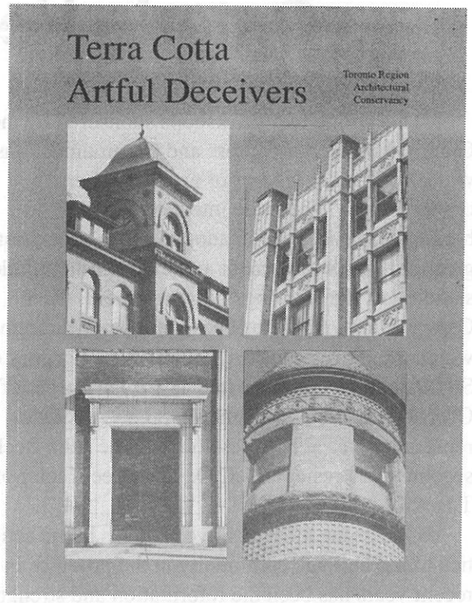
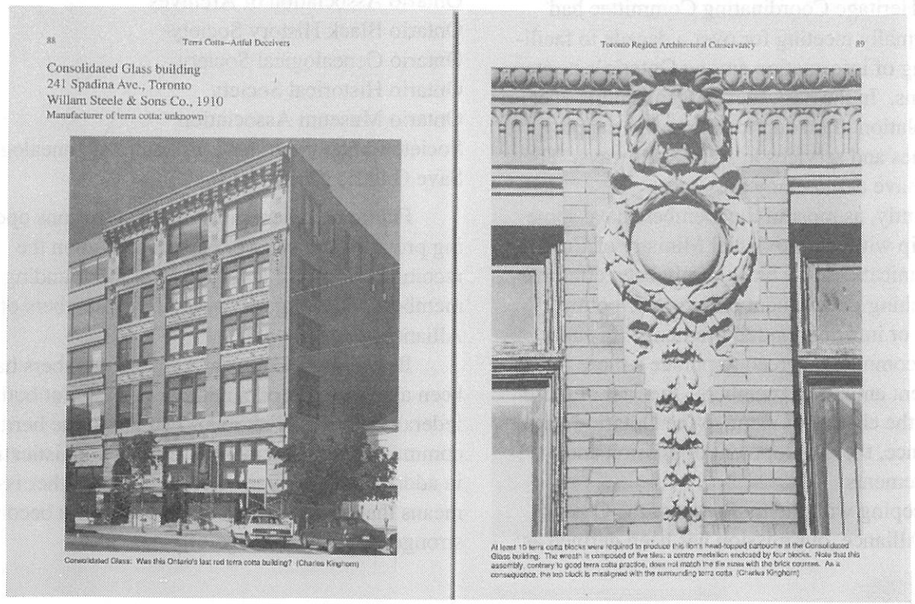
Terra Cotta: Artful Deceivers



TRAC's long-awaited new book, "Terra Cotta: Artful Deceivers" was published at the beginning of the year. This 140-page volume offers a fascinating look at the history of terra cotta as a building material in Ontario. It is filled with over 150 illustrations, ranging from the superb photographs of Charles Kinghorn and other contemporary Ontario photographers, to dozens of historic and rarely-seen photographs and architects' drawings. Its chapters have been written by such luminaries as Patricia McHugh, Mark Gerson, Laurie Wells, Drew Krouse, and Richard Moorhouse, each of whom brought his or her own unique knowledge of a different aspect of terra cotta, a many-faceted endlessly malleable architectural material.

The book is on sale in book stores for $17, but TRAC members can get it for the special members' price of $14 at Toronto branch events. Or if you prefer, we can mail it to you for just an addional $1 shipping charge. Order yours today—and consider getting extra copies: They make great gifts for anyone interested in architecture, heritage, or Toronto and Ontario history. See the order blank enclosed with this newsletter.

p.s. Don't forget that our previous book, "Toronto's Theatre Block: An Architectural History" is still available to members for just $10 (plus applicable shipping). See the order blank for details.


88 Terra Cotta—Artful Deceivers

Consolidated Glass building
241 Spadina Ave., Toronto
Willam Steele & Sons Co., 1910
Manufacturer of terra cotta: unknown

Consolidated Glass: Was this Ontario's last red terra cotta building? (Charles Kinghorn)

Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy 89

At least 15 terra cotta blocks were required to produce this lion's head-topped cartouche at the Consolidated Glass building. The wreath is composed of five tiles; a centre medallion enclosed by four blocks. Note that this assembly, contrary to good terra cotta practice, does not match the tile rows with the brick courses. As a consequence, the top block is misaligned with the surrounding terra cotta. (Charles Kinghorn)

TRAC
Newsletter of the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy
May 1991

Trees for the Rouge

On a lovely spring day in May 1990,, the **"10,000 trees for the Rouge Valley"** organization held a tree planting. Over 800 people came out and planted over 14,000 trees on 20 acres of barren parkland near the headwaters of the Rouge River. In 15 years the scene in the photograph above will be a forest! The organization hopes to create a park system along the tributaries of the Rouge running from Richmond Hill and Markham all the way to lake Ontario.

The Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy gave $1000 toward the purchase of trees, in commemoration of T.R.A.C. Past President Margaret Tucker.

The book "Terra Cotta: Artful Deceivers" was published at the end of 1990 and was dedicated to Margaret as well.

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A branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario Inc.

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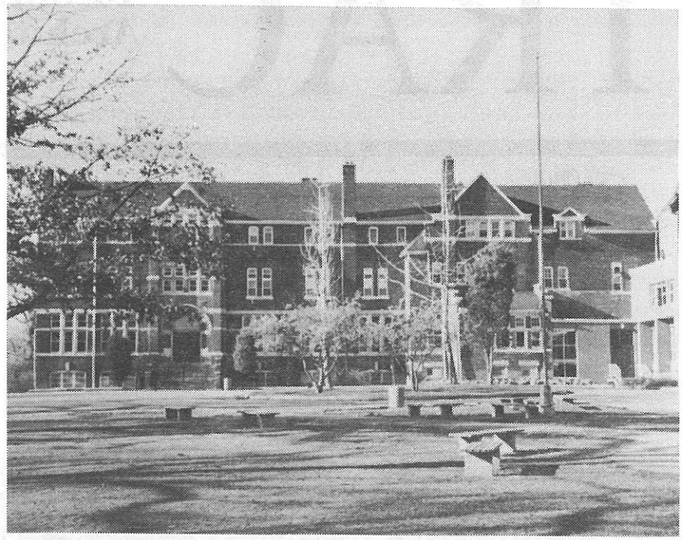

Demolished—the Peacock Building at Upper Canada College, which housed the Pre-School at U.C.C. It was demolished in 1990 despite the efforts of many to save it.

Demolished—102 Tyndall Avenue in the Parkdale area of Toronto. Demolished by the owner, City Home, in March 1991 immediately after the last tenants were forcibly evicted, and with no effort made to save any of the unique interior finish of the building.

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Ontario Heritage Alliance

This spring two workshops sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications will be offered to leaders of provincial heritage organizations. These are intended to assist the heritage organizations in adopting long-term strategies for their development and to better their understanding of the workings of government. Save Ontario Shipwrecks has been the agency through which these programs originated. Fred Gregory of S.O.S. is to be congratulated as are Jan Shroer of O.M.A. and Edna Hudson of O.G.S. A.C.O.'s representatives at both sessions will be Julia Beck, second vice president A.C.O., and Alec Keefer of T.R.A.C.

One of the most positive changes in the activities of the heritage community in the province in recent years has been the reformation and strengthening of the Ontario Heritage Alliance. More than any other force, the alliance has demonstrated that it is an excellent vehicle to defend all our legacies; be they cemeteries, registry documents, buildings, museums, genealogical records - all have found a strong champion in the Alliance. The TRAC looks forward to continuing its aggressive involvement with the Alliance.

The Heritage Coordinating Committee had been informally meeting for over a decade to facilitate sharing of information among Ontario's heritage associations. In the past, these organizations operated in isolation often duplicating or overlapping programmes and services in significant ways. These meetings have eased many pressures.

Recently, as most of the members have some relationship with the provincial Ministry of Culture & Communications, we have jointly been effective in approaching government on issues of policy, procedure or information requirements. In June 1989, the committee agreed to pursue a more formal arrangement among its members, the first of these steps was the change of name to the Ontario Heritage Alliance, the development of mission and object statements.

In keeping with the traditions of the Ontario Heritage Alliance, our mission has been defined as:

The Ontario Heritage alliance, consisting of organizations with purposes to protect, preserve, conserve, research or display the heritage of the province of Ontario for future generations, shall pursue the betterment of their joint and individual aims and objectives by sharing information and pursuing common concerns.

In pursuit of this mission, the following objectives have been established:

- to function as the agent for formulating joint responses to government policies,
- to provide a forum for the exchange of information affecting the heritage community,
- to foster an environment where skills can exchanged which will promote better management and administration of heritage organizations, and
- to better ensure that our activities enhance the heritage field and society.

Founding members shall form the core of the Ontario Heritage Alliance. These are:

Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
Multicultural History Society
Ontario Archaeological Society
Ontario Association of Archives
Ontario Black History Society
Ontario Genealogical Society
Ontario Historical Society
Ontario Museum Association
Societe franco-ontarienne d'histoire et genealogie
Save Ontario Shipwrecks

Future members must be organizations operating provincially and will be accepted upon the recommendation of at least two of the founding members and a majority vote of the members of the Alliance.

By working together, Alliance members have been able to speak on a number of issues at both federal and provincial levels that affect the heritage community. The increasing level of sophistication in addressing policy matters, as well as other issues means that each member organization has become stronger separately and jointly.

Award of Merit: 118 Yonge St.

This 1910 photograph of 118 Yonge Street shows scaffolding in place ready for the 1910 Holt Renfrew renovation (City of Toronto Archives)

This building, 118 Yonge Street at the northwest corner of Yonge and Adelaide, was originally part of the Elgin Buildings, a Georgian terrace built in 1850 by Jesse Ketchum, philanthropist and land developer. Here, William Lyon MacKenzie published the **Weekly Messenger**. The building was altered in 1901 for Ryrie Brothers Jewellery (later affiliated with Birks of Montreal) by architect Matthew Sheard and altered again in 1910 for Holt Renfrew & Co., who were then solely furriers, by architect James Havil.

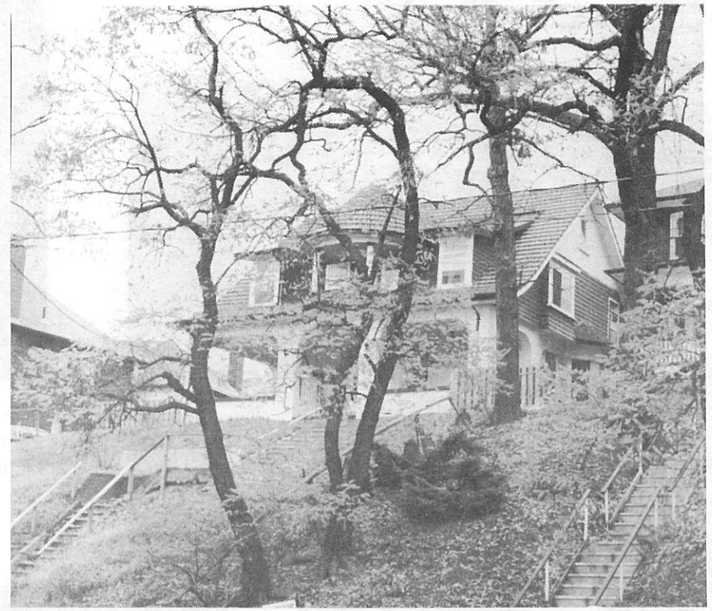
More recently the building was the May Company. Sandra Seligman is responsible for the restoration of the building in 1987 and will be the recipient of this award.

The actual presentation will be announced in a future newsletter.

The Bungalow—1414 Davenport Rd.

In this issue we begin a series on the bungalow house type around Toronto. One of the most unique examples is 1414 Davenport Road in the City of Toronto, built by Robert James Dodds in 1912.

Born in Orangeville in 1870 Mr. Dodds emigrated first to Binghamton, New York, where he engaged in the contracting and real estate businesses. In 1908 he shifted his attentions toward Mexico where he leased 130,000 acres of timber. In 1909 he returned to Toronto and set up his firm which specialized in the remodelling and subleasing of commercial structures. In 1912 he married Mary L. Board and soon after constructed 1414 Davenport Road as their honeymoon home. Many of the design qualities and materials used in this house are related to his career in both New York state and Mexico. It is reported that many of the interior wood elements are ebony, teak and mahogany. The evocative tile roof with its awning-like curved eaves and front umbrage porch that is echoed on both east and west facades all imply a strong Hispanic parentage that is unusual in Toronto. Considering the date of its construction we can see this as a forerunner of the bungalow type which was to dominate home construction in Toronto after the First World War. The house is deceptively

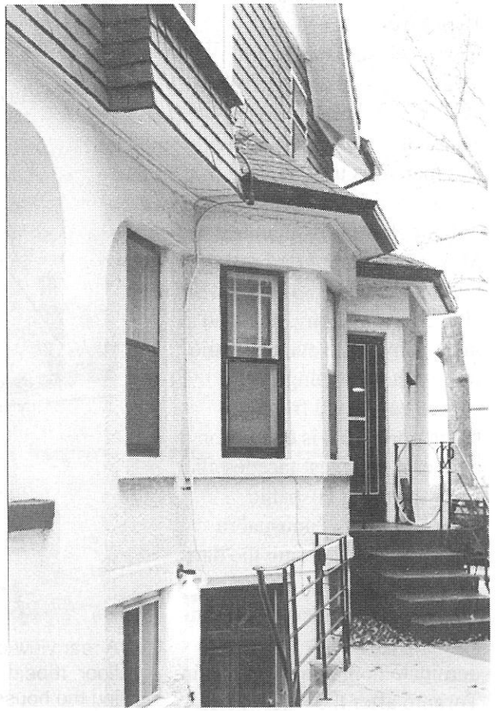


1414 Davenport Road from the front. Framed gracefully by black locust trees, the house perches on top of the St.Clair-Davenport hill. (all photos Doug McGavin)

A rear view of 1414 Davenport. Note the recessed wall area on the ground floor, repeating the line of the porch and suggesting a verandah surrounding the house. The stucco on the walls, which may be applied over terra cotta blocks, is remarkably well-preserved. This is probably due in no small part to the generous roof overhangs.

To take full advantage of the hillside site, the front door is placed off to one side so that the plate glass window is front and centre.

A photograph of Mr. Dodds taken from Middleton's "The Municipality of Toronto".



Close-up of the east wall. The bay windows on this side are intended to catch the morning light.

spacious, considering the non-imposing exterior profile.

Currently 1414 is owned by Woodgreen Cooperative. The house has for many years been subdivided into apartments. Recently the owners instigated a redevelopment proposal, to build a large addition to the rear and a three-storey building in front. As part of that process the Toronto Historical Board was asked whether or not the building merited inclusion on its Inventory. Notwithstanding community support the T.H.B. turned the building down. The development was rejected by the City of Toronto, however, and this decision was upheld on appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. The owner is now considering other options. It is fervently to be hoped that the Toronto Historical Board reconsider its decision and give this unique Toronto bungalow the protection it so clearly merits.

buildings with the poorest energy efficiency are those built between 1940 and 1975. 18. As the pressure to reduce commuting costs mounts, so probably will the demand for inner-city houses. Rehabilitation on a large scale would partly answer this demand.

Our buildings represent an enormous energy bank overlooked until recently. If we are to retain the benefits of this huge investment, it is crucial that public policy recognize and protect it.

Notes

13. Assessing the Energy Conservation Benefits of Historic Preservation: Methods and Examples, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C. 1979. (Report prepared by Booz, Allen and Hamilton, Inc.)

14. Extensive groundwork for such calculations has been laid by Richard G. Stein in his Handbook for Energy Use for Building Construction,U.S. Department of Energy, 1976, and Architecture and Energy, Anchor Books, 1978.

15. See, for example, Architecture and Energy, op. cit. and The Long Term Outlook, op. cit.

16. From "The Concept of Embodied Energy", a paper given by William Whiddon at the symposium on energy sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington D.C., May 1980.

17. The Long Term Outlook, op. cit. page 14.

18. Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings by Baird M. Smith, Preservation Brief #3, April 1978, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

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*(**Housing on Main Streets**—continued from page 25)*

Another advantage to building on main streets is that most developments are welcomed, rather than shunned as they often are in residential neighbourhoods. "You can add development without upsetting too many people," says Mr. Gilbert.

This is particularly important for groups planning to build social housing, which often carries a stigma. "Building on main arterial roads often means you are...not building in the middle of an existing residential area. Instead you are building...in an area that is used to seeing lots of activities," Mr. Gilbert says. Because the developments would be smaller, Mr. Sewell says, "if you want to make it assisted housing, I think everybody would say 'Oh, that's fine; that's not a problem.' So it gets away from project mentality."

So far, only the City of Toronto is actively preparing for main-street housing. This month, the city's land use committee approved a number of studies aimed at making the necessary zoning changes to accommodate main-street development interests.

One study presented to the committee indicated there is a potential for 15,000 to 50,000 dwellings along the main streets over the next 20 years.

Mr. Gilbert says it will not be long before the rest of Metro follows suit, because it is such a sensible solution to part of the housing shortage in the city.

But there are problems.

The greatest need is to find housing for families, said Chris Smith, who heads a group of lawyers and planners who act as consultants on co-operative housing projects.

"It's not ideal to put families, particularly families with small children on main streets, busy thoroughfares. That is where the real need for housing is."

Besides, an allowance of four or five storeys may not be enough to encourage development, said Michel Labbé, a consultant with Lantana Non-Profit Homes Inc.

There is little point to tearing down a two-storey building to put up one of three storeys. For anything higher than three storeys, wood construction is not allowed, which means the cost of building goes up. A fourth floor can actually involve a penalty that is not really recouped until a height of six or seven storeys is reached, he said.

"Where there are vacant sites it might make sense, but where there are currently stores with an apartment above, then the demolition and replacement of that needs a higher land value than social housing can provide," Mr. Labbé says.

There are also fears that changing zoning laws to promote main-street housing will increase land values enough to make existing owners tear down structures and put up the maximum size buildings allowed under the new regulations.

That could put small, historically significant buildings at risk, says Hamish Wilson of the Architectural Conservancy of Toronto.

Embodied Energy

A case for renovation instead of demolition

by George Galt

The Conservancy has been lobbying on behalf of older buildings for more than fifty years. Two aspects of current lobbying efforts include stressing the embodied energy and resources in older structures and the resource preservation of renovating as opposed to demolition. To further emphasize embodied energy we reprint here an excerpt from ***Conserving a National Asset****, prepared for Heritage Canada in 1981 by George Galt.*

A speculative assumption among conservationists in the past decade was that existing buildings represent a significant store of invested energy. In 1979 a major American study demonstrated exactly this point. [13, 14] Analysts took three buildings (a former hotel, a former carriage house, and an apartment building in different parts of the United States and measured their energy costs and benefits against comparable new construction. Two of the structures had been extensively renovated for new uses, and one was abandoned. In each case it was found that *significant energy savings over the long term accrued from retention and rehabilitation as opposed to demolition and new construction.*

One of the buildings, the Grand Central Arcade in Seattle, was found to have a net energy advantage over an equivalent new structure *for the next two centuries*.

The methodology of the study was straightforward and sound. Embodied energy, the amount of energy required to manufacture and put in place all a structure's building materials, was calculated. It was then added to the energy required to demolish the structure and clear the site. This total was plotted against any gains that might result from a more energy-efficient replacement building. (one old building was found to be more efficient even for operating energy). In each instance, any possible gains in operating efficiency over the expected life of the structure were easily outweighed by the energy savings stored in embodied energy and unexpended demolition energy.

Estimates of the annual energy consumption in North America attributable to the construction of new buildings range from 5 to 8% of the national totals. [15] Any saving in this area would have a substantial impact on our national energy requirements. At issue here are not only housing units, but public, industrial and commercial buildings too. The loss of a courthouse or school, the demolition of retail space on Main Street, the replacement of old warehouses by new parking lots, all mean a sacrifice in energy. Multiplied across the country, the losses each year are considerable.

Some perspective on just how much is at stake is offered by the principal author of **Assessing the Energy Conservation Benefits of Historic Preservation**. The example is American, but nonetheless instructive for us. "The rehabilitation of two million single-family residences will result in energy savings totalling *one quad of fossil fuel use*. To give a brief comparison, the U.S. Department of Energy would like to see two million passive solar buildings erected by 1986. Those two million buildings are expected to save *one-tenth of a quad of energy*." The author concedes that older houses would not allow for the continued benefits that will come with new passive solar buildings, but the initial tenfold savings of rehabilitation make it, in this view, a valuable instrument for national energy conservation policy.[16]

Over the next decade in Canada's metropolitan centres the high cost of energy will probably create another incentive for rehabilitation. A high proportion of older buildings are found toward the centres of cities. It is likely that as commuting costs increase, living near the city core will grow more attractive. In 1971 a commuter living 50 kilometres from his workplace spent $500 a year to commute. By 1991, it has been estimated, the cost will have risen to $3000. [17] Furthermore, there are indications that the offsetting fuel-efficiency of newer houses in the suburbs is not as high as has sometimes been assumed. American studies have shown that the

Bill 31, The Cemetery Act

by Alec Keefer

Imagine your cousin Frank comes back to town for a visit after having lived outside the country for several decades. When asked what he wishes to do during his stay, he responds that he would like to go to the old home town. So you all pile into the car.

Upon arriving at *our town*, one of the stops you might expect to make is the town cemetery. You go to the place you remember as the cemetery, only to find it is now an apartment building. It could just as easily have become the site for a new school, a library, or if water was nearby, a marina. In the front yard of the apartment building sits a large granite boulder that has attached to it a brass plaque. It reads something like this: "Formerly the site of the St. Anywhere Cemetery, in 1992 its one hundred and forty four bodies were exhumed and relocated elsewhere in the county. Those that could be identified are appropriately mentioned on plaques in their new resting place. Those that could not be identified were reinterred in a common grave. If you have reason to believe that ancestors of yours were buried in the former St. Anywhere Cemetery, please go to the Town Clerk's office during normal business hours where a typed list is available."

This scenario is not as bizarre as it seems. Should the current government of the Province of Ontario proceed to enact Bill 31, the Cemetery Act, that passed the House on October 16, 1989, then the distressing ordeal faced by cousin Frank and yourself will be repeated countless times across the Province of Ontario.

As disturbing as Bill 31, the Cemetery Act, may be, if you understand the process of its drafting then you can gain some insight into the circumstances under which the heritage community has been forced to operate during the last 5 years under the previous provincial government. During that time the heritage community was forced into crisis management. This severely strained these heritage organizations' ability to deliver their own programmes, requiring as it did that they act as watch dogs of then government's legislative initiatives. The Ontario Heritage Alliance, which is composed of ten heritage organizations whose purpose is to protect, preserve, conserve, research or display the heritage of the Province of Ontario for future generations, took up the challenge.

We can infer that the former government was influenced to write Bill 31 in much the same way they were prompted to pass the infamous Automobile Insurance Act. Both seem to be cut from the same cloth, designed to satisfy special interest groups. If time permitted, we could expand on each of the eight points contained in a letter that was sent to Premier Bob Rae by the Ontario Heritage Alliance I mean to imply that the actions of the former government with regard to Bill 31 were not an isolated incident, but were, I am afraid to say, typical.

The Cemetery Act, Bill 31 represents a departure from its predecessor. Under Bill 31 cemeteries in Ontario are now to be viewed as mere depositories with potential for relocation--prime redevelopment sites. This was not formerly the case. Notwithstanding this change, the voters of Ontario continue to believe that cemeteries are perpetual. They constitute an abiding presence in our society. The heritage community is committed to ensuring that the best of what we are and have been, survives for the benefit all.

When the residents of Ontario approach a cemetery, mentally or on foot, regardless of the cemetery's ethnic or religious associations, we do so with love, trepidation and respect. Bill 31 is insensitive to these beliefs and directly contradicts these widely held principles. These principles are contained in the unwritten social covenants which form the basis upon which society operates. These covenants can only be tampered with by any government after the public has slowly and logically contemplated the ramifications of the changes; so central are they to our definition of who we are.

After reviewing the Act the heritage community found no clear references to heritage, despite the *revolutionary* nature of Bill 31. Government staff stated before the Standing Committee that they

were comfortable with the choice of language used in Bill 31. I must conclude that either the Ministry of Culture and Communications was unwilling to accept the government staff's input or that the government staff was ineffective in communicating the importance of the heritage element when legislating with regard to cemeteries. In either case we are left with a controversial and potentially dangerous Act. When the public understands the ramifications of Bill 31, expect an outcry.

Initially government staff maintained that consultation *had* taken place between the two ministries prior to the drafting of the Act. However, on May 9, 1990, at the release of the Blue Paper (proposals for legislation) government staff in answering a question about future inter-ministerial vetting of pending legislation that might impact heritage said that they wanted no more *Cemetery Acts* where legislation had been drafted **without** consultation with all government staff.

Over the summer of 1990 many, many meetings had taken place. First came meetings between the heritage community and the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations to review draft regulations written to support Bill 31. Subsequently, members of the heritage community met repeatedly with the government staff to revise and reword these regulations. The government's legal counsel attended these later meetings. A valiant attempt was made to draft the regulations so as to safeguard for the people the heritage aspects of cemeteries. It was soon realized that the Act, Bill 31, was inherently inadequate. This Provincial Government should ask the opinion of their legal counsel as to whether the issues and concerns raised by the heritage community are valid and legitimate, and whether protection can be gained under regulations which refer to Bill 31.

The heritage community holds that the regulations cannot work as we believe they must. For the Act does not recognize that the public at large is at least as concerned about cemeteries as are cemetery owners, operators, and potential redevelopment forces. The latter groups seem comfortable with the wording of Bill 31.

The senior staff of the government have maintained that all the shortcomings of the Act can be addressed in the regulations. Sadly, the heritage community has learned that this is not the case.

1. We encourage the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations to withdraw Bill 31.

2. Draft a new Cemetery Act in consultation with the Minister of Culture and Communications, his legal counsel, his heritage staff and the heritage organizations of Ontario. Consideration might be given to investigating legislation in other provinces or states, where legislation is in place that addresses both the practical and the historic, cultural and social concerns.

3. The Minister should know that the time the heritage community spent working over the summer and fall of 1990 on the regulations was not productive. However, we, the heritage community found the exchange of information and the dialogues meaningful. Indeed it should serve as an excellent example of a rational consultative approach to the development of legislation. If only the staff of both ministries had involved the heritage community from day one, in the dialogue which lead up to Bill 31, I would not be writing this piece today.

What the heritage community experienced with regard to Bill 31, the Cemetery Act, was a total lack of consultation. It is safe to conclude that the leaders of the heritage community were alienated by the inconsideration. The aim of the heritage community is altruistic. We want a Cemetery Act we can live with **and** die with.

If we rebuild our main streets without getting some real answers based on extensive research to these questions, we risk perpetuating the problem.

At present the current initiate seems too design-oriented—too interested in the skin. If the proponents had first instigated independent scholarly analysis of why main streets have failed, then these findings could have been incorporated into the new creations. I suspect that the skin of the buildings is not one of the reasons why main streets are not carrying their share of the housing load.

The true reasons for this failure are a host of factors that reinforce each other. Here are a few—just off the top of my head. The lots are often too shallow—houses on flanking streets press too closely on the commercial rear lot line and constrain development. There are too few lane ways. Services to the commercial streets are too often performed in the middle of the night. There are too many licensed drinking establishments that empty their customers our on to the street at precisely 2 p.m.

I could go on but instead we want to hear from you our members. During the next month spend some time walking on any our arterial roads and imagine them transformed.

And here is an article from the Globe and Mail on the issue of Main Streets Housing.

Housing on Main Streets

by Craig McInnes
Reprinted from the Globe and Mail, Friday, December 28, 1990.

The noise from four lanes of traffic rolls over the sidewalks of Danforth Avenue at all hours, bumping up against the glass storefronts separating the bakeries, restaurants and novelty bazaars from the passers-by and echoing up the apartments above.

It is hard to picture the Danforth as a potential residential neighbourhood; yet on streets like these the City of Toronto wants to find homes for tens of thousands of people over the next two decades.

Proponents of the housing-on-main-streets initiative envision European-style four- and five-storey buildings pressed up against the sidewalk. On the ground floor would be the stores and restaurants that now line the main streets. Above would be apartments and condominiums, their windows and balconies overlooking the streets below. The initiative would provide badly needed housing and revitalize the retail strips that line the main arteries of the city, supporters say.

Metro Councillor Richard Gilbert, who was one of the first to promote the idea in Toronto, says there are 1,000 kilometres of main streets in Metropolitan Toronto. About half of that has potential for redevelopment and the addition of several hundred thousand new buildings.

Mr. Gilbert admits that life on main streets will not be for everyone. But being only a few steps from transit, shops and restaurants can be a strong drawing card.

"There are quite a lot of people who like to live ... as part of the action," Mr. Gilbert says. "I'm not prescribing this for everybody; I'm saying there is too little of it."

Opening up those streets for development would offer opportunities for small entrepreneurs to get into property development and would provide new locations for subsidized and co-operative housing projects, former Toronto mayor John Sewell says.

Developers who want to erect four- or five-storey buildings now must go through an expensive and lengthy process of obtaining an exception to the existing zoning. That virtually rules out small developments, because the cost of getting them under way is spread over too few units.

"I think if we had as-of-right zoning on main streets...there would be a whole bunch of small entrepreneurs who would get back into the market because they could make some money," Mr. Sewell said.

(continued on page 25)

In fact the public at large have reacted very negatively to the *pursuit of the masterpiece*. One of the end results of *that* preservation scheme has been partial retention or facadism. There are the remains of portions of dozens of buildings in our city's centre. At one time these now-isolated buildings were part of streetscapes, but no more. Some authority, having considered a group of buildings, made recommendations. Building Number 7 is a masterpiece while Numbers 6 and 8 are merely vernacular—and, horror of horrors, have been modified over time. Perhaps the doors have been replaced, new windows hung, a porch added or the brick painted. It does not matter if the modifications were ones of quality, if they are easily reversible, or if they were designed by skilled craftsmen or artisans.

A case in point would be on Victoria Street at the former Imperial Life Building where a recent *restoration* threw away the 1950s doors, their surround, and canopy. They were replaced by something more in keeping the with Mathers & Haldenby first and second floor reworking of the 1912 George Miller seven storey limestone and steel structure, which was itself originally clad in terra cotta.

Someone discerned that a 1991 re-worked *classical* entrance would be superior to retaining the great 1950s entrance. No matter that the stainless steel door with its original marble handle was in perfect working order. Or that the small subtly curved canopy looked to be in excellent condition after 40 years of exposure. I hope you see that the building was a curious but pleasing amalgam of parts and periods. It *was* Toronto. The great problem with the *pursuit* of the *masterpiece* is that it ultimately boils down to a judgment call. At Imperial Life the dreaded dragons subjective and its siblings the aesthetics raised their horny heads.

The Conservancy sensed after we had led the attack on facadism that the proponents of the *Pursuit of the Masterpiece* were discomfited, to say the least, and that L.A.C.A.C. staff would try to be more sympathetic and tolerant with regard to the retention of good streetscape even if no masterpiece was present. We were mistaken. Of late we have seen that the "masterpiece-ists" are alive and well.

Which brings us back, at long last, to the Housing on Main Streets design guidelines. The city must look to the L.A.C.A.C. staff and board members to help develop a framework in which to contain the pre-redevelopment process. I hope you understand that since this city's architectural heritage is of a vernacular nature and the L.A.C.A.C. staff are interested primarily in the pursuit of the masterpiece over the vernacular, then the city is singularly unable, or unwilling to see serious merit in much of what Toronto has its main streets.

Often individual L.A.C.A.C. members and the public at large have requested that the L.A.C.A.C. staff list a series of buildings which they feel make an important contribution to the street. In most cases these lists are winnowed down until, perhaps, one or two buildings were acceptable. These scenarios can be documented, if need be.

So—quite clearly we have a heritage process that is not at present up to the job of drawing guidelines.

Is it the Planning Department's intention that the volunteer sector—the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy, CHIP, Town of York, etc., dedicate itself over the next decade to adjudicating meetings with property owners and developers? Educating the players, professional and lay, so as to produce compromises that are compatible with our shared understanding and our vision? If so then I fear that this is based on the assumptions that the heritage community in this city is in agreement as to what is good architecture, that the heritage community in neighbourhood after neighbourhood has the communication skills necessary to influence property owners and developers and that the volunteer heritage community has the time to undertake the above tasks.

Treating the Cause and not the Effect

Many of our main streets were once a preferred place to live. The presence of many excellent buildings is clear testimony to that fact.

Today many second and third floors remain uninhabited—vacant. In many cases this has been the situation for decades.

Clearly something has changed.

We must ask ourselves the questions, "Why have our main streets been unable to hold their own? Why are they not providing the housing they can even without intensification?".

Death Sentence for Graveyards?

by Bill Gladstone

reprinted from the Globe and Mail, December 27, 1990.

The tranquillity of some Ontario cemeteries may soon be rudely shattered, thanks to Bill 31, an amendment to the province's Cemeteries Act.

The bill has yet to be proclaimed into law and sources at the Ministry of Commercial and Corporate Affairs indicate that may not happen until the spring. Still, heritage groups claim it has already inadvertently led to the wanton - but perfectly legal - destruction of several cemeteries.

"I heard of a case where the church just got so worried that they would be sued if anything went wrong that they just went out and knocked all the stones down," said Dorothy Duncan, executive director of the Ontario Historical Society.

The bill is "very strong on closing cemeteries, moving or disposing of the stones and making the land available for other uses," Ms. Duncan says. "And it fails to do one important thing. It does not spell out that a cemetery or burial site is considered to be an educational, historical and sacred resource...it doesn't even allude to that." The historical society has requested that the bill be withdrawn.

The proposed law was sparked by a coroner's inquest after an accident in which a young girl named Kristie Vandescheur, who was playing in an abandoned cemetery near her home near London, was pinned beneath a monument and killed.

The bill makes municipalities responsible for keeping all abandoned graveyards within their bounds in good repair. It also compels cemetery owners to do "whatever is necessary by way of repairing, resetting or laying down" tombstones that may endanger public safety.

The consumer and corporate affairs ministry wrote to every Ontario municipality after the Vandescheur death, warning that liability for such accidents would rest with them, says Gail Sussman, a technical adviser in the heritage branch of the Ministry of Culture and Communications.

"Some cemeteries were bulldozed right away as a result," she says. "I saw it happen in Port Hope, and I've heard of it happening in other places."

"Today I visited a cemetery and the tractor marks were still there. Some obelisks were only three feet high; they had been bulldozed down, and they were just scattered about like so many logs."

In the past, pressure to close cemeteries came primarily from real-estate developers, she notes, but now the government seems to be exerting an unprecedented force toward closing.

At a cemetery in Markham, Ms. Sussman claims, the bodies were moved to another site in a manner that was insensitive to archaeological methods and the cultural and religious traditions of the deceased, as often happens.

In addition, she says, "there was a record of 17 people being buried there, but they only moved 13. Where are the others?"

Ms. Sussman, one of several culture and communications officials who have been advising the Ministry of Commercial and Corporate Affairs on heritage matters, says that municipalities face "tremendous economic pressure toward closure." The MCCA, she adds, usually grants permission to close graveyards almost automatically.

"There are all kinds of little burial grounds scattered about the countryside and I think they might just quietly disappear," says Marjorie Stuart, executive director of the Ontario Genealogical Society. "Many stones say 'rest in peace' but right not, they're not resting in peace."

The MCCA's mandate is consumer protection. "The heritage component is something that's brand new," acknowledges Gary Carmichael, registrar of the ministry's cemeteries branch.

"Cemeterians don't want to jump through too many hoops." He maintains that the heritage concerns can be handled in regulations to the bill or in the Heritage Act, which is also under review.

Mr. Carmichael, who was hired last spring, says he is unaware of any cemetery in the province being bulldozed. "That's a worst-case scenario that's been put forward and, to my knowledge, it hasn't happened.

"But even if it has, I throw out the obvious question: what's worse, a bulldozed marker or a dead little girl?"

The legal responsibility for cemeteries belongs to his ministry, he explains, owing to a 1955 arrangement for a fee levied on all burials to go into a trust fund to provide perpetual care and maintenance for cemeteries.

Because no central trust fund existed before 1855, few dollars are allocated to older cemeteries that were largely filled before then.

Also lacking perpetual care are burial mounds sacred to native people and early farmyard graves of pioneers. The fate of old graveyards like these may be compared to the plight of senior citizens who fail to save for their retirement years and become a financial burden on the state.

Eric Teppenden, vice-president of public services for Toronto Trust Cemeteries, is one of many in the field who favour the new legislation. "It's important to understand that cemetarians across this province take their role in serving the community very seriously," he says.

"I think heritage groups fear we'll ignore heritage issues in favour of public safety issues. I don't think that's the case. Cemetarians are interested in preserving historical public monuments but they don't always have the financial resources."

In recent months, heritage group volunteers have spent thousands of hours helping draft the regulations that are to accompany the bill. The Ontario Historical Society has described the process as "an exercise in futility."

Furthermore, officials at both the historical and genealogical societies say they learned of Bill 31 only by accident as it was going into third reading, then had to fight for permission to present their views to a parliamentary committee.

During third reading, then-NDP critic of culture and communications Shelley Martel eloquently voiced many concerns to the previous provincial government.

Ms. Martel, who is now Minister of Northern Development and Government House Leader, said the heritage groups felt that "heritage values were being eroded and the government was appearing not to notice."

It will be a test of the still-honeymooning New Democratic Party government to see how it responds. The dead, of course, although their earthly memorials may be at stake, remain silent, oblivious to the cares of this world.

Bill Gladstone is a Toronto freelance writer.

May 08,1991

Mr. Wm. Thorsell
Editor
Globe and Mail
444 Front St. W.
Toronto, Ont.
M5V 2S9

Re: **Death Sentence for Graveyards?** - Thursday Dec. 27, 1990

Dear Sir:

We wish to congratulate the Globe and Mail newspaper for the insightful article by Mr. Bill Gladstone that dealt with the proposed new Cemetery Act.

Cemeteries are places that the general population does not like to spend a great deal of time thinking about. We are no exception. It has taken us five months to respond. We enclose for your consideration a long article that will appear in the next addition of the Architectural Conservancy's newsletter, T.R.A.C..

Yours truly,
Alec Keefer

to develop a more mature orientation toward it. It is at just this precise moment that the City of Toronto has announced its intention to investigate major rebuilding along the main streets in our city.

We, in North America have yet to produce an acceptable definition of "the vernacular." Certainly, most North American building enthusiasts are uncomfortable with the European version that denotes something exclusively medieval. Perhaps the only light their definition sheds upon our mere 150-year experience in Ontario is that the European vernacular is viewed as a phase, necessary in the maturation of a society's design ability. Those of you who reject the vernacular should take heart, if the Europeans are correct we may never outgrow our dependency on it. I hope we never do outgrow it.

Some of the words and phrases that we should keep in the back of our minds when we look at Ontario architecture are—a product that is native or indigenous, something loosely, orally translated from another (usually codified) source, a thing strikingly peculiar to the locale. To these *dictionary* type qualifications I would add one that I suspect is crucial: the nature of the process of construction. By that I mean I take the *vernacular* to be a product of actions that are not conscious of their style-parentage. Or were they conscious and not concerned with replication. To practitioners or disciples of the *vernacular*, using well that which was at hand was more important than pattern tracings. What was happening in Brussels was interesting if local material, talent and money could do it and the climate would support it. Putting something together that could withstand local conditions, the climate for example, was important. But also the buildings had to relate to the existing buildings and incorporate modifications that experience had demonstrated to be necessary or advisable.

If the vernacular can be said to be the antithesis of anything then that surely is fashion. In the vernacular tradition, the look of the thing, its style, is one of the least pressing of concerns. When consideration is given to style, it is employed to qualify a form that is already established if not on paper then at least in the mind of the builder.

Given the nature and strength in this city of the vernacular tradition it must be considered cruel that the heritage community is being requested to develop design guidelines for infill housing intensification schemes on our main streets. The process of arriving at even the most elementary of statements referring to the existing built form must of necessity be horrendously complicated with slews of provisos, qualifications, ifs, ands and buts. But, always, always site specific. A laborious task, I hope you agree.

The professionals who will be employed to do the designing are, through no fault of their own, not cognoscenti of our tradition—the vernacular tradition. The professional have been educated to be interested in the surface of the structure—the skin. They have not been made familiar with indigenous materials. By and large they are not up to speed on the climate and its impact on materials. For example, human beings must not be allowed to touch many surface materials. The design guidelines the city is seeking to establish must include a crash course on the hands-on. The designers and builders must read and believe a detailed manual of *someone's* creations that will extol the virtues of each material highlighting its individual strengths and handicaps. The builders and designers must be taught the difference between that which is merely flattering and that which is complimentary. They can only do that if they are willing to loosen up and design less consciously, of in the vernacular tradition!

Pursuit of the Masterpiece

We have been monitoring the descriptions written by L.A.C.A.C. (Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee) staff over the last decade. Certain trends have been discernible.

Several years ago it was the norm for descriptions to concern themselves with the degree to which a building was a complete and full example of its style or type. This fits comfortably with a perception that conservation and preservation are activities the ultimate aim of which are the detection and veneration of the masterpiece; the building is perceived as a style statement.

The opposite approach to this *pursuit of the masterpiece* could be labelled, streetscape significant. L.A.C.A.C. staff have started to give signs the over the last few years that buildings might be of value, indeed of great value, without the buildings being masterpieces.

A Response to the Main Streets Proposal — What We Find

In the February 1990 issue of the newsletter we printed a letter addresses to Mr. R. Scott James, Managing Director of the Toronto Historical Board. Here are President Alec Keefer's thoughts on the subject of re-building our Main Streets.

by Alec Keefer

When I was a child playing Monopoly, the street names used in that elementary crash course in real estate development seemed romantic. They were certainly highly evocative. How many adults actually ever went to Park Place with their green-edged monopoly deed in hand and saw the real thing? How many of them then tried to relate their vision with reality? I have no idea. One thing that was certainly impressed upon us as we raced around the board was that all buildings sites were not created equal.

When residents of Toronto who are urban form enthusiasts return from visiting many other large cities, there is always a necessary period of decompression. Social welfare nets aside, a visit to Philadelphia, Brussels or Leningrad can be a sobering experience for thinking Torontonians. Most of us are startlingly humbled by the encounter elsewhere with architecture that has for generations, even centuries, clearly been using different yard sticks with which to create and measure itself.

I have at the age of 41 been wrestling with this conundrum. I am always fully conscious whether travelling or at home of what a remarkable city, in many ways, Toronto is. And yet—and yet, visions of the built Dublin, Chicago or New Delhi do haunt. Most Torontonians soon recover from the decompressing process, shelve their experiences of Barcelona, Madrid and Seville and get on with life. The apparent mere adequacy of some of Toronto's built form is to be tolerated and therefore we guess perpetuated. I am by and large as guilty of this as everyone else.

A recent initiative by this city with respect to **Housing on Toronto's Main Streets** has jarred me awake. It has reminded me of my years of juvenile Monopoly gamesmanship. For over a year I have been living with the Main Streets intensification dreams being promulgated by many well meaning and caring individuals. I have shared my concerns with officials involved but felt that it behoved me, as President of the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy, to put pen to paper. I know I am far from alone in regard to my reactions to this truly revolutionary and monumental undertaking. One of the side effects of that undertaking will be the legislation of taste. I hope those who are as concerned as I am will follow suit, pull their thoughts together and distribute them.

Let me confess that I remain very sceptical about whether the proponents of the Main Street scheme will be in any way affected by my observations. Some of those involved in the Main Streets movement are comfortable in the righteousness of their convictions and the appropriateness of their vision.

In general the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy is committed to elevating the role of heritage. Heritage must always be front loaded whenever discussions take place at any level of government. At present, Heritage in Ontario is too often an afterthought.

The structures on the main streets in our city are the product of our tradition of building. And that tradition is largely a vernacular tradition. Few cities of our size owe as much to the vernacular side of architectural design as Toronto does. Most cities, constructed using the western European experience as their springboard, have produced successive generations of structures that either took their genesis from a series of *schools* (movements), or were products of autocrats or with a strongly focused vision of their building ideal. The *vernacular* tradition has long been held to be inferior to the traditions; the *schools* (movements) type or the autocratic.

At long last building enthusiasts are reconsidering and reevaluating the vernacular, and are trying

What to do with those awkward facades

by Devorah Garland

Reprinted from ***Building Renovation****, November/December 1990*

Facade restoration is satisfying to no-one. It places a considerable technical burden on the developer of a site. In addition, the attempt to integrate an existing historic building into the design of an new structure results in an awkward finished product that is totally devoid of the original historic character.

This panacea to the public is a political device that is best described as "fence-sitting". It skirts the tough question of what to do with historic architecture that's in the way of a new development, while appearing to offer the great public service of preserving historic buildings.

Preservation, restoration, renovation--all of these activities are valuable: but what is being achieved by , for example, integrating the facade plus four metres' depth of an historic building into the colossal perspective of Toronto's BCE Place development?

This downtown project by Brookfield Development Corp. (formerly BCE Development Corp.) encompasses a city block, including two office towers and a retail/galleria/public area.

The Toronto Historical Board stipulated that 12 facades located on the site—constituting that city's largest original 1800ss streetscape—must be preserved. Two buildings were relocated to accommodate the five-acre office complex's design and 10 were left in place, their backsides receiving new fronts as part of the interior galleria.

Can the public gain anything, learn anything or even experience the "feel" of a structure when there's only 4 metres of it left, all carefully absorbed into a larger complex and overwhelmed by the surrounding structure's design?

Furthermore, if these buildings constitute the largest streetscape of its type, then would it not follow that the actual location of each structure contributes greatly to the overall value?

Of the two that were moved, one of these structures was sliced into sections and relocated from 11 to 3 Wellington St.; the second building was dismantled, stone by stone, and moved south away from the original streetscape. Although the structures have been partially preserved, neither of these tow buildings has received a treatment that

contributes to preservation of the streetscape in its original form.

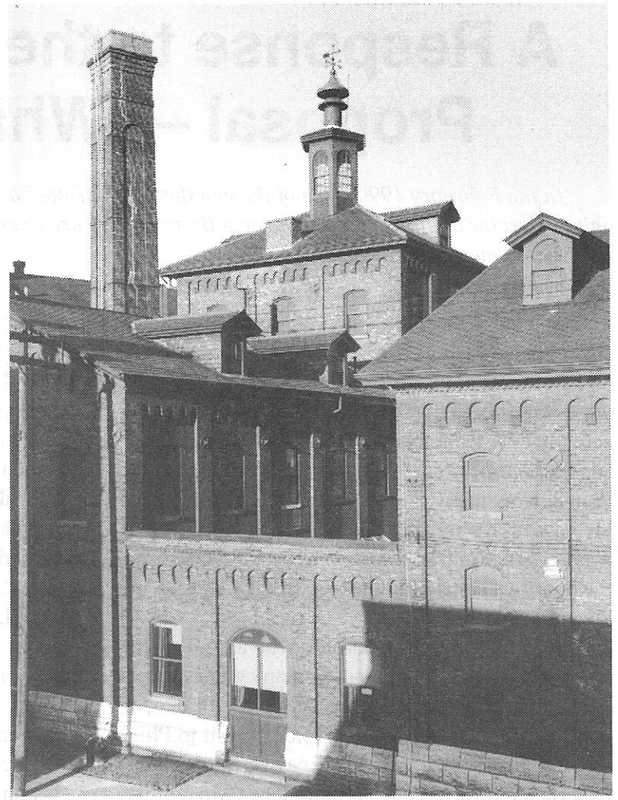
Compromise is required when the historical board's theoretical goals and that of a powerful developer meet on such a valuable city block of land. But in gaining the tax revenue of this ambitious project, Toronto has sacrificed these 12 buildings. Although this is a lucrative trade-off, renovation-wise it means the city still ends up the loser.

This is one example of a trend that makes historic relics into silly ornaments on the faces of modern structures.

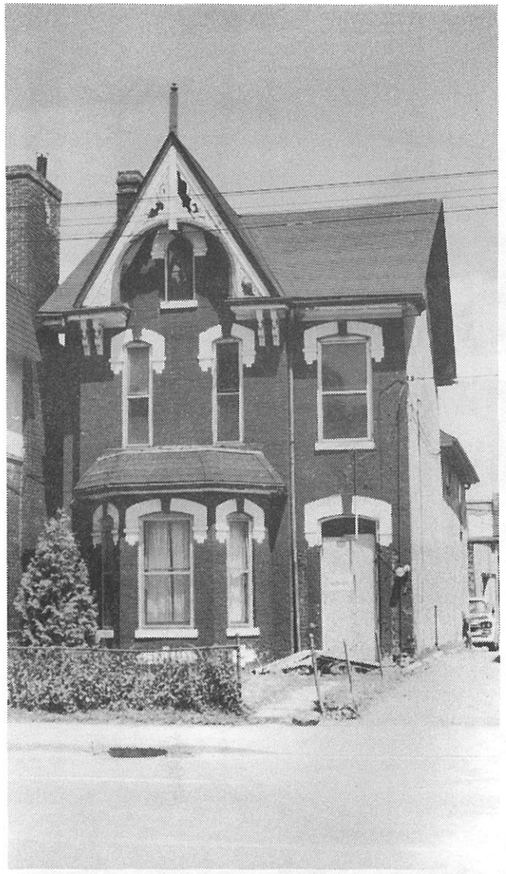
The situation is made more absurd when preservation of the facade and two rooms is required—such as the commercial Bank of Midland district, formerly located at 15 Wellington St., which was dismantled and moved south into BCE Place's galleria. What should have be done with the empty spaces between each of the elements?

"We are required to reconstruct an entire building of appropriate proportions to give the appearance of one complete historic structure," reported Stuart Fearnley from his position, last year, as construction manager for BCE Development Corp. This is a backwards way of doing things, rather than like turning under a garden and searching for the misplaced plants.

And, like last year, we end up at the Gooderham & Worts distillery, where a lucky few people went on a tour guided by distillery Vice President and plant manager Paul Allsop. The distillery dates from 1832 and is Canada's oldest. Those on the tour were treated to a fascinating mini-history of the distilling industry, and the structures that it engendered, by Mr. Allsop, who was instrumental in having the Gooderham & Worts distillery declared a National Historic Site.



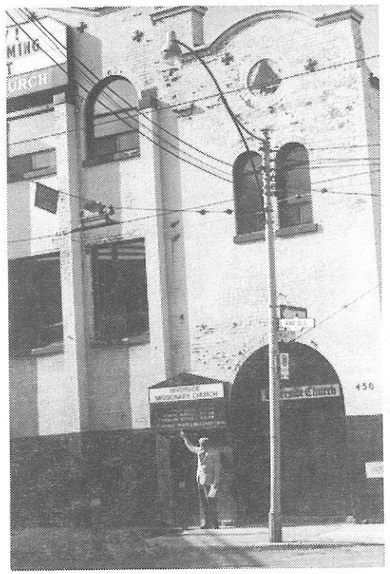
Paul J. Allsop, Vice President and plant manager of the Gooderham & Worts Distillery, was named the 1990 recipient of the Toronto's First Post Office "Seal of Approval," given annually to "a person or group which has made a significant contribution to the preservation and promotion of heritage in our community." The award was given to Mr. Allsop in recognition of his successful efforts to have the distillery declared a National Historic Site and his work with his company, government and local heritage groups to protect this unique site. He is shown here receiving his award, a beautiful framed certificate, from Toronto's First Post Office Curator Joan Murray last November. The Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy would like to add our own congratulations to Mr. Murray and express our appreciation for his warm hospitality on our tour.

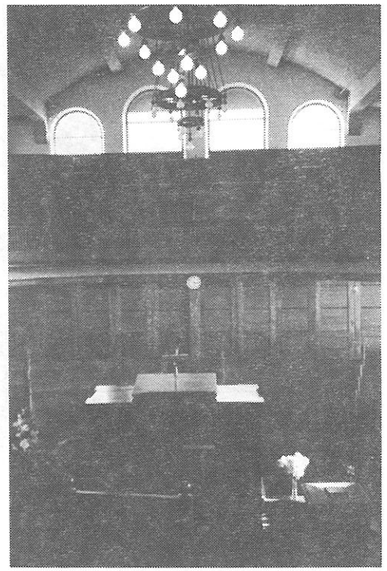


A house on River St. The rear of the house betrays a classical parentage, with rough-cast walls, low-angle roof and returns at the soffit. The public facade that we see today is a painted red and white vernacular Italianate design, typical of Toronto, that was grafted on to the classical structure, giving it a fashionable bay and steep, almost Gothic gable with decorative bargeboards.

Demolished—The Olympic Bowling and Recreation Club at 335-339 Yonge St., Toronto, A. McLeod, 1922. This building represented one of the last instances of the use of terra cotta by a Toronto architect. It was demolished in 1990 to make way for a new building (Charles Kinghorn)

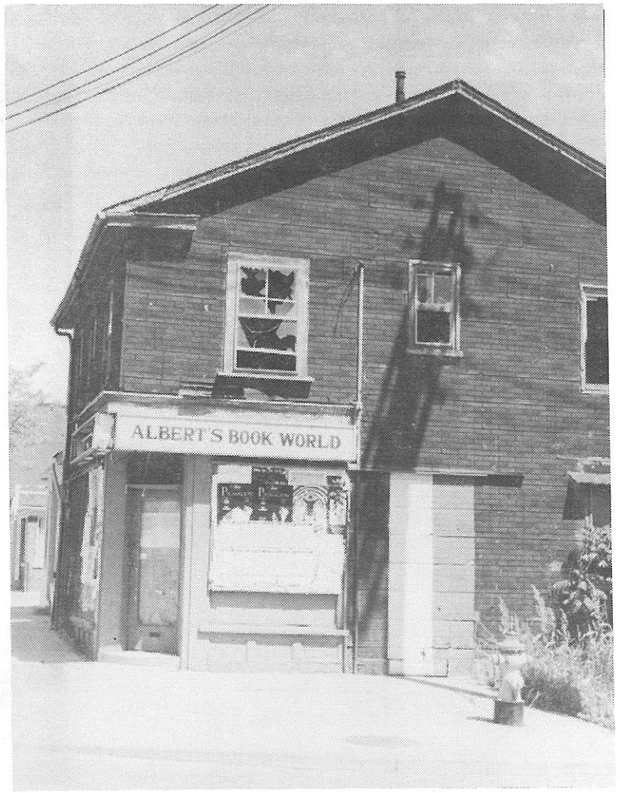
Souvenirs of Our Trip to Irish Town





We started our walk at the Riverside Church at King and Bright streets. The church originated on Bay Street and the frame building, the rear of the present church, was later moved to its present location. In 1901, Burke, Horwood and White designed the front addition, seen below as it appears today after cleaning and above left we see it painted before restoration. Above right is an interior view, showing the oak woodwork which the congregation is gradually restoring (Above photos courtesy of Mr. Derwyn Foley)

423 Queen St. E., built in 1862 for the owner, Charles Moore. Thomas Bridgewater, the original tenant, ran a tavern on the ground floor. The frame structure, originally clapboard sided and shown here covered with insulbrick displays classical concerns. These include the regularly spaced fenestration and plain facade, the low angle of the roof and the emphasized returns at the soffit. Sadly, this building was demolished in the summer of 1990 within months of our visit.

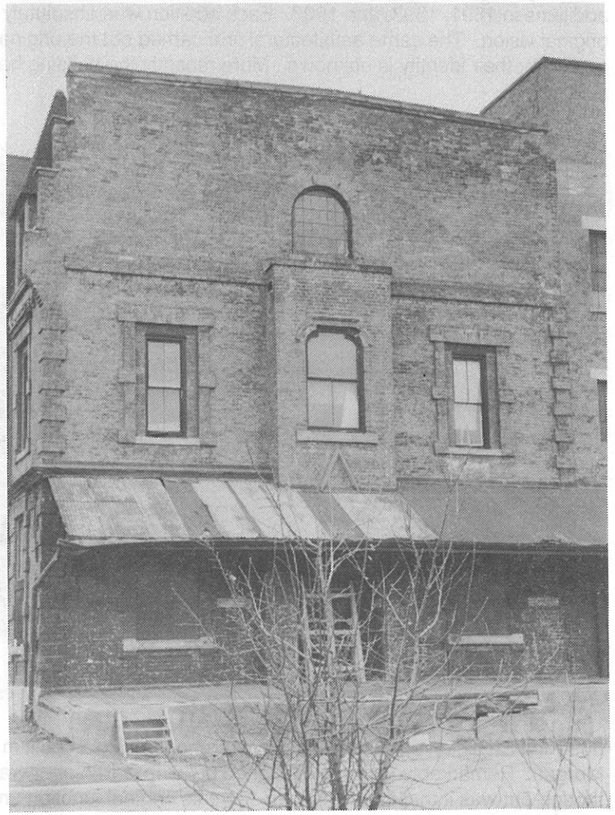


334 King St. E. at the corner of Parliament, built in 1911 by architect F.H. Herbert, also for the Aluminum and Crown Stopper Co. Where 91-93 Parliament is restful, this design is carefully detailed, if somewhat busy. Perhaps if it hadn't lost its metal cornice the composition would seem more finished.

The sprawling Craig & Wickett Tannery on Cypress St. It is almost the last of its type in the city: a vernacular row of industrial buildings built from the 1880s onward. There is virtually no chance this complex will survive the imminent development of this area.

409 Front St. E., 1890, the Cherry Street Hotel. This former school and later hotel is the lone survivor from a whole community that once surrounded it. From "Toronto, the Queen City of Canada," published in 1893:

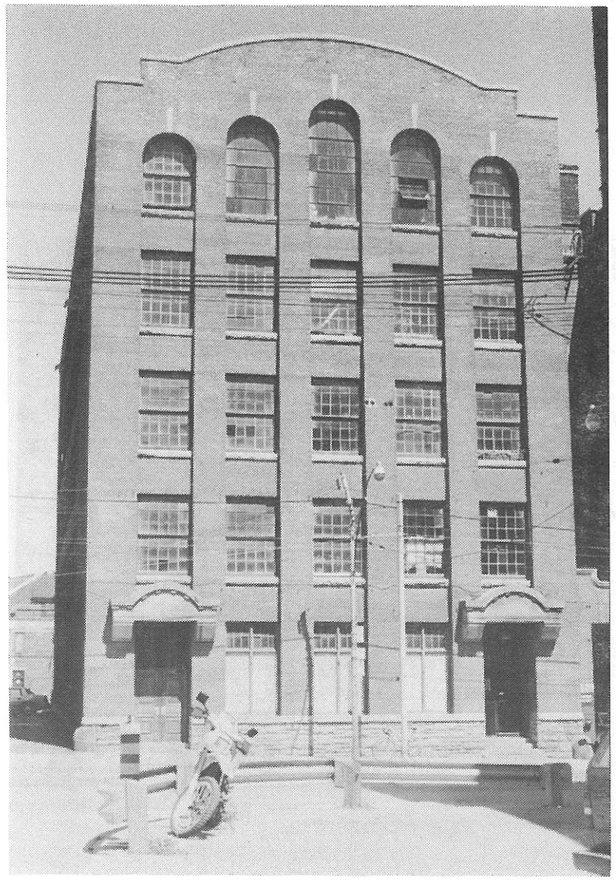
> "A well-known and popular hotel in this city is the Cherry Street Hotel, Mr. J.J. Darcy, proprietor, situated at the corner of Cherry and Front streets. The building, a commodious brick structure, was originally a school-house for a period of 45 years. In 1890 it was remodeled and rebuilt into a hotel, and opened by Mr. Robert Irvine as The Irvine House. On the 20th June, 1892, he was succeeded by Mr. Darcy, the present proprietor, who refitted and refurnished the house throughout and has since conducted it as the Cherry Street Hotel, in a manner greatly redounding to his credit. The house contains upwards of 40 neatly furnished sleeping rooms, a well equipped dining room and office. The very best to be obtained in the market is served daily in the dining room, and in the well kept bar can always be found the choicest imported wines, liquors, ales, beer, porter, stout and cigars.. The house is but a short distance from the Don station of the Grand Trunk railway, and it has the reputation of being the best $1.00 a day house in Toronto. Mr. Darcy is a social, genial landlord, and knows how to welcome the coming and speed the parting guest."



Here we see the south wall of the building, corresponding to the extreme right of the picture above. The ghost of the school's original gable roof can just be made out on the top-storey wall.

The Freyseng cork factory at 73 Sumach Street. It was built in 1890, with a series of additions in 1891, 1893, and 1907. Each addition was absolutely compatible with the original vision. The same architectural firm carried out the original design and following additions; their identity is unknown. More recently the building has been retrofitted as office space.

569 King St. E., an automotive supply warehouse. It was built in 1947 by Adamson and Morgan. Remarkably, this well-designed building is free of alterations. So functional and well though-out was it that it continues to serve its original function unchanged.



91-93 Parliament street, the Aluminum and Crown Stopper Co., built in 1907 by architect Henry Simpson. The sandstone canopies over the twin entrances are two of the finest of their type in Toronto. When compared to its companion at the corner of King and Parliament (see opposite), the uncluttered elegance of its facade asserts itself with quiet dignity. The arched roofline echoes the form of the canopies below.

Sackville Street. Three houses survive against the odds, beside a windowless T.T.C. electrical building. The centre and right houses were originally like the one to the left, with a polychromatic brick facade; they have been covered over with brown and white aluminum siding.