquin College, July 2014.*

My first encounter of the Chapel occurred during my time as a Heritage Conservation student in the School of Canadian Studies. As my research interests included the transformation and rehabilitation of deconsecrated church buildings, I was naturally drawn to the Rideau Street Convent Chapel. Whether a visitor finds a quiet spot in the gallery courtyard outside the Chapel or finds refuge in the second-floor galleries overlooking the courtyard, this space has profound presence even though it no longer functions as a sacred space. Its grounding nature is further exemplified by Janet Cardiff's *Forty-Part Motet* sound sculpture which radiates from the Chapel, bringing the visitor deeper into the space. Together, these complementary elements create a rather exquisite and deeply moving profound presence within the National Gallery.

The recreation and installation of the Convent Chapel within the National Gallery displays remarkable architectural features. The exemplar fan vaulted ceilings, beautiful trefoil rosettes and pastel colour palette make this space a distinguished landmark for further study and focus.

At my next encounter, I was teaching the *History of Art* course at Algonquin College and sought out new and innovative ways to incorporate experiential learning opportunities into the classroom. The significance of the Chapel's architectural elements with its distinct heritage value produced a rich learning environment beyond the walls of the classroom.

I recall the very first group of students that I brought to the Rideau Street Convent Chapel for a field trip. They were taking the course as part of their summer studies term

as an elective with the School of Business. The concepts students would endeavour to learn would be therefore new and unfamiliar. To help students reach some of the desired learning outcomes they completed an *Observational Report* based on a field trip and tour of the Chapel. This detailed study would help learners connect theory with practice and consolidate their learning as an extension of the classroom experience.

They investigated the rich, detailed carvings of the altarpiece, the tracery of the windows, and assessed the different use of materials within the context of the Canadian landscape. Nevertheless, it was the fan vaulted ceilings that captivated the students' attention. This brief experience at the Chapel ignited a new generation of learners to connect with and actively participate in discussions around built heritage.

The experience also exposed learners to a new set of tools that would allow them to 'read,' analyze and comprehend the different aspects of a building. As stated by one of the students, "Nicole, your course has taught me to look up and notice the beautiful architecture that our Canadian cities have to offer."

The lesson taught at the Rideau Street Convent Chapel has therefore created meaningful learning opportunities and a deeper appreciation for Canadian built heritage.

*Nicole Sammut is a former member of the Board of Heritage Ottawa and a Learning and Development Specialist at Algonquin College.*

# The Heritage Barns and Farms of Greater Ottawa

By Allison Margot Smith

At the time of Confederation, the government of the newly-formed Dominion of Canada recognized the significance of farming for the country, and the need for national leadership. In 1868, they formed the Department of Agriculture, initially to address the issue of livestock diseases and to inhibit their entry into Canada. Along with other responsibilities, one key role of the new department was scientific research.

Eighteen years later, the department created the Central Experimental Farm, to provide a site for conducting this research and sharing the results with the public. One target audience was farmers. But, according to Rev. John Lowry Gourlay, author of the *History of the Ottawa Valley* (1896), local farmers thought this government-run “experiment was ten times more costly than profitable” and that farmers couldn’t afford to take the advice offered.

In 1998, the Experimental Farm was designated a National Historic Site. One of the reasons was that the Farm was “a symbol of the central role agriculture ha[d] played in shaping the country.” Today, we must recall this sentiment, as much of our local farm heritage is disappearing.

The earliest farms in this region appeared in the 1790s and by 1818, many more had been established. By the 1890s, the area was well-populated agricultural countryside. In 1896, Rev. Gourlay described the view from the hills west of the city, saying:

[T]he prospect is so fair[,] so agricultural, and ...so extensive, so well cultivated, so productive, luxuriating in waving meadows, golden grain fields and green



*Silver Springs Farm*

pastures, teeming with flocks and herds of improved breeds and of many varieties and lengthy pedigrees.

But by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the number of individual farms in Ontario had peaked. Small farms sold and the remainder grew larger. The amount of land devoted to agriculture continued to grow until the Great Depression. But after that, farming acreage declined. By the 1970s, only 70% of the farmland from the 1930s remained active. Over this time, the population living and working on a farm had dropped by more than half. So, because of the “central role agriculture ... played in shaping the country,” farming modernized. But many of the heritage structures associated with early farming were being lost.

Today, with its newly-expanded municipal boundaries, the City of Ottawa is home to more farms than before. But, along with the benefits of having inherited this wonderful agricultural heritage, our city has also taken on some significant fiduciary responsibilities.

Silver Spring Farm on Richmond Road, west of Highway 416, is a good example of this important heritage.

The house was built in 1867, followed by the timber-frame barns, between 1880 and 1910. They were constructed for the Bearman brothers, who were successful men of Irish descent, known locally for their involvement in politics and rural affairs.

Three of their four connected barns form a “U” shape, which is indicative of the scientific design of barns around 1900, and is a recognition of the often-severe Canadian weather. While the gambrel roofs are of different sizes, they are of equal proportions.

The farm is now near an on-ramp to Highway 416. But with an evergreen windbreak and open fields beyond, together with its gardens, lawns and orchard, it maintains a rural and agricultural quality within an increasingly-dense urban setting.

In 1989, the house and barns were designated Classified and Recognized respectively by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office. Today the farm is owned by the National Capital Commission, and is leased by the Ottawa and District Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. As such, it has been altered to accommodate this vital

Photo: Joanne Clifford, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>, via Wikimedia Commons



residential and work program. But, between the federal recognition, the NCC ownership, and the lease holders, we can hope that this farm will be protected for the appreciation of future generations.

In the 1830s, another farm was built on Richmond Road, that was described as a “great frame house and a still greater stone barn.” It was built for Peter Aylen, a timberman who was feared in the area for his violent activity and his leadership of The Shiners’ War. While the house remains at 150 Richmond Road, near the Real Canadian Superstore, it is clear, in this urban part of west-end Ottawa, that no great stone barn remains. But it is not clear what became of it.

In 2017, the Blackrapids Farm in Nepean, was lost to fire. Three barns burned, including one heritage barn. They have now been replaced with a modern dairy operation.

Hazeldean Road had historically been lined, on both sides for many miles, with old stone, brick and milled-lumber farmhouses. According to Stittsville resident and former Heritage Ottawa board member, Karen Prytula, only five of these farmhouses remain.

Over the decades, many barns have been lost to fires – wild fires,

lightning strikes, sparks from steam-powered equipment, and occasionally, to arson. Some barns came down in wind storms or floods, and some were crushed by snow load. Some barns lasted for generations and then finally succumbed to neglect. But thankfully, some barns remain.

Bradley-Craig barn complex on Hazeldean Road in Stittsville, was built 148 years ago, in 1873, by local carpenter, John Cummings. It was built for Joshua Bradley, who was born in Ireland and took possession of his land grant in Stittsville in 1824. He farmed the land until his death in 1881, and the farm remained in the family until 2007.

Bradley-Craig barn is a beautiful example of a timber-frame structure, connected in a U-shape. Two adjoining elements are “monitor barns,” also called “raised centre aisle barns.” Both have diamond-shaped windows in their clerestories. One has a double raised bank serving the pair of barn doors.

In 2010, this barn complex was designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* and is now on the City of Ottawa’s *Heritage Watch List*. No longer in use, the new owners – Richcraft Homes – proposed to dismantle and move it, to be part of a summer camp and

amusement park. But, having missed a deadline in 2018, it was left in place. Had the barn been moved, it would have lost its heritage status.

This past winter the barn complex was prepared for foundation restoration work by Richcraft. But the “Friends of the Bradley-Craig Farm” remain concerned that the barn is increasingly weathered. Its doors have been removed, leaving its interior exposed. While a heritage architect has been engaged by Richcraft, and City by-law officers keep an eye on it, there is concern that a significant structural failure could spell the end for the barn.

In early rural Canada, barns served a variety of community purposes, aside from farming. Barns housed community meetings, when there was nowhere else to meet. They were the shelter for religious services before a church could be built, and the classroom when there wasn’t yet a school.

Today, these old barns reveal the historic fingerprints of the broad axe and the upright saw. Notches offer clues of reused timbers, and charred edges suggest the demise of some older structure. They are manuscripts telling our early stories. The graffiti on a wall, the record on a door frame of some important figures, a secret love declaration – the testaments to the lives-lived under these old roofs. As such, it is imperative we protect them. They represent an irreplaceable physical record of our heritage, of successful innovation, and of our ancestors’ agricultural labours and their means of survival.

*Allison Margot Smith is an historian and historical documentary filmmaker. She is a member of the Board of Heritage Ottawa.*



Bradley-Craig Barn – 2021 and 2003 in inset, doors in tact.



# News from the Advocacy Front

By David Flemming, Chair, Advocacy Committee

The early months of 2021 have been marked by an increase in built heritage advocacy issues.

We continue to consider and make recommendations to the Built Heritage Sub-Committee of Planning Committee on development applications under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

On February 24, City Council approved a sixth and final proposal for an addition to the Château Laurier Hotel based on a new design submitted by the hotel's owner as a result of negotiations with Heritage Ottawa's Château Laurier Working Group, our legal team and our four expert heritage advisors. Approval by the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) of Minutes of Settlement between Heritage Ottawa and Capital Hotel

GP Inc. in April 2021 led to formal approval on May 3, thus ending the LPAT process.

In March, we submitted our responses to the City's new draft Official Plan (OP). As part of our input, we shall also be meeting with City Heritage Planning Officials to consider the development of a Heritage Management Plan which shall be part of the OP.

We made a submission to Parks Canada's development of a Rideau Canal Management Plan and continued to support efforts to develop legislative protection of Canada's Federally-owned heritage properties.

We have taken a leadership role in the formation of The Alexandra Bridge Coalition, an advocacy group representing over a dozen

organizations and special interest groups that oppose the demolition of the bridge and instead recommend to repurpose it for transportation uses well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Likewise, we are working with Canada Lands Company, City heritage planners and members of the Alta Vista community in proposing possible heritage designation and adaptive use of the former Federal Study Centre (1495 Heron Road) – (see page 1).

We continue to participate as a member of the Community Engagement Group for the new campus of the Ottawa Hospital on the Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site of Canada and closely monitor its effect on the Farm, the Observatory Complex, and the Rideau Canal UNESCO World heritage site.

For more details on these and other advocacy matters, visit [heritageottawa.org/advocacy](http://heritageottawa.org/advocacy).



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