Holiday Get Together!
Saturday, December 9
at the Toronto Board of Education Archives
263 McCaul Street

Featuring a talk by Joan Murray of Toronto's First Post Office on:

Toronstonians: Creatures and Characters That Reside on our Buildings

Saturday, December 9 at 3:00 p.m.
(See page 2 for details)
Holiday Get Together
Saturday, December 9 at 3:00 p.m.

We will be treated to a tour of the original Toronto Board of Education headquarters now located behind (to the south) of 155 College Street. This handsome pre-First World War office building is truly one of the city’s buried treasures. The building’s boardroom is an extremely attractive and dignified room with excellent plaster and woodwork.

Joan Murray, the affable curator of Toronto’s First Post Office at 260 Adelaide Street East will present a short illustrated chat on the ugly faces that are on our old pretty buildings—gargoyles.

In focusing the camera lens on the ornaments of architecture, we celebrate the builders’ desire for beauty, the joy of fancy and the freedom of thought. Look above the entrances, to the tops of the roofs, under the eaves and through the vines. There you will find them—stone creatures and characters that have regarded generations of city dwellers through snow and rain and sunlight and darkness.

A reception will follow—with tasty tidbits and tempting morsels, and liquid refreshments to match.

To find the Board of Education’s old building (now the Board of Education Archives) go south along the east side of McCaul Street from College and turn left at the walkway just past the driveway down to the parking area down to your left. The walkway is marked by a blue sign with “Toronto Board of Education Sesquicentennial Museum and Archives—263 McCaul St.” on it. There is a map on the book order form enclosed with this issue.

We need to know how many are coming, so please R.S.V.P. by calling the T.R.A.C. answering machine at 947-1066 and let us know the number in your party. There will be a charge of $5 per person to cover refreshment costs. Come on out and mingle with your fellow Conservancy members!

In our opinion this description of the gates, with their graceful, sweeping curves, is an understatement. If you visit this superb building, note the pilasters beside the former main entrance and between the former garage doors on Cowan Avenue. Each is surmounted by a magnificent wrought iron light fixture, designed as noted above by the City Architect’s department. In many ways this is the City Architect team’s most conservative creation, eschewing the exuberance of the centre bay balustrades on the fire hall at Gerrard Street and Carlaw Avenue (see last issue), or the monumental detailing of the police station at Yonge Street and Montgomery Avenue.

The No. 6 Police Station has had a less happy existence than the still-operational Gerrard and Carlaw fire hall. Due to the consolidation of policing in larger divisions it has long since ceased to be a police station and now is serving as an emergency housing shelter. It is listed in the Toronto Historical Board’s Inventory.

On the back cover: No. 6 Police Station as it is today.

Holiday Gift Books!

This holiday season, don’t forget books from T.R.A.C., ideal for friends and family alike. Our selection includes:

Toronto’s Theatre Block: An Architectural History by Paul Dilke—our own publication chock full of both historic and contemporary images. 80 pages, soft bound large format. $15

Well-Preserved: the Ontario Heritage Foundation’s Manual of Principles and Practice for Architectural Conservation by Mark Fram. A great sourcebook of interest both to preservationists and to those undertaking restoration projects of their own. Well-organized and lavishly illustrated. Quantities are limited. 230 pages, large format spiral bound. $20

Toronto Architecture: A City Guide by Patricia McHug. This is the guidebook to have for walking tours in many different parts of Toronto. Note that this is the first edition of this great guidebook at a special bargain price. There is a Second Edition now in print. Medium format paperback, 264 pages. Quantities are limited. $10

And, of course, the Conservancy’s booklets on architects Eden Smith and Alfred Chapman, still available at the low price of $5 each.

All these prices include shipping and handling. If you act quickly, we can have the books to you in time for Christmas. See the coupon enclosed with this issue.
3) Goel Traedec Synagogue—east side of University Avenue, north of Armoury Street, now the site of the Bell Telephone Building. Built 1907, designed by William Symons, demolished 1955.


There are many reasons why so many religious structures in Toronto’s downtown core have vanished. Land values, congregations that moved to the suburbs, fires, deteriorating neighbourhoods are but a few. But there is no doubt that Toronto has lost landmarks representing the designs of its most significant architectural firms. Now all we have are photographs and memories.

![Carlton Street Methodist Church](City of Toronto Archives).

**No. 6 Police Station**

In this issue we continue to look at the Art Deco civic buildings designed in the 1920s and 30s by the Toronto City Architect’s Department (J.J. Woolsough, his assistant K.S. Gillies and designer S.T.J. Fryer) with the No. 6 Police Station at Queen Street and Cowan Avenue in Parkdale. Like many of these buildings, it replaced a prominent public structure, in this case the Parkdale Town Hall, built in 1885 to the designs of J. Ades Fowler, a prominent West Toronto architect. The October 1932 issue of Construction had this to say about it: This Police Station, completed early in the year is as the plan shows compactly and economically laid out. The exterior is Toronto Red brick and Queenston Limestone with copper cupolas. The interior trim is Canadian brick. The bronze clock over main entrance was decided on after building was under construction. A bronze tablet at corner of building tells the passer by the clock was erected in memory of ex-Controller J.J. Ward who was responsible for the Sunnyside Lakefront improvements. This clock, tablet and the special electric fixtures were all designed in the City Architect’s office, and are in keeping with the general character of the building, which though rather severe, as perhaps a Police Station should be, yet has that air of severity softened by the arched main entrance with its bold rounded mouldings and spandrels, bull nosed brick jambs of windows, and copper casings. So is the severity of the law softened by mercy. Stone band courses in the parapet help to tie in the whole exterior and emphasize somewhat the horizontal. The double gates at west end on Queen Street are interestingly treated.

**Land Title Documents**

We covered the destruction of original deeds by the provincial government in our September 1988 and January 1989 newsletters. We can at last update readers on this issue. An Advisory Committee has been struck by the Minister of Culture and Communications:

1) to review the existing program for archival preservation, duplication or destruction of land registration records in the custody of the Land Registry Offices or the Archives of Ontario,

2) to identify issues related to the documents’ accessibility,

3) to identify and evaluate options for archival preservation,

4) to make appropriate recommendations to the Ministers of Culture and Communications and of Consumer and Corporate Relations.

The committee will be chaired by Dr. Gerald Killan, Director of History at the University of Western Ontario. It will be composed of representatives from 13 provincial heritage organizations. The A.C.O.’s representative will be TRAC president Alec Keefer. The committee will meet through the fall and early winter and hopes to have its report ready in January.

**Music Building at the C.N.E.**

On Tuesday, October 31, Metropolitan Toronto Council at last adopted the recommendation to support the restoration of the Music Building at the C.N.E. Readers will note that the sad story of this building has been an on-going for over three years. The management of the C.N.E. wanted to demolish the Music Building to make way for the ignominous purpose of creating a new loading dock at the Queen Elizabeth Building. During the ensuing wrangle between the C.N.E. and Metro and City politicians, the closed Music Building was almost destroyed by a mysterious fire. At that point, hopes for saving it were dimmed. But thanks to the initiative of the Toronto Historical Board and its campaign, and the strong leadership roles of Metro Councillor Darwyn Shea and Sam Sniderman (better known as “Sam the Record Man”), it now looks as if we will keep this beautiful George Gounlock-designed building.

**Eaton Auditorium and Round Room**

After years of legal wrangling between the City of Toronto and the owner of College Park, it looks like the stalemate is finally at an end. The Executive of City Council has recommended to the full council that:

1) It endorse in principle the restoration of the Seventh Floor at College Park as a music centre.

2) It request other levels of government to endorse the funding.

3) Subsequently it establish a community foundation to raise funds for the restoration.

4) It request that College Park forgo rent for the first five years after the restoration.

5) It set up a design steering committee once the community foundation has reached the target figure.

The Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy renews its commitment to bringing the Seventh Floor back to life. Your Executive will be aggressively analyzing the information made available to us to ensure that this most important 1930s interior design space is returned to the cultural life of Toronto.
Frame and Fortune: the Urban Impact of Frame Technology
by A.M. de Fort-Menares

The principles of the frame have not changed since the Greek temples, although the means to calculate and resist the stresses has advanced, as has our ability to impose them. The basic elements of frame construction are the sill (the bottom horizontal), the top plate (the top horizontal) and the vertical posts which transmit the weight of the roof and superstructure to the foundations.

The typical nineteenth century timber frame house consisted of strong principal posts extending the full height of the wall placed at the corners and at one or two strategic points on the long wall. The principals were constructed, tied, braced and erected as rigid units across the section of the house. Smaller vertical studs between floors provide the skeleton for the wall. Normally the principals and studs were mortised into the sill and the principals were further held together by pins and braces. The conjunction of heavy timbers required complicated methods of joining to ensure strength, stability and rigidity at corners and other meeting points. The methods of making these joins varied over time and

Where Have All the Churches Gone?
by Margaret Baily

As Toronto entered the 20th Century it was often called "The City of Churches" or "Toronto the Good". Early 20th century panoramic photographs and post cards showed a sea of treetops pierced amazingly frequently by the steeples and domes of religious structures. Only occasionally and mostly close to the water was there the intrusion of factory chimneys or tall commercial buildings.

Today in the downtown core most of the trees are gone and what religious structures remain are dwarfed by the obelisks of commerce, a building trend begun by the construction of the Traders' Bank in 1905 and ending heaven knows where. It is truly amazing to see how many religious structures have disappeared since 1945.

A natural result of any financially prosperous period is a resulting building boom, not just of larger commercial buildings or opulent residences but also of places for public use; churches represented some of the best and most frequent examples of such buildings. Major landmarks erected in the nineteenth century but lost to us since 1945 include:

1) Carlton Street Methodist—south side of Carlton Street about 100 m. east of Yonge Street. Now a parking lot. Built 1874, designed by William Storm. Demolished 1959-60.

sharp contrast to the banding on other surfaces and is used to emphasize the entrance function. Two stone motifs composed of five single waves are employed between the second and third storey windows at the centre front and above the actual doorway opening. These provide a compelling vertical thrust to the composition. The doorways themselves are surrounded by two black lacquer frames embossed on their surfaces in suitable 1930s script with the street number and the name “Everglades”. An original pair of wrought iron banisters on both steps at the front complement the doorway.

These structures trade upon their Florida connection, not just in their names, which is obvious, but clearly also in their design. Excellent examples of their type, their strong emphasis of the horizontal reinforces the name’s evocation of a marine vista.

In their scale, monochromatic composition, and dressed down simplicity of detail they are specimens of the rental unit complexes which originated in Miami Beach in the late 1920s.

Mr. J. Hunt Stanford, the architect, was a prolific and flexible designer frequently commissioned to do apartment buildings. Other stylistic examples include buildings on Ontario Street, 1912, and on Bloor Street West, 1912. The same year that he completed the Everglades, he erected 1930 Yonge Street, a close relative of our subject buildings.

Across regions, and even between individual buildings, this method is not much different from late medieval timber framing, and from a house of the 1690s in Massachusetts to a house of the 1790s in Ontario, heavy timber framing was still being used much the same way.

Members became lighter and thinner as sawmills and advances in transportation improved the availability of standardized materials. The wall spaces were commonly filled with brick, boards or rubble set in mortar to provide insulation and weather proofing. One of the easiest and most inexpensive sheathings for covering the frame was of course wood, adaptable not only to suit but to enhance many of the fashions in house building. Less frequently seen are roughcast plaster, shingles, and wood imitating stone. Later in the nineteenth century metal, artificial stone and other composite materials appeared.

Although most of the cities of North America started as towns of wood or even of log, aspirations to grandeur were nearly always expressed in the first building ordinances. In Washington Jefferson prohibited the construction of wooden houses and required conformity to street lines because they were restricting the development of the town. Governor Simcoe imposed similar ambitions on York in 1793, requiring that houses on front lots facing the lake meet minimum architectural standards of having 45” frontage, being two stories high and uniform in architectural style. In the second street of the three-street layout, reduced frontage was permitted, though architectural pretensions still held; only ‘in the Back Streets and Alleys’ would the ‘Tinkers and Tailors be allowed to consult their own Taste and Circumstances’ for building on small lots. Writing to Isaac Todd on the matter, Richard Cartwright commented, ‘Seriously, our good Governor is a little wild in his projects.’

A sale of building lots in Oakville in 1833 also stipulated that a stone, brick or frame house not less than 24’ by 18’ be built within eighteen months of purchase as a condition of sale. Such requirements were common but their effect is, and one suspects always was, negligible.

In York, fire regulations passed between 1817 and 1823 required every household to have a ‘readily available ladder of sufficient length to reach the eaves as well as another one supplied with iron hooks to be hooked over the ridge, in order to reach the chimney top. Leather buckets of three gallon capacity were to be kept handy at the front door, and six persons in the town who were ‘discreet and active’ were appointed fire wardens. Photographs of the town taken in the 1850s show that these ladders were still in place on a number of buildings. In the final analysis, it was not fire regulations but prosperity which influenced the outward aspect of buildings. As wood buildings burned or fell down, they were replaced by brick for the same reasons that brick is the material of which we have the most from the recent past: durability and prestige.

In 1850 the population of Toronto stood at around 30,000, and clustered mostly in the town grid south of Queen Street or close to Yonge. Between 1851 and 1856 more land was surveyed for subdivision than had been previously subdivided in the preceding twenty years, since the private sector had first begun speculative subdivisions in the 1830s.
with Macaulay Town. The Globe complained that there were enough vacant lots to absorb twice the population, but 1853-57 continued to be boom years for subdivision, as they were for the optimistic construction of prominent public buildings. St. Lawrence Hall, the Seventh Post Office on Toronto Street and the York County Court House were all built in this time.

With the return of the capital to Toronto, the continuing influx of immigrants and the expansion of commerce, the city grew tremendously. Houses nearly doubled in number from 4,834 to 8,383. Most significant was the coming of the railroad, which enabled manufacturers and industries to make significant changes in handling and distribution, the trends which eventually resulted in the specialization of land use. As places of employment expanded their scale of operations, which occurred most dramatically in the 1880s, people could no longer live close to their places of work but required reliable, affordable means of getting there. Beginning with a continuous service on Yonge Street in 1849, the public transit system in Toronto expanded substantially in the 1870s and 1880s as new areas of dense habitation were opened up. Another building boom commenced in 1867, and the Globe reported that the amount of building activity in 1869 was almost without parallel, adding that regrettably many buildings were plaster instead of brick.

This feverish construction activity would not have been possible without a new technique of frame construction, the balloon frame. Although it was one of the most important innovations of the twentieth century, it is an invisible one that had no effect on the external aesthetics of the building. It is virtually undetectable until a building is gutted or demolished.

The innovation of the balloon frame was to substitute thin sill plates and regularly spaced studs, running the full height of the wall, for the plate and principal posts construction of heavy timber framing. Instead of hand-cut mortise and tenon joints, the balloon frame was simply nailed together. Floor joists rest on and are nailed to the horizontals, instead of being cut into them. The wood members were lighter to handle and framing no longer required the skills of a carpenter. In 1865 a journalist wrote, "A man and a boy can now attain the same results, with ease, that twenty men could on an old fashioned frame. If a mechanic is employed, the Balloon frame can be put up for 40% less money than the mortise and tenon frame."

The prerequisite for balloon framing was industrialized manufacture of materials. Lumber had to be available in regular dimensioned lengths, which was not difficult in most settled parts of Ontario; but nails also had to be available in abundance. In Toronto the Toronto Rolling Mills established in 1857 by Casimir Gzowski were probably the first big iron mill capable of mass-producing cut wire nails in Ontario. Before that, nails were cut from imported sheets of iron, and before that of course they were hand forged. Technologically the condition for the mass production of nails existed in Toronto and Montreal only from the late 1850s.

The invention of the balloon frame has been traced to Chicago, although even in the 1860s its origins were considered obscure. St. Mary's Church of 1833, the year of Chicago's incorporation, was the first building to employ the method. Chicago was a speculative development from its inception, and the explosive growth of the city could not have been supported without a mechanized, standardized construction industry.

News of the balloon frame did not get to New York until the 1850s, and it seems not to have been widely used in Ontario until the 1880s, although it is reasonable to assume it may have underlined the Toronto building boom of the late 1860s. By the time of the massive industrial expansion, residential construction and general boom of the 1880s, the balloon frame was certainly in standard use.

Its name was initially thought to be pejorative, mocking the apparent insubstantiality of the light timber members, but it was also called Chicago construction. The balloon frame is now a closed chapter in architectural history, superseded in this century by platform framing which allows floors to drop away from the frame during a fire. The invention of balloon framing depended on a certain level of industrialization, but in turn it made possible the rapid proliferation of housing that supported the expansion of the industrial city. Although it did not significantly affect architectural styles, its presence and impact is evident in the city all around us.

This apartment house, of 24 central hall plan suites, was completed in 1915 by William B. Charlton. The builder was Mr. John D. Allen. Each floor contains six units which are unique in their layout, material and decoration; all have oak woodwork, wainscots and trim. The interior stairs and stairwells, complete with skylights, are covered with marble. All living rooms have working fireplaces and all 24 units have enclosed sun porches.

The design of 102 provides a direct comment on its northerly neighborhood, the Art Deco "Evelynview" at 110 Tyndall. When 102 opened it was heralded as the epitome of gracious family living. This building, with antecedents that go deep within Western European culture, has a "U" shaped floor plan, a generous courtyard, and a trinity of entrances: two Romanesque doorways to the north and south, and one classic pilastered one in the centre. The rusticated polychromatic first floor stone work is complemented by smooth buff brick at the second and third levels, and a roughcast third floor. The whole is finished by a fine pressed metal cornice extending generously at the roof. The building echoes in its creation the Villard Mansion on Madison Avenue in New York. Another obvious but more distant forebear of 102 Tyndall Avenue is the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome. Prior to the 1950s, many architects would experiment with this style, one of the most polished specimens being Charles Dolphine's 1046 Yonge St., erected in 1926.

110-112 Tyndall Avenue

These two three-storey apartment buildings are each configured in a U shape, facing each other over a narrow courtyard. The structures are entirely of buff brick which on the sides and rear is laid with the fifth course, the header, noticeably recessed. This, together with their flat roofs, provides the buildings with their strong horizontal flow. To further emphasize this feature, under the third and main floor windows runs a stone course. This patterning of brick is carried through the window openings by the steel sashes, a typical feature of the period. It is most dramatically communicated on corner windows.

The front elevation of each building is divided vertically into sections. The smaller north and south portions of the two fronts are a continuation of the design just described, while the larger middle portion rises above the roof line. The bricks within this centre area are stacked parallel, having no headers or over laps. This provides a
Cheap at the Price: Dear at the Cost
the Leacock House Controversy

A recent Ontario Municipal Board decision has
given the go-ahead to housing development on the
front lawn of the Stephen Leacock home in Orillia
on Brewery Bay (see May 1989 issue). The city
backed the development despite the fact that its own
Official Plan identified the site as only approved for
parkland. A local citizens’ group, the Committee to
Protect the Stephen Leacock Home, had fought to
no avail, this development all the way to the O.M.B.
The Toronto Region Architectural Conserv-
ancy objects in the strongest possible terms to the
current scheme which would strip Stephen Lea-
cock’s home of its rightful setting. This national
monument is truly significant not just in terms of our
literary past but also as a nature site.

When we consider that we have been allotted
half of a continent on which to live, is it not tragic
that society should contemplate building houses on
an area of such great beauty? We are confident that
future generations will not thank us if we allow the
destruction of the unique relationship that exists
between the Leacock home and its surrounding
property.

In the long run, all heritage sites must be
subjected to interpretation. We must animate them,
bring them to life, so that they are relevant to our
experience. Each successive generation must per-
form this act of translation, for a previous genera-
tion’s assessment of a building may be inadequate as
a means of explaining the structure to those who
encounter it decades or even centuries after its
eruction. As society evolves, what we bring to the
site, our basic knowledge, varies. The purpose of a
root cellar was obvious to our grandparents; it is not
so to many of us. Because we change, the site itself
must not change. In compromising a site’s integrity,
we may take away from it some elements that future
generations will need to decipher it. Those elements
may not be recognized by ourselves and so are not
obviously necessary to our understanding. We
become different people over time. Our blind spots
are always shifting. What seemed obvious to
Torontonians in 1910 about the Don Jail may not be
understood nearly as readily today.

The spirited and valiant Committee to Protect
the Stephen Leacock House were so committed to
their cause that they pursued the matter as far as the
Ontario Municipal Board. The Board was created to
hear objections to the planning process.
Unfortunately the O.M.B. sided with the city. In
their decision they stated that “the heritage atmos-
phere” was being respected. We submit that it is
cruel to expect heritage to approach the daunting
O.M.B. process as a means of safeguarding our
birthright.

We in heritage should expect that some mecha-
nism at the provincial level be made available as our
court of appeal. For heritage is a given--it may
contravene municipal zoning and other by-laws.
Did the provincial government, when it created the
O.M.B., imagine that they should be required to
adjudicate the subtle and often subjective issues that
dominate our field? We believe not! We must
protect the O.M.B. from being required to define
heritage, let alone “heritage atmosphere”. Some
provincial agent must be mandated to intercede
when citizens and local governments are at logger-
heads. The O.M.B. process is physically and finan-
cially exhausting to heritage organizations that have
no endowment and are voluntary in nature. We can
do our job if we are given the tools.

The Leacock controversy is unfortunately not
an isolated incident. If space permitted we could
detail dozens of similar struggles. We can best sum
up this tragic and shameful turn of events in Stephen
Leacock’s own words:

“I never realized that there was his-
tory, so close at hand, beside my very
home. I did not realize that the old grave
that stood among the brambles at the foot
of our farm was history.”
102 and 110-112 Tyndall Avenue

Two Noteworthy Low-rise Apartment Buildings

Named in honour of the celebrated Irish physicist John Tyndall by the founding Gwynne family, prior to 1914 Tyndall Avenue was an exclusively upper middle-class residential street. Grand family homes were sited on large lots. While none of the estates survive, the generous east and west boulevards can still be appreciated. Arguably the widest in the city, these boulevards are significant as they communicate graphically exactly what the “Park” in Parkdale stood for.

#102, a rental apartment building, was designed so as not to disturb the patrician nature of the street. By 1935 the City, conscious of the distinct identity of the area, aggressively worked with the architect and the builder of #110-112 Tyndall to ensure that the new structures would be ones of quality and would not detract from the first experiment in rental accommodation on the street.

#102 and #110-112, in their generous setbacks from the street allowance, in the material of their construction, their scale and massing, and even to a certain extent, their exterior decoration, are extremely complementary. They accurately document the first two generations of apartment type construction in the city. On a street now almost completely rental in nature and although the oldest of such structures they remain the most intimate inviting and attractive of residences. This is surely an indication of the success of their design.

On the basis of their importance to the streetscape and given their context the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy strongly recommends that #102, #110, and #112 Tyndall Avenue be added to the City Inventory.