ACT - Newsletter of the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy

A.C.T.
Newsletter of the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy
May, 1989

Lecture
Where Have All the Churches Gone?

Date: Sunday, May 28, at 3:00 p.m.
Place: Hydro Auditorium, Hydro Place at College and University.
Lecturer: Margaret Baily, staff member at the Toronto Historical Board

Unlike Twentieth Century Toronto, which has put much of its collective disposable income, energy and architectural innovation into office towers and commercial development, Toronto in the 19th Century was called “the City of Churches”. It was in church design and construction that many of the most prominent architectural firms expressed their creativity and engineering skills.

Religious structures gave Toronto many of its most prominent landmarks. Today, with the high price of land and the declining importance of collective worship, many of these monuments have disappeared. Using slides of past and present churches and synagogues, Margaret Baily will cast a backward glance at a “kinder, gentler” Toronto of yesterday.

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Bad News: Redevelopment at "Parkwood"

Parkwood, the former home of the late Colonel Robert Samuel McLaughlin, President of General Motors of Canada, is widely known as one of the most lavish and beautifully developed estates in Canada.

Located in Oshawa, this estate contains 12 acres of grounds designed by H.B. and L.A. Dunnigan-Grubb during the 1920s around a 55-room mansion designed by Darling And Pearson in 1916-17.

In addition to the numerous individual gardens laid out by the Dunnigan-Grubs, such as a sunken garden, an Italian garden, rose gardens, and an orchard, the grounds also contain the unique formal water gardens designed in 1935-36 by Toronto architect John Lyle. These gardens, containing a 225 foot reflecting pool, fountains and formal flowerbeds, were hailed as an achievement not only nationally but internationally when they were developed.

Since the death of Colonel McLaughlin in 1972, the estate has been open to the public. Its owner, the Oshawa General Hospital, is now apparently developing a hospital expansion plan which would jeopardize as much as half of the estate, including the Lyle formal garden. We will keep you informed on the status of this threatened landscape.

--Robert Hunter

Article reprinted from: Pollen Vol. 1 No. 3 March 1989

The Art of Wychwood

To celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Wychwood Park, Conservancy member Albert Fulton has written a book which traces the artistic development of the Park. Originally conceived as an artist’s colony, Wychwood was and is home to many creative people, and “The Art of Wychwood” outlines the artistic and architectural pursuits of some 25 residents, past and present. The 302-page book contains more than 300 photographs and illustrations, including 10 colour prints of work by Wychwood artists. It is available from Albert or Emily Fulton at 96 Wychwood Park (537-5006). A copy may be examined at the Conservancy office in the Heritage Centre (10 Adelaide St. E.) or at the Wychwood Library (1431 Bathurst St., just south of St. Clair). The price of $30 includes a $5 donation to the A.C.T. and a $5 donation toward the restoration of a portrait of the artist Marmaduke Matthews (the founder of Wychwood Park) painted by George A. Reid (founder of the Ontario College of Art and long-time trustee of Wychwood Park). The restored painting will hang in the Wychwood Library.

Preservation Action Survey

We are grateful for the response to the Preservation Action survey that was enclosed with the November '88 newsletter. For those that didn't fill it out and send it in, there is another enclosed with this issue. We hope to print a summary of the responses in a future issue, but in the meantime here is a sampling of the comments made under the "other ideas" category:

- Guidelines regarding foreign investors - BS, Toronto.
- Not enough focus on green space, valleys, trees, rivers, pollution of air, water, soil (acid rain). - LJ, Markham.
- We should have an awards program like the AIA 25 year award. we could have a 5 year, 10 year, 20 year and 50 year award each year for buildings of these ages to show that buildings need not be ancient to warrant respect and protection. - AM, Toronto.
- Institutions teaching architecture and planning (by any name) need to be re-educated. Heritage organizations require drastic improvement in government funding (at all levels). - JB, Toronto.
Orillia Citizens Group Fights to Save Leacock Property

One of Canada's literary landmarks, the Stephen Leacock Memorial Home on Old Brewery Bay in Orillia, is about to have its natural setting despoiled by an enormous, encroaching, private development, if Orillia's city council has its way.

However, a group of Orillia residents, the Committee To Protect the Stephen Leacock Home, is appealing the city's decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. This committee is now seeking support locally, across Canada and abroad.

The historic home, Canada's only literary museum, sits on 26.14 acres of city-owned land that was once part of Leacock's estate. Built by Leacock in 1928, this beautiful summer residence is now maintained as a public museum by the city of Orillia. It is surrounded by lawns and gardens carefully groomed to capture the time when the world-renowned humorist composed such masterpieces as Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town.

Since Leacock's day the Home has retained the character of a summer retreat. With Brewerry Bay on the North, Barnstable Bay on the east, acres of woodland to the south and wetlands to the west, the Home and its grounds have remained an undisturbed sanctuary, reflecting Leacock's idea of a "land of hope and sunshine".

In 1987 the City of Orillia invited development proposals for 17.74 of the 26.14 acres. The proposed development, a private retirement community to be owned and operated by Versa Care Ltd., contains 52 double duplexes, 38 row houses, 20 maisonettes, 200 "luxury living units" and a 100 unit nursing home.

Orillia city council has sold part of the Leacock lawns to allow construction of a double duplex in the Home's backyard. It is also permitting the closest line of row houses in the development to be 100 feet from Leacock's kitchen door. Should this development proceed, all the woodland to the south of the Home will disappear, and the Home, to all intents and purposes will be incorporated into the private development.

The committee is now soliciting support from all concerned Canadians and friends of Leacock abroad to fight this proposed development.

If you can help, contact: Committee To Protect the Stephen Leacock Home
129 Coldwater Road West, Orillia L3V 3L5 (705) 325-9033
Excerpts from The Orillia Sun, January 4, 1989:

...since the home's humble beginnings three decades ago, senior governments have moved to protect historic properties from encroachment by non-complementary development. In 1985, Culture and Communication Minister Lily Muñoz secured an injunction to halt a subdivision from constructing homes on a hillside behind the Rockwood Academy, a property owned by the Ontario Heritage Foundation. In another instance, an injunction was obtained halting a subdivision in the Don Valley because it would endanger an important geological site.

Both injunctions were obtained long after developers had secured zoning adjustments and other municipal okay. What has been overlooked in both cases was the public interest, the "aesthetics", in the case of the Academy, the geological environment in the case of the Don Valley."

--J.A. Pete McGarvey

A retention pond to collect storm sewer drainage from the development will occupy the approximate site of Leacock's "to be restored boathouse": a large paved parking lot will surround the gift shop some 40 feet from the shores of Brewery Bay; about 100 feet of a double row of cedars planted by Leacock in 1927 will disappear and a quadruplex will be built on Leacock's lawn.

The historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada will refer the Leacock Home to the Board, possibly as early as June on "possible, national architectural significance of the house."

As we go to press the group fighting to save the Leacock home are appealing to the O.M.B.

Runnymede Theatre

Cinematic Landmark Comes Under the Gun

It's been a West Toronto landmark since 1928. But time may be running out on the Runnymede Theatre. The theatre, which is one of only two 1920s era architectural landmarks left in West Toronto, sits on the south side of Bloor Street west of Runnymede Road. It also sits under the oppressive cloud of a demolition permit, duly issued on December 14, 1987.

As far as the city is concerned, the permit is still valid. Until December 31, 1988, the building was owned by the Famous Players movie theatre chain. But recently, the building, which incorporates street addresses from 2223 to 2229 Bloor Street West, was sold.

According to Famous Players, the new owner of the building is Louis Goodman, a businessman who owns several other Bloor Street West properties. A spokesman for Famous Players said their contact for dealing with Goodman was lawyer Martin Kaplan.

In a brief interview Kaplan told the Villager he had "no comment" on the building's owner, or whether he even represented Goodman. Now rumours of plans to demolish the building and put up a two storey mall are running rampant.

While the rumours are unsubstantiated, one thing is certain. Any plans to demolish the building will be met with fierce opposition from area residents, specifically the West Toronto-Junction and Swansea Historical Societies. The theatre lies on the boundary between the two groups, and is therefore of great interest to both, according to West Toronto-Junction Historical Society president Joan Miles.

"Every effort should be made, even at the eleventh hour, to retain the building," Miles said. "It and the Runnymede Library are the two historical structures of the 1920s in the area."

Miles said her group, along with the Swansea Historical Society, will be making a joint submis-
Historic Buildings In Newmarket Threatened
by Terry Carter

Some of the finest examples of Newmarket’s residential and industrial architectural heritage have come under threat of the wrecker’s ball this year. The two early 19th century Yonge St. manor houses, Dawson Manor and Bonshaw, have recently been sold to developers and their farms will soon be the subject of subdivision applications.

Dixon Pencil, once the Canwoodworking factory, also has new owners and we can expect a development proposal for that property in the near future. The surviving Office Specialty building, which along with the Canwood factory is the major surviving industrial building from the last century, is now owned by the town but may not be designated as an historical structure, the mayor said recently, because in a few years it may be demolished to make way for housing.

The loss of any of these four buildings would be a tragedy for the community. There are few enough of Newmarket’s early buildings surviving in the sea of ticky-tacky subdivision development which is lapping all around us.

These are the buildings which give the town its distinctiveness, its character, and like the old town hall which the same mayor was all in favour of tearing down a few years ago, must be retained, put to new uses and allowed to continue to impart their flavour to our historic community.

Dawson Manor

Dawson Manor is one of the best colonial homes of Yonge St. Built during the 1830s by a wealthy English colonist in the Georgian style, it passed out of his family only in recent months when his descendants sold house and farm.

Dawson Manor was built by Squire John Dawson, one of Newmarket’s first doctors, and it witnessed many a joyous occasion in the community because the good doctor was also a merrymaker—a justice of the peace.

Located on the rise of ground immediately north of Upper Canada Mall, the Manor still has its original trim, carvings and woodwork, its hand-blown glass and many of its original fixtures. It remains a gracious home on part of its original 400-
Pearse House

Movement to Preserve Rouge Valley Landmark

by George W. J. Duncan

The Save the Rouge Valley System (SVRS) organization, well-known for its effective lobbying to preserve a nationally significant wilderness area on the eastern fringe of Metro Toronto, is currently undertaking a major project to establish a Rouge Valley Conservation and Environmental Resource Centre. The focus of the project is the preservation of the historic Pearse House, a late Victorian farmhouse ideally located on Meadowvale Road on the Metro Zoo property.

In addition to its efforts to preserve the Rouge Valley and increase public awareness of its natural heritage resources, the SRVS is also concerned with the protection of historic and prehistoric sites. The Pearse House project, due to the building’s high visibility and potential for public access, presents Scarborough preservationists with a valuable opportunity to promote a strong heritage conservation presence in this community.

A sub-committee of the SRVS is preparing a feasibility study for the project, which will address the complete restoration of missing interior trim, and an addition to house a large meeting room and exhibit area. The estimated cost of this work is $350,000, to be raised through private, corporate and government sources. One of the funding proposals is the sale of a limited edition colour print of the Pearse House in its ‘prime’, by Scarborough-based artist Roy Henry Wright.

The Pearse House is essentially a balloon-framed, brick-veneered Classic Ontario Farmhouse. A rather late example, it was constructed in 1830 and left Stokesley, Yorkshire to come to Canada with his family. Obviously a man of means, Dawson brought with him his servants, farm animals and implements, glass, wrought iron and household goods.

It took three attempts before his ship succeeded in crossing the Atlantic and even then they made harbour much farther south that anticipated—putting in well below New York City, according to family history.

Undaunted, Dawson set out by road and then pioneer settlers’ trails to reach his goal, the York County frontier.

Purchasing the 400 acres on Yonge St., enough to leave 100 to each of his four sons, family and servants constructed a log house and outbuildings to serve until a proper manor house could be built.

It took until 1837 to finish the Manor. Bricks for the 14-inch thick walls and three chimneys were made from clay found on the property and baked in a kiln nearby. Enoch Rogers, a Newmarket builder, did the carpentry work.

The house may have been the first in the area to have central heating—a wood-burning furnace was installed during construction.

Dawson moved in in 1837, the year the Rebellion broke out. As a doctor, he often ministered to the Indians and was well liked and much admired by them. The squire was also known as a staunch supporter of the government.

Knowing Newmarket was a centre of rebel activity and fearing Dawson Manor might be attacked, the Indians took measures to protect it. A party pitched teepees on the Manor’s front lawn, serving notice to the neighbourhood that Dawson Manor was under their protection.

Rumours were already rampant in the community that the governor was gathering Indian war parties from the north to sweep through the rebellious York County settlements, and so the sight of teepees was no doubt enough to keep the rebels away.

As was the custom, Dawson ran his own dispensary at the Manor in which he filled his own prescriptions, and so although it was well out of town in those days, the Manor no doubt was often a

Bonshaw on Yonge Street, Newmarket - photo courtesy Terry Carter
busy place as patients came to see the doctor, get
their medicine and do business with or get married
by Dawson the justice of the peace.
Squire Dawson died in 1851.

Bonshaw

Bonshaw, a white, pillared mansion with a
strong resemblance to a southern U.S. plantation
house, crowns the Yonge St. hill leading north from
the town.

The plantation flavour is no coincidence, for
Bonshaw's builder, Jacob Aemilius Irving was born
in Charleston, South Carolina.
The Irving family left Bonshaw, Dumfriesshire,
Scotland, in the early 1700s, settling first in Jamaicas
and then in Bermuda and South Carolina.
Jacob chose a military career in the British
army. He was wounded while serving under Well-
ington at Waterloo with the 13th Light Dragoons
and remained in the army with the rank of lieutenant
until 1834, when he decided to emigrate to the
United States.

In 1839, following a stay in England where he
lost three daughters to scarlet fever, Jacob Aemilius
came to Newmarket, where he purchased the lot
north of Dawson Manor for $6,048 from Theodore
Huntley. The farm was already cleared and had a
two-storey house, barns and sheds on it, but Irving felt
the house was not adequate.

In 1841 he erected the fine southern-style
mansion which he named Bonshaw. Based on the
plan of his brother's home in Charleston, it is of
brick made on the site and local stone and timber.

Jacob Aemilius Irving moved in influential
circles in the colony and was closely connected with
Family Compact members, including the Robinson
family of Newmarket and Toronto. Irving was
appointed the first warden of Simcoe County in
1843 (Bonshaw was then in Simcoe County) and was
called to the Legislative Council the same year.

Dixon Pencil Factory

Today's Dixon Pencil factory was built by
William Cane for his woodenware business on the
ashes of his earlier factory on the site which burned
in 1885.
For many years this factory, along with the Office Specialty and the Davis Leather Co. tannery, was one of the three pillars of Newmarket’s industrial community.

Cane, who became Newmarket’s first mayor upon the village’s incorporation as a town in 1881, founded his business in Queensville when he was 18 years old. In 1874, Cane’s Mills, by then a thriving complex consisting of a sawmill, boardhouse and other buildings on the 5th Concession south of Queensville, burned to the ground. Williams rebuilt, only to see everything destroyed by fire again.

He relocated to Newmarket, purchased the Sykes foundry and engine works on Huron St. (now Davis Dr.) and then lost that to fire. It was the woodenware, sash, trim and door mill and factory he then built which burned in 1885. At the time it was Newmarket’s largest employer.

The new buildings employed 250 workers and was the biggest and most important business in the town’s economy.

Ethel Trewella writes of interviewing town residents who remembered the long lines of horse-drawn sleighs carrying huge loads of logs arriving on winter days at Cane’s. Sometimes as many as 500 logs a day came in.

Daily output at the factory, she says, included 40 dozen pins and eight to 10 dozen tubs in the booming 1880s.

But the timberline gradually receded, the huge virgin-growth trees disappeared from the remaining forests, and of course, the market for wooden buckets, jugs, clothespins and other items made at the factory shrank as other better and cheaper products became available.

About 1920 the firm installed pencil-making machines and became the first manufacturer of lead pencils in Canada. In 1931 a U.S. firm Dixon Pencil Co., acquired the firm.
Land Title Documents

by Alec Keever

In 1984 the heritage community throughout Ontario was informed by the Ontario Heritage Society, of the intention of the Provincial Ministry of Consumer & Commercial Relations to convert all the data held by all the Registry Offices into a paperless format, meaning microfilm. For the purposes of the Real Estate Business once the deeds had been microfilmed the original pieces of paper were redundant and the Ministry sought to dispose of them. The province requires that government documents be evaluated by the Archives of Ontario before they can be discarded.

Until 1984 the registry offices held all original deeds, memorials and instruments. These pieces of paper recognized as legal tender by the courts contain a record of contracts between individuals with respect to the holding and transfer of property. Many parcels of land and their associated documents go directly back to John Graves Simcoe’s surveys of the 1790’s. In a very real sense this 200 year old trail of paper is the best single series of documents to explain the society that evolved north of the great lakes. For it was the right to own the roof over your head along with other essential freedoms, religion, etc. that were to form the most powerful magnets to attracting immigrants from nations where these basic rights were not commonplace.

In 1976 our organization initiated the Rosedale Project. A group of volunteers have been working continuously since that date. They have documented the architectural history of every building in that district.

This Committee is chaired by the Past President of the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy, Mrs. C. Neal. It is in the final edit stage prior to publication. Their work will soon be going to press. When completed, this monumental undertaking will serve as the prototype for organizations such as ourselves throughout North America. The hallmark of their work; extremely accurate research and thoughtful analysis of structure design, communicated in a clear expressive manner.

We contacted Mrs. Neal when we first heard of the microfilming and disposal campaign. We asked her how this policy, regarding original instruments and memorials, would have impacted the Rosedale project. Mrs. Neal responded that if they were starting work now using only microfilm they would be unable to complete the project. The original deeds were crucial.

On November 8, 1984 the then Director of Real Property Mr. V.S. McCutcheon, in reaction to the public outcry, stated “...I have instructed my Toronto Registry Offices to refrain from discarding any document that is more than 25 years old....” Further the director informed historical groups that, “...in the near future, we hope to provide a forum whereby the archivist and others such as yourself can determine more definitively as to the historical worth of documents no longer required by this Ministry....”

You well can imagine the shock we at the Toronto Region Conservancy felt when we learned from a researcher (ACT Newsletter Sept. 84) that all original deeds dating from 1886 to 1947 for York County had been shredded and the paper sold to Donmar to be recycled as the skin on wallboard.

When reminded of their commitments of 1984 Mr. R. Logan, Mr. V.S. McCutcheon’s successor, informed the heritage community that “…the decision to destroy these documents was made after consultation between staff of this Ministry and the Archivist’s office. It is the responsibility of the Archivist to determine the historical value of such documents.”

In a large part as a response to communiques exchanged and meeting held between the Architectural Conservancy Toronto Region and the Ministry of Commerce and Commercial Relations in July of 1988, the Minister of Culture and Communications the Honourable Lily Oddie-Munn has urged the heritage community to form a committee to advise her on how to proceed with this important matter.

Thousands of cubic meters of original land titles documents for York County dating from 1868 to 1947 have been shredded.
As a way of amplifying our concerns we here reprint a piece from Currently - Ontario Museum

Dust to dust, ashes to ashes ... Archives to shredder?!?

by Steve Neufeld

In the final analysis, these are the decisions that must be made by archivists. In the Archives of Ontario, under the Archives Act, this heavy burden rests on the shoulders of the Archivist of Ontario.

The POLARIS Solution

The philosophical issues of the nature of museums and archives can lead to lively debates, but the real heart of the matter comes to the fore when practical realities require action. The case in point that has led to the recent controversies has been the handling of Land Registry Office records.

These records contain the original instruments and deeds of property transactions throughout the history of Ontario. The procedure at one time was to copy all the transactions into bound volumes of uniform size. The intention was to create a more manageable duplicate of the original records. Obviously the accuracy and completeness of these copy books were dependent on the dedication and skill of the copier, and the time left at the end of the day! The Archives of Ontario assumed responsibility of the original instruments and deeds and the original copy books from the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. These holdings were vast, and it was recognized that the Archives of Ontario did not have the appropriate storage facilities and human resources to keep all the material and have it accessible to titlesearchers and historical researchers. The decision was made to retain all the original copy books, since they were in much better condition and easier to handle and copy all the original instruments and deeds onto microfilm. The original Land Registry Office instruments and deeds dated 1866-1947 would then be destroyed. This process became part of POLARIS (Province of Ontario Land Registry Information System) - which is in essence a programme to achieve the complete automation of the property registration
system in Ontario. What is implicit in the program is the eventual destruction of the original archival Land Registry Office records.

It’s Our Problem Now
While POLARIS looks good on paper, and the intention of making information more easily available is laudable, there are some fundamental issues - beyond the normal desire for historical research - underlying concern about the destruction of the instruments and deeds.

What happens when some unforeseen circumstance the microfilm is damaged in processing? What if the microfilm camera was not in focus, and on the particular day in history relating to those records the copy assistant went fishing and no transactions were recorded in the copy book? What happens when some crucial evidence was written on the bottom of a document and carried over on the reverse, and only the one side was microfilmed? What is going to happen when you are researching the history of your community for an exhibit and find that important information about an historic house cannot be deciphered on the microfilm and the original deed has long since been shredded? What is the legal status of a microfilm copy of a deed? What will happen to other records like birth and death certificates when the space runs out?

Is society willing to pay the price to preserve its documentary heritage?

Is the problem unique to Ontario, or is this the “normal” way that archives remain in the rest of Canada and North America deal with such problems?

Sad to say that while these issues are being debated, the process of copying and shredding a representative original Land Registry documents had been going on regardless.

By July 1988, when the full implication of POLARIS became realized, and the extent of the destruction of the original documents known to the public, the Archives of Ontario, Jan E. Wilson, and the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations halted all further destruction of the instruments and deeds pending full consultation and review of the programme. To conclude the review process, representatives of several provincial heritage groups, the Ontario Museum Association being one, were invited by Minister of Culture and Communication Lily Munro, to participate with the Archivist of Ontario on an Advisory Committee on the Original Land Registry Records.

The terms of reference for the advisory committee were:

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

2) to review issues related to the condition of accessibility of these records and of microfilm copies of the records;

3) to identify and review options for the preservation, duplication, distribution or destruction of these records and to identify the implications of these options, including necessary resources.

4) to make any recommendations which seem appropriate concerning any of these issues to the Minister of Culture and Communications and the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

All destruction of land registry office records will remain halted until the advisory group’s recommendations are considered by Ms. Munro and Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

Solidarity of Heritage Organizations

The Heritage Co-ordinating Committee, consisting of representatives of all the provincial heritage service organizations, met on 6 February to discuss the issue of POLARIS. In an unprecedented show of solidarity the members of the committee had been asked to participate on the Advisory Committee agreed not to nominate a representative until the concerns of the Heritage Co-ordinating Committee could be presented to the Minister of Culture and Communications.

The committee discussed various objectives and agreed on the following position statement:

1) The Heritage Co-ordinating Committee is committed to the preservation of its original archival material.

2) The Committee encourages continued reproduction of original documents for routine use, with the provision that a set of standards for reproduction and a quality assurance programme
Open the Seventh Floor!

Below is a complete, up-to-date list of signatories of the petition to restore the public spaces on the seventh floor of the former Eaton's College Street store. Thank you to all who signed—your voices will be heard! (If you missed it, there is another copy of the petition enclosed with this issue.)

The 7th floor of the former Eaton's College Street Store — housing the Art-Deco-style Eaton Auditorium and the Grand Room Restaurant — is rapidly deteriorating. The present owners, Toronto College Street Centre Ltd., are not permitted to demolish the interiors. However, in 1976, when developing the College Park Complex, they made legal promises to restore them.

This petition will be presented to Mayor Arthur Eggleton’s special committee studying the Eaton Auditorium situation, demonstrating that they must insist upon the speedy restoration of these tremendously important architectural interiors that have played such an important role in the cultural history of Toronto.

“I agree that the 7th floor of the former Eaton College Street Store must be restored to its original condition as soon as possible, for the benefit of all Torontonians.”

The Honorable Pauline McGilton
J. Beckwith
H. Freedman
H. Simmons
A. Karst

Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy
Executive
A. Kenner
M. Tucker
H. Miller
D. McFarlane
E. Ingall

McFarland
G. Owen
H. Leavie
A. Cote
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L. Phipps
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Endicott Historical Society
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M. Smyth
C. Szkics
B. Hiller
M. Thompson
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M. Fleming
E. Links
D. Dessureault
M. Cross
P. Raoult

Friends from Peterborough
D. Atkins
C.M. Friesen
J.M. Green
S.A. Ramden
C. McGrath
M.S. Thomas
N.M. Henry
J.B. Wilson
P. Kuchwara
R.E. Furey
A. Bonner
W. Bonner

Heritage Belleville
D. Bentley
M. McMillan
M. McMeeken
R. Beard
D. Thompson
M. McKinnon
J. A. Ogrydziak
B. Green
J. Juston
A. Wilson
N. Grieve
R. Bay

Heritage East Gwillimbury
D. Glover
M. Urquahart
B. Sanderson
D. Sinek
M. Denys

R. Zauviy-Jackson
H. Martin
B. Cote
A. Barlow
M. O'Keefe
T. O'Connor
H. Klassen
M. Whitney
S. Feehan
J. Fair
M. Stagg
C. Mabey
L. Gates
M. Davor

Is There a Future For the Past?

There are no easy answers, but at least there is now a focus on the following problems:

1. The Archives of Ontario is under-funded, even after support for the archives has been twice mentioned in Throne speeches. Monetary support for archives in Ontario is the lowest per capita in Canada. (unofficial estimates suggest that Ontario spends about half as much on its provincial archives as Quebec).

2. Preservation and not conservation should be the priority when dealing with original archival material — an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Justifying the destruction of original documents because it is too costly to conserve them to the ultimate standards in vogue today is not a valid argument. Resources spent in destruction might just as effectively be spent in building repositories for the long term safe-keeping of archival materials.

3. The function and role of archivists in general are not understood, and as a result the needs of the archival community have been neglected.

4. The burden placed on the Archives of Ontario is unmanageable; alternatives should be examined such as a system of regional archives co-sponsored by the regions and the Province.

satisfactory to the committee to be developed and monitored on an ongoing basis.

3) The Committee identified the need for a comprehensive policy regarding storage, access and handling of original documents.

The Committee met with David Silcox, Deputy Minister of Culture and Communications, and Ian Wilson, Archivist of Ontario, on 9 March 1989 and discussed the concerns of the heritage community regarding the preservation of original archival material. The Committee has been invited to meet with Ms Lily Munro in the near future. The resolution of the Heritage Co-ordinating Committee remains firm — and none of the members will participate in a select Advisory Committee on Historical Land Registry Records until the Minister of Culture and Communications has had an opportunity to meet with the Heritage Co-ordinating Committee and redress directly to our position.

We at the Conservancy are grateful to the OMA and to Mr. Neff for this thoughtful exposition of the facts as they see them. Although we building fanatics may not entirely share the museum community's perspective, we look forward to working with the OMA and the other members of the Heritage co-ordinating committee to arrive at a satisfactory solution to the impasse we now face.

CRAGLEIGH HOUSE DEMOLISHED

Cragleih House

May 1989

5) The copying of original documents seems to be the norm in North American archival practice, but the destruction of originals is not.

Our efforts to improve the lot of museums and museum workers in the Province of Ontario has been a struggle, and with pressures on our funding from Bill C119 the challenge will certainly not lessen. However, we cannot afford to ignore the plight of our colleagues in the heritage community - we are all stewards of a heritage resource which must be managed for generations to come. Is there a future for our past?”

We are deeply sorry to inform our readers that Cragleigh House, the subject of an article in a recent newsletter, was demolished on February 11 of this year by its Toronto developer owner.

Cragleigh House was built by Sir Sandford Fleming in the 1850s as a home for his parents. It stood at one of the most historic locations in Ontario, near the site of two Petun Indian villages and some of the earliest French Jesuit missions in the province.

Its loss makes one more black mark against our society, which time and again turns its back on its heritage in favour of the short-term profits of real estate development.
"Oaklands"

336 Annette Street, north-west corner Annette and Laws Streets

Circa 1910

Residence of Robert L. McCormack

Former owner/occupant, William Stewart

Members of McCormack family last resided there in the early 1920s.

The Jewish Children's Home occupied the site from 1922 until the 1930s.

Dates of construction, demolition and identity of original architect are all unknown.

Photo: West Toronto Junction Historical Society

Courtesy Mary Draper, née McCormack (who was born here.)

In response to the photographs of Edgewater House on Fallingbrook Road, Scarborough, a member came forward with the above excellent panorama of "Oaklands". Keeping in touch with our past is important—maybe you have pictures of homes your family has owned. Why don’t you share them with us, so we can all enjoy them?

Readers should not confuse this house, now demolished, with the one of the same name still standing on the de La Salle College campus on Avenue Road, south of St. Clair Avenue.