

Regional News

Newfoundland

Local news: Demolitions—the St. John's City Council recently approved the demolition of the **Pitts Building** on Water Street to allow for construction of the Scotiabank Towers. The **Pitts Building** (constructed 1906) and the adjoining Goodfellows Block were designed by the local architect William Howe Greene and were among his few remaining buildings on the street. At one time buildings by Greene dominated Newfoundland's chief commercial street and of these the **Pitts Building** was one of the finest. The Mayor however described it as one of a group of non-descript structures.

Other losses include the late Victorian **Cochrane Hotel** which burnt down on March 21 and **Gladney's Farm** which burnt down the following day. The **Cochrane** had been one of the city's finest hotels. Built in the Second Empire Style it was clearly considered to be the place to stay by visitors who included most of the pioneer aviators who made the early transatlantic flights (Alcock and Brown, Lindberg) as well as Marconi and Trotsky. The **Gladney Farm** was the last of the hip-roofed, settle-fireplace Irish houses left in the St. John's area and its loss is a serious loss to Newfoundland's heritage of vernacular architecture.

On the positive side, the Government has finally appointed the Newfoundland Heritage Foundation whose Chair is Dr. Leslie Harris, a former Chairman of the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board. The Foundation's mandate is to encourage the preservation of Newfoundland's architectural heritage. And, while it is only working with a very limited budget, it does mark a significant beginning for this sort of work in Newfoundland.

Submitted by Shane O'Dea, SSAC Director Newfoundland.

The following was recently printed in the Memorial University newspaper the Gazette.

Research project explores Nfld. material culture

Research in two important areas of Newfoundland material culture—architecture and furniture—will be greatly advanced this year by the work of two members of the Faculty of Arts. Shane O'Dea, English language and literature, and Gerald Pocius, folklore, have received a total of \$70,000 in funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canada Works, and the National Endowment for the Humanities to allow them to collaborate on this major research project.

For the past three years Professor O'Dea has been collecting information on the building history of St. John's from newspapers published between 1844 and 1918—research supported by a Vice President's Grant and funds from a NEED Program. The information gathered includes data on the city's buildings: on the architects, builders, craftspeople and clients; on prevalent architectural styles and attitudes towards them; on building practices; and on the interrelationships of personnel in the building trades.

This data is now stored on some five to six thousand index cards, and in addition Dr. Pocius has amassed a large file on architecture, particularly from the Southern Shore, as the result of an SSHRC Grant awarded in 1980. With the aid of the dean of arts, computer assistance has been obtained in order to enter and sort this data, while three researchers hired under a Canada Works Grant will continue the data collection.

Professor O'Dea intends to focus the current research on papers from private, institutional and governmental collections and to develop a complete picture of the buildings process in St. John's at the end of the Victorian period, using the Great Fire of 1892 as a focal point. Specifically, he will determine the way in which the architecture of the city reflected its economic and social aspirations. In this regard the project will be as much a matter of urban history and geography as it is of architectural history.

Additional benefits will accrue from the undertaking, since the data will serve as the basis for a complete inventory of heritage buildings in the province. It will also help to identify architects, builders and contractors outside the St. John's area and provide important information on churches constructed between the 17th and 19th centuries.

Dr. Pocius will initiate a major study of Newfoundland furniture, focusing on the Bonavista Bay area. Building on the recent work of Walter Peddle, Rupert Batten and Ralph Clemens of the Newfoundland Museum, he will investigate the major designs and styles which characterize the area's locally made furniture.

Archival research, supplemented by seven months of fieldwork, will focus on such aspects as how factory made, massproduced furniture influenced local design. The analysis of the material gathered will then take place at Winterhur Museum in Delaware, one of the leading furniture research centres in North America. Dr. Pocius is one of three North American scholars who have been appointed research fellows at Winterhur for the next year, giving him access to the museum's extensive library and furniture collections to assist in the analysis of the Bonavista Bay pieces. The project is also expected to provide a basis for identifying furniture from specific parts of the province.

Quebec

Building a Beaux-Arts Museum: Montreal 1912

Having announced plans for a future extension of its space, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is planning an exhibition on the history of its Beaux-Arts building on Sherbrooke Street. The museum, known earlier as the **Art Association of Montreal**, was completed in 1912 by the Montreal Architects Edward and William S. Maxwell (Fig. 16).

The Maxwell brothers were both trained in Boston, Edward (1868-1923) in the office of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, and William (1874-1952) with Winslow and Wetherell. William also spent two years in Paris at the Atelier Pascal. The style of design for the new museum reflected the Maxwells' architectural background and the latest trends in American architecture.

The exhibition will give details of the competition for the design of the building and follow the steps in its construction. Attention will be given to the craftsmen involved in the decoration of the museum, most notably the Bromsgrove Guild (Canada) Ltd., a branch of the British guild. Photographs of other Beaux-Arts buildings in Montreal will also be included. The exhibition, organized by Rosalind Pepall, will run from February 14 until March 30, 1986 and will be accompanied by a catalogue.

Submitted by R. Pepall, Guest Curator, Early Canadian Art, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

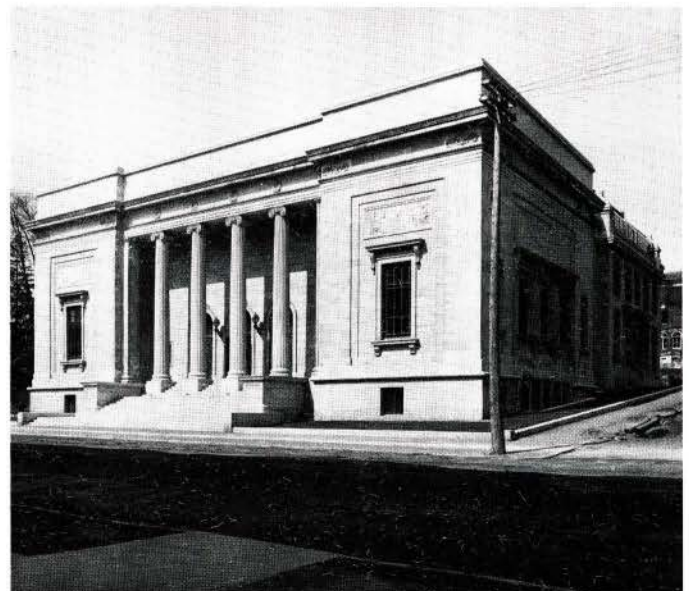


Figure 16. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Sherbrooke Street, completed in 1912 by Edward and William Maxwell, Architects will be the focus of an exhibition in February-March 1986.

Saskatchewan

Moose Jaw

The Moose Jaw Main Street Project at 31 Main Street North will, in all likelihood, be ended in June of 1985. This joint project of the City of Moose Jaw, Department of Urban Affairs & Heritage Canada Foundation has helped approximately 30 businesses in the Downtown area with designs for signage and renovation that are in keeping with the unique character of buildings in Moose Jaw's Downtown. There are no grants associated with the project but the designs are intended to be economical as well as attractive. The City of Moose Jaw is continuing to seek sources of provincial funding to help keep the project going, but to-date there have been no commitments.

Submitted by Stuart Lazear, SSAC Director, Saskatchewan



Figure 17. The Orillia, circa 1903, was reduced to rubble in May, 1985 to make way for a planned 16 storey office tower.

British Columbia

Vancouver

On a Sunday morning in May what was once an important piece of Vancouver's architectural heritage was lost forever. The **Orillia**, the oldest extant apartment building in Vancouver's downtown core took only minutes to be expunged from the face of the earth (Fig. 17). A small crowd gathered to watch the 82 year old **Orillia** be demolished for the self interests of Hong Kong developer S. H. Sung. A 16 storey office tower is proposed for the site.

Notices

The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada has received initial funding from Canada Council and the SSHRC for the project definition phase of a proposed "Critical Examination of the Role of Architecture in Canada". The study will address fundamental issues of how Canadian society fulfills its architectural responsibility, the roles of key players in the process and specifically the role of the architectural profession. A two-year research period is envisaged.

Seminars in Architecture, Art and Design

Organized for the design professional, historian, artisan and student. **Northern Form** is a series of four seminars scheduled for 1985, and will trace the interaction of major western and eastern influences on regional design:

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| 21 May - 4 June | "Alvar Aalto in Finland"
(Helsinki, Turku, Jyvaskyla, Imatra) |
| 2 June - 16 June | "The Bauhaus and Revolution"
(Helsinki, Berlin, Dresden, Prague) |
| 19 July - 8 August | "Summer Night"
(Moscow, Leningrad, Vladmir, Helsinki, Suzdal, Novgorod) |

Further details contact RAIC, 328 Somerset Street, West, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0J9. Telephone (613) 232-7165.

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