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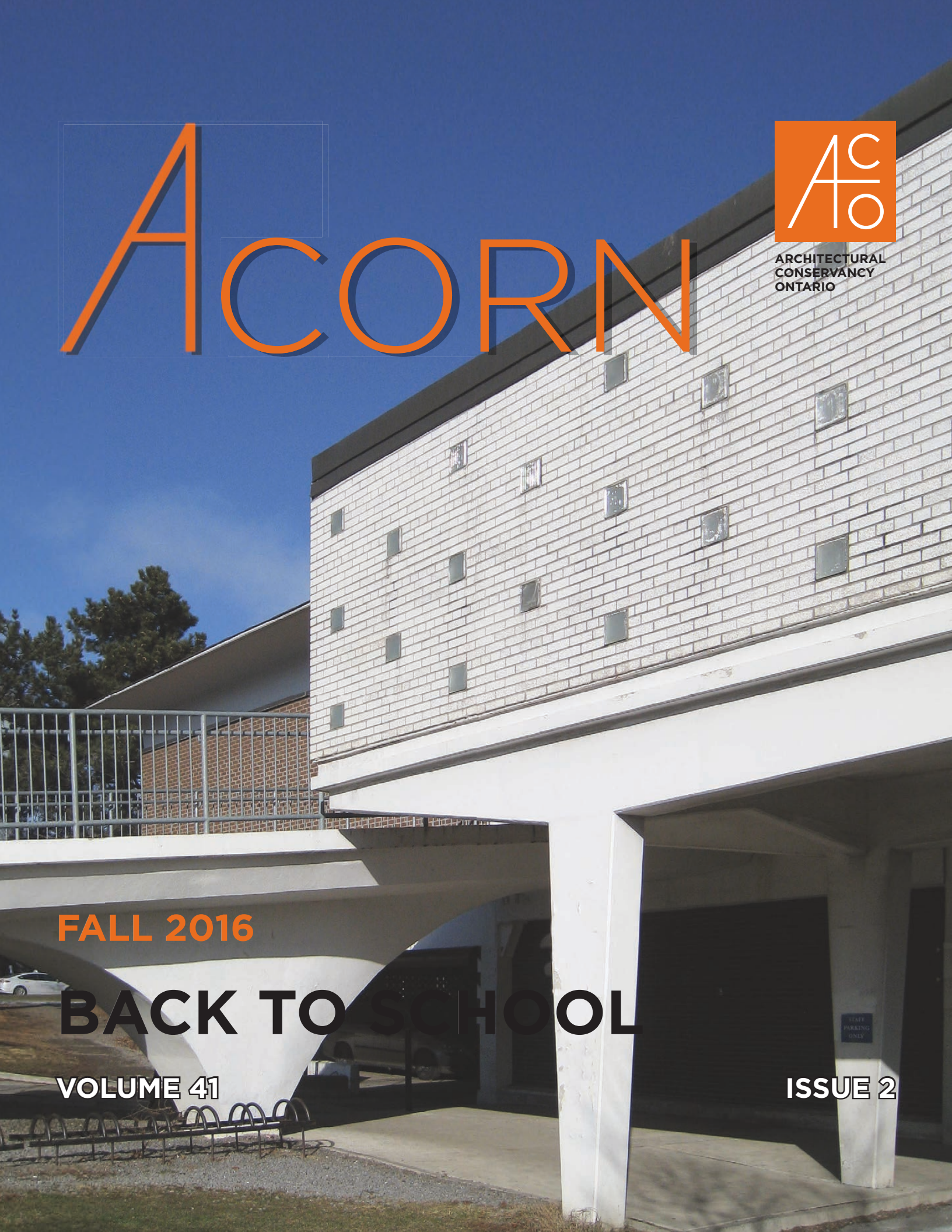

FALL 2016

BACK TO SCHOOL

VOLUME 41 ISSUE 2

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

150 Reflections – ACORN Spring 2017

In 2017, Ontario – as one of the four founding provinces – will join the rest of Canada to mark a century and a half since Confederation. The spring ACORN will celebrate 150 years of architectural and cultural heritage that tell the story of who we are as a province. Join the festivities by reflecting on Ontario's built heritage:

- Monuments, structures or cultural landscapes with a connection to Confederation
- Significant buildings dating to 1867
- A Confederation-era architect whose work is conserved
- Milestone contributions by Ontario architects over the past 150 years
- Outstanding Centennial projects that celebrated 100 years since Canada's formation
- Special restoration projects being completed in 2017 to mark this occasion

Articles should be either 500 or 1000 words in length accompanied by high-quality photographic images. All submissions should reflect ACO's mission to "encourage the conservation and reuse of structures, districts and landscapes of architectural, historic and cultural significance to inspire and benefit Ontarians."

Please send queries to liz.lundell@rogers.com. Deadline for submissions is January 28, 2017.

Submission and photography guidelines are available on www.arconserv.ca.

Eden Mills Hotel, built in 1867. **Photo** *Dan Schneider, 2016*

Cover image of the former Parkway Vocational School at 1 Danforth Avenue, Toronto

Photo credit: Robert Moffatt, 2016

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kensington Market Lofts – A Repurposed School

by Catherine Nasmith

Thanks to the terrific editorial team at ACORN for spotlighting the precarious position of Ontario school buildings in this issue.

So many communities have fought to save their local school, some successfully, but often the end is a heartbreaking loss of a community landmark and touchstone, sometimes along with publicly owned open space. In an article about Davisville Junior Public School in Toronto, I will highlight some of the reasons this happens, and what ACO is doing and hopes to do to stop such losses.

Here's the crazy part: when school buildings are declared redundant and put up for sale there is generally a bidding war from developers who want to repurpose these well-built structures. Here follows just one of those stories.

Kensington Market Lofts interior. **Photo** *Catherine Nasmith, 2016*

I live in Kensington Market, in a building called Kensington Lofts. The complex is the former George Brown College campus. It was declared redundant by the College in the mid-nineties. After several attempts by the local community to find disappearing housing monies to start a co-op, the building was bought by C and A Developments (in fact the A is former ACO President Lloyd Alter). The firm later became Context Developments.

What follows is the success story of its conversion to a loft condominium, finished in 1999. The conversion was done very economically, giving the lie to the need to tear down old buildings because they are too expensive to fix. It's a great place to live, but we benefit as condo owners from the public investment in the original building, that was probably not recaptured in the sale for private purposes. The condo corporation is going through a series of investments in re-pointing and masonry restoration. While expensive in the short term, there will be many years of low maintenance to follow.

The project was a pioneer loft conversion comprised of two wings – one on Baldwin Street and the other on Nassau. Although aimed at mid market, a high standard of architectural design was achieved. (The other partner in C and A was Howard Cohen, formerly head of the Design Exchange.)

Architect Alex Spiegel, a later partner in Context Developments, wanted the project to be as "green" as possible. The first step was re-using the existing buildings. In addition, a central system supplies heated and chilled water to individual heat pumps in the units. Among the material selections are bamboo, recycled concrete, and glass countertops. The original doors, fitments, and furniture were sold or given away to community agencies. There is a roof garden on the connecting link with Nassau Street, which is visible from the stairwell of the Nassau Street building.

The high ceilings in the original buildings created dramatic spaces, and the old buildings also allowed for great variety in size and layout of individual suites. The wide school corridors were left as generous hallways. On the second and third floor of the Nassau Street building remain two dramatic coved ceilings from the 1924 school. In many of the halls the services are left exposed, painted dark grey, with lighting suspended below them.

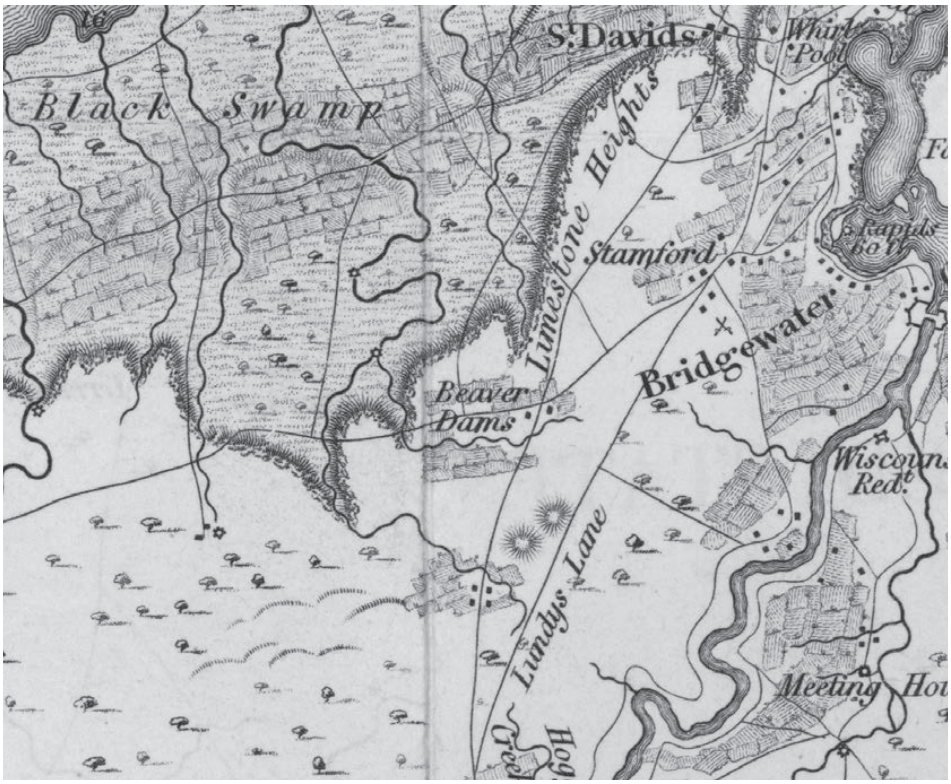
If your community is faced with a school demolition, do all you can to argue for repurposing for public use, but if that fails you won't have to look too far to find a developer willing to convert.

Parts of this article were originally published in East/West: A Guide to Where People Live in Toronto *(Toronto: Coach House Books, 2000).*

Educating Future Citizens

The Beaverdams Story

by Sarah King Head



Detail of Lieut. Francis Hall, "The Niagara Frontier," in Travels in Canada and the United States in 1816 and 1817 *(London: Longmans and Hurst, 1818), pp. 206–07.* **Digital reproduction** *courtesy of Brock University Archives*

Utterly unremarkable is how most people would describe the area: overgrown and bleak, a post-industrial hinterland that exists west of the Welland Canal in Niagara.

But, stumbling eastward along an ATV-rutted path from the quaint village of Beaverdams (c. 1790) in the City of Thorold, we come to the banks of the Third Welland Canal. Three heavy concrete abutments nearby are the only reminder that a swing bridge once traversed the canal here and hint at a far more antique relic: the Indigenous Beaverdams Trail. An artery following the ridge of the Niagara Escarpment, it had been used for a millennium by the region's First Peoples before economic refugees of European descent first began to navigate the densely wooded region after crossing the Niagara River in the late eighteenth century, travelling from Lundy's Lane to Hamilton.

Spring. Before the weeds and insects take over, one can still detect the stone foundations of two buildings to the south and north of this path: one from about 1833 and the other from 1855.

These foundations are potent – and yet almost entirely unknown – reminders of a chapter in Upper Canadian history. It is the story of the implementation of a system of free, non-denominational public education that was commemorated by a recently appointed Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, Rev. Egerton Ryerson, and various local politicians and educators on a hot summer's day in 1848 a few hundred metres to the east at Kelly's Grove.[1]

Beginning his career as a saddlebag preacher on the St. Catharines circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Ryerson is said to have first preached at nearby Beaverdams Church after its dedication in 1832. Fifteen years later, when he sought to implement an educational system that had the power to shape future "useful" citizens, he focused his attention again on the little hamlet along the historic trail.

For reformers like Ryerson, consistently poor enrolments in common schools were recognized to be a direct consequence of the so-called "rate bill system." On the one hand, if families could not afford to send their children to school, society missed a golden opportunity to shape the national character and economic prospects of the next generation. On the other, the system made it difficult to hire and retain teachers in the poorer districts since salaries were paid directly by individual families based on attendance. The problem was acute in Thorold township, as Thompson noted a half century later: "As there were only a few children in that section [i.e., Beaverdams] wealthy enough to pay fees, consequently the attendance was small, and the salary paid was utterly inadequate as compensation to a teacher of any ability whatever."[2]

Relying on a standardized system of elementary education that had been established with the *Common School Act* in 1841, Ryerson therefore drafted legislation that would make it the responsibility of local authorities to raise, collect and provide for the

maintenance of schools under their jurisdiction. *An Act for raising monies for building School Houses and for other purposes relating to Common Schools in certain sections of Townships in this District* also made it the responsibility of District Superintendents to pay teachers' wages.

Two schools were singled out to test this new system in 1847: School Section No. 4 in Stamford (Niagara Falls) and School Section No. 2 Beaverdams (Thorold).

Already within a year of passage of the Act, district superintendent Dexter D'Everado was able to boast of a 90 per cent increase in school attendance. He did, however, observe in correspondence to Ryerson in 1848 that the Free School System was "not approved of by every person in the Niagara District."[3]

The impact on the small community of Beaverdams was sufficiently great that, within eight years, a new school building was required. The original one – a 6 by 7.3 square metre frame building located on the south side of the historic trail – had already been in use since about 1833. It had been positioned on a road allowance between two 200-acre (80 hectare) farms that were bisected by the trail, by then a much-travelled road. In 1855, the school was relocated to the north side of the Beaver Dam Road. Commensurate with its elevated status, the building was expanded to 8 by 9.8 square metres and constructed of brick.

It is almost certain that this site would have received cultural heritage commemoration had the march of progress not insisted the school be moved further along the trail to its current location; indeed, the decision in 1878 to create a more direct route for the Welland Canal brought the expropriation of the land immediately adjacent to the schools.

School Section No. 2 Beaverdams, 1879. **Photo** *Sarah King Head, 2016*

The 1879 building is an early example of the schoolhouse design template that Ryerson had also envisioned as part of his educational reform package. Codified by his protégé J. George Hodgins in *Hints and Suggestions on School Architecture and Hygiene* of 1886, the characteristics were to include brick construction, an airy and naturally lit classroom for formal instruction, an antechamber, a covered gable entrance, and a bell tower. The Beaverdams version also boasted decorative details like the label stops in the yellow brick segmental arches surmounting the round-headed windows on the north façade. Although modifications have been made over the past century and a half, we can still today read beneath the façade's gable: "School Section No. 2 / 1879".

This is a building with a proud pedigree. It served the educational needs of the farming community until the early 1960s, and ultimately became a private residence. By contrast, all that remains of those original, mid-nineteenth century schoolhouses are their overgrown stone foundations and the odd brick.

Notwithstanding, the community remembers its role in helping pioneer educational reform and the implementation of free, public education with two discrete cairns that rather anachronistically assert "Beaverdams 1790 / Canada's First Free School".

Notes

1. See J.W. Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Toronto, 1988), pp. 144–51.
2. J.H. Thompson, *Jubilee History of Thorold Township and Town* (Thorold, 1898), p. 160.
3. J.G. Hodgins, *Historical and Other Papers Illustrative of the Educational System in Ontario* (Toronto, 1912), p. 67.

About the author

Trained as a historian, Sarah King Head, MA, PhilM, is currently pursuing a Graduate Diploma in Planning at the University of Waterloo. She has served ACO as both an executive committee member and Production Editor of ACORN.

Test of Time

Trends in Ontario school architecture

by Shannon Kyles

Cathcart School at Westfield Heritage Village in Hamilton, 1845. **Photo** *Shannon Kyles, 2016*

"Any education system must be judged by the achievements of its graduates."[1]

If the above statement were true, then a serious discussion needs to take place regarding the impact on learning of the new big box school environments in contrast to the one-room schoolhouse. The few people whom I have met that have graduated from a one-room schoolhouse are all singularly intelligent, thoughtful and responsible citizens. Can these qualities be maintained in the new school environments?

From the first days of European settlement to well into the late twentieth century, the one-room schoolhouse was a fixture in any small community. The schoolhouse in Westfield Village is an example of one of the first schools in Ontario. The belfry above the front door became a fixture as it called students to class as well as alerted the local community of any danger or important event.

The plans and building methods for a one-room schoolhouse were published in The Canada Farmer journal in 1866. This plan specified a gable front with clapboard siding. The windows and doors were to have an architrave. Heating and insulation were also specified. By 1900, most of the log schoolhouses had been replaced by brick, stone or stuccoed buildings, but the style and shape were maintained. Side window design was a matter of local choice.

As the land use changed and the population became increasingly urban, many of these schools were abandoned. Often they have been bought and turned into residences, some enthusiastically accurate to original materials. Others are maintained by local enthusiasts, but are waiting to take their place again as useful buildings in the community.

By the late 1800s, there were many thriving towns in Ontario with enough students to make larger schools practical. Very large private schools such as Albert College in Belleville emerged. Smaller towns had large schools such as the one in St. George.

Late Victorian to early Edwardian schools are scattered around the province. Square solid construction is ornamented with stunning period detailing. Today, many of these are being turned into condominiums and community centers with great success.

The 1930s and 1940s saw the rise of Collegiate Gothic in Ontario. This return to the craftsmanship of medieval times was linked with nostalgia for the early monasteries and their emphasis on research and science. The classrooms had electricity and plumbing and everything modern but the school was Neo-Gothic; the school had a crest and the feeling was of history and permanence.

St. George School, St George, 1893. **Photo** *Shannon Kyles, 2016*

Westdale High School in Hamilton, 1931. **Photo** *Shannon Kyles, 2016*

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, Belleville. **Photo** *Shannon Kyles, 2016*

Sadly, the Ontario school boards are not terribly interested in the maintenance of some mid-century Modern buildings. They are getting torn down at an alarming rate, while other less interesting and less durable buildings are being constructed nearby. For example, in Dundas, a beautifully situated high school in a large park is slated for demolition while another high school was turned into condominiums just three blocks away. Five years ago the condos in Dundas District High School sold for $375,000. One was sold last month for $850,000. Is anyone paying attention here?

This style lasted through the Second World War until the post-war mid-century modern school movement announced itself as a force to be reckoned with. The baby boom was accompanied by a school boom for all the babies. Long, low buildings with lots of light, a large auditorium and gym, and ample fields for Physical Education and sports were the standard design.

Most of these schools were built to last with cinder block or concrete foundations and steel-reinforced walls. Architects were careful to make extremely safe buildings, and the structures are good candidates for restoration as well as adaptable for other uses such as condominiums and retail. The designs are sometimes very fanciful and fun, and the structures – made to have extensive window space – are perfect for modern buildings.

In the nineteenth century, three trustees were elected for every common school in Ontario. The school trustees were not paid, but they gave their time to seeing to school matters often including repairs and maintenance. By 1970, school boards were growing at an unprecedented rate, and there was also a growing body of people who were dedicated to school administration of one sort or another. The idea that students could be easily distracted developed, and given modern building methods, schools without windows were preferable. The windowless schools of the 1970s and 1980s can be found across the province. I have not heard of any of these being transformed into condos.

After the no-windows craze, the reaction was almost the polar opposite: the more windows on a façade, the better, all without the benefit of bird-saving glass. Big schools are replacing smaller schools. There are continual and very vicious fights in communities across the province between groups who want their small local schools retained and other groups, usually including the school boards, who want to

Demeza Sports Centre, Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, Belleville. **Photo** *Shannon Kyles, 2016*

close all the local schools and create big box schools.

Students have been bused to school since the 1950s, and the fact that the teenage population is becoming obese does not seem to have any effect on the push for newer, bigger schools that are farther and farther away from home. A new type of building not seen in the nineteenth century but increasingly frequent in ensuing years is the Board of Education building, sometimes called "Palaces of Education."

The one-room schoolhouse had graduates with astonishing qualities. With money being spent on new school buildings of every glass-encased description, and increasing pressures on teachers and teaching staff, we can only speculate on the quality of our graduates and what they may be able to achieve in years to come.

Parkside High School in Dundas. **Photo** *Shannon Kyles, 2016*

Note

1. John Ewing Marshall, *Fifty Years of Rural Life in Dufferin County*, 1977.

About the Author

Shannon Kyles is an architectural historian and professor at Mohawk College in Hamilton. She also serves on the Executive Committee of Architectural Conservancy Ontario as Secretary.

The Value of Schoolhouse Conservation

by Vanessa Hicks

There is much to gain from exploring the value of historic schools in Ontario and principles of their adaptive reuse, as well as many questions to be answered. For instance, why are schoolhouses significant and what social and cultural impacts do schools have on their communities? Are rural schoolhouses disappearing, or is there a healthy stock of schoolhouses, and why?

I don't consider it a coincidence that I once lived in a renovated one-room schoolhouse and later became an archaeologist and heritage planner. I became these things *because* of my experiences. When I was 16 years old I was already analyzing the landscape, finding artifacts, and looking for documents at the local archives.

I learned that the Caistor School Section was organized in 1843 and S. S. No. 5 was built by Ronald Squires and James Coon on Lot 18, Concession 6 in 1878 on a one-acre lot. School sections – abbreviated as "S. S." followed by the number of the school in that section – were usually comprised of 3,000 to 5,000 acres (roughly 1,200 to 2,000 hectares) depending on the value of the land and population.

The school was built of red brick with a front-end gable and two separate entrances at the front; one for boys and one for girls. An iron bell was fitted in the roof belfry. The iron bell is rumored to have been stolen, some say by young local farm boys who dragged it from the top of the roof and through the farmers' fields into a nearby wooded lot. Others say the bell was taken down around the same time the school was closed and kept with other bells of local schoolhouses. Regardless, the bell remains lost to this day. The local farmers may have been joking, but they said that they couldn't remember where they left it.

Before the construction of schoolhouses, a person's house or a church would serve as a school. Teachers also travelled from place to place, staying with the families during their tutoring. The formalization of the school system began in Canada after the *Constitutional Act* of 1791 with the ambitions of Governor Simcoe. By 1797, British Parliament set out to reserve Crown lands as a fund for establishing grammar schools in each provincial district as well as colleges and universities. The first public schools act was passed in 1807, with the following *Common School Act* of 1816 being the

first attempt to provide people the right to education under an act of Parliament. The School Act was revised often throughout the years, each building on the previous.

The School System of Ontario (Canada), its history and distinctive features by George William Ross (1896) demonstrates that schools such as S. S. No. 5 in Caistor were constructed based on the many regulations set out by governing bodies and early acts of Parliament. School sites, the construction of the buildings, location, design, features, equipment, and even the washrooms were highly regulated in the nineteenth century.

School sites were selected based on proximity to well-travelled roads on lots which were properly drained and graded, with trees for shade, and they were required to be enclosed by a "substantial fence." School sites were to be no less than half an acre or one full acre if there were over 75 pupils. Rural schools were open 208 days a year from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. School board trustees were given the responsibility to judge style and material of the building. Often, this depended on the funds available to the community. Separate entrances for boys and girls, as well as covered porches and cloak rooms, were encouraged.

So what makes schools valuable to their communities? What do they offer us in terms of our quality of life?

Schools are deeply imbedded in the history of the community and they become an integral part of everyday life. According to Caity Hamilton's 2013 thesis "A New Life for Old Schools: Support for the Adaptive Reuse of Abandoned Historic School Buildings," schools are deeply rooted in a community's sense of place and identity, and their loss can leave a void in a community's cultural heritage. Schools contribute to a community by becoming gathering places and serve as repositories of information and records. In terms of architecture, schools often become representatives of their community in built form and represent the era during which they were built. One-room schoolhouses are not always constructed in a simple rural form, as was S. S. No. 5 in Caistor. For example, The Old Grammar School at 327 Queen Street South, Mississauga, was constructed in the Italianate style and is described in the Canadian Register of Historic Places as being a reflection of the vernacular of its small-town agricultural past.

Many former one-room schoolhouses still survive such as S. S. No. 3 North Marysburgh, built in 1875. **Photo** *Shannon Kyles, 2016*

According to Hamilton, school buildings are often lost because of changes to school districts such as consolidation, public policy, dwindling attendance, and the need for building maintenance. However, Hamilton's thesis states that according to David Anstrand, an

architect and board member for the Council of Educational Facility Planners International, "A well-constructed school building can last indefinitely with good maintenance and a major renovation every 20 to 30 years. Furthermore, schools built before World War II, are primarily sturdy with thick walls that today are considered overdesigned in structural capacity." This provides a good argument for conservation, as these buildings are capable of being in good condition and may be candidates for adaptive reuse.

Adaptive reuse refers to the act of converting a building to a different use or purpose than was originally intended while retaining its heritage attributes. Examples of this can be found all across Ontario. A few urban examples include the Aurora Church Street School, now the Aurora Cultural Centre (and Art Gallery), and the Hamilton West Avenue School Apartments. A rural schoolhouse can also suit a new use. For example, the first Rosseau log schoolhouse is now the Seguin/ Humphrey Museum. Schoolhouses are often used as restaurants, such as the Olde School Restaurant in Brantford. Many rural schoolhouses are converted to residential use.

Are schoolhouses disappearing and at risk similar to the vernacular barns of Ontario? Or are a considerable proportion of them being conserved through the principles of adaptive reuse? It is obvious that there is no longer a demand for such small-scale rural schools and that their presence on the landscape demands adaptive reuse or demolition. This leads me to believe that while rural schoolhouses are under threat, many are very good candidates for adaptive reuse as residences. Historic schools in urban settings are likewise featured as candidates of adaptive reuse, often due to their central location.

While there are always varying degrees of "good" adaptive reuse, I feel the most important principles are to identify the significant physical attributes of the building – which include specific features such as the belfry, or the dentils, or front-end gable roof – and conserve these attributes while ensuring their continued conservation by using the building for another purpose.

It is equally important to understand the historic place and conserve and commemorate its history. For example, S. S. No. 5 still has former students' names carved into the brick. Some of our neighbors have been able to look around our house and find names of their family members. These are some of the things that tie a place to its community and give it meaning. I believe the conservation of schools has a lot to offer communities, and I am always happy to see others appreciate them as I do and care for them so that they may survive another generation.

Sample of artifacts found in the backyard of S. S. No. 5 Caistor, former Township of Lincoln. **Photo** *Vanessa Hicks, 2016*

About the author

Vanessa Hicks attended the University of Waterloo's School of Planning and has practical experience as a municipal heritage planner. Her BA in historical/ industrial archaeology from Wilfrid Laurier University enabled her to work as a cultural resource management consultant and field archaeologist for several years in Ontario. She has contributed other articles to ACORN and participated in ACO NextGen. Vanessa is currently a Heritage Planner with MHBC in Kitchener.

Lil' Red Schoolhome

by Catherine Cassidy and Rory McDonnell

An alcove between the front entryways displays a stone plaque which reads "Uniondale School No. 4 East Nissouri Erected 1941", but for a designer and builder couple with a love of heritage buildings it is simply home.

The rumour of the rural, one-room schoolhouse being for sale began a year-long house-stalking adventure for my husband and me, ultimately leading to our purchase of the building in 2007. The previous owner had converted the decommissioned school in 1975, leaving the main floor original and undivided while developing the basement for additional living space. Unfortunately, a sun porch was added to enclose the two sets of double doors, and the deteriorated bell tower was removed, totally obscuring the exterior schoolhouse characteristics.

As owners of a heritage-focused construction company, our first priority was to restore the building's exterior to its former schoolhouse glory. Its history, for us, was its appeal. We feel privileged to live in a building that served this rural community for over 30 years.

To begin restoration, we needed a photo of the original exterior to use as reference. The East Nissouri History Committee introduced us to one of the school's teachers, Hugh Garnham. On visiting us, the 80-plus-year-old retired teacher supplied a photo of our red brick school from the late 1940s and shared his recollections: how students toted in water from the well beside the house and that in winter months the basement was used for roller skating. He clarified which annexes were used as cloakrooms or bathrooms. He showed us where the chalkboard was placed and where the bell rope had hung. It was charming to step back in time together.

A restoration was soon underway, beginning with the demolition of the enclosed porch to reveal the two double door entrances – historically one for the boys and the other for the girls – with matching gabled porticos. The reference photo inspired the rebuilding of the 10-foot-high bell tower and the retrieval of a vintage school bell found in a barn loft. In the eight years since, we have refinished the original floors, exposed the wood soffits, repaired and restored the ceiling height, restored wooden windows and returned two clerestory windows to their original position.

Future plans include restoration of the wooden entry doors and removal of an attached garage to restore the enclosed basement walkout at the side of the building. Foremost, this old school is our home so we have also updated it with modern conveniences to make it comfortable. We recently renovated an unfitted kitchen to suit the eclectic space and retain the one-room schoolhouse character.

A unique home that reflects our design/build philosophy of preservation, revitalization, and appreciation of our shared heritage has always been our goal. We are proud to walk the talk, and living in a rejuvenated schoolhouse gives us a better appreciation of the design and build concerns of our clients' heritage homes.

About the authors

Rory McDonnell and Catherine Cassidy are owners of Build, a heritage-focused design/build firm in Stratford, Ontario. They are corporate members of ACO Stratford/Perth County.

Uniondale School, southeast of St. Marys. **Photo** *Rory McDonnell, 2016*

Preserving a Part of Prescott

by Bonita Slunder

Do "creaky-floored rooms" make for better teachers? In his keynote address at the Ontario Heritage Conference in May 2016, David Prosser, Literary and Editorial Director at the Stratford Festival, wasn't saying that exactly but his observations are well heeded. An example of one such place with "creaky-floored rooms" is St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church and Memorial Parish Hall in Prescott, Ontario.

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church's Memorial Parish Hall, Prescott. **Photo** *Bonita Slunder, 2014*

The first Anglican church in Prescott was a wooden structure of Norman design erected in 1821 at the corner of James Street West and Centre Street. By 1858, this small building was bursting at the seams and a new, more glorious church was "erected to the honour and glory of God, intended to be a valuable addition to the ecclesiastical architecture of the country." The architect was T.S. Scott of Montreal and the cost was about $13,600. Canada was yet to be a nation and Prescott already had an impressive Gothic Revival limestone church with spires and stained glass, a bell-tower, buttresses, exposed beams and lofty ceilings. The inspiring steeple quickly became a landmark – a beacon for sailors navigating the St. Lawrence River.

Fast forward to the late 1920s when the congregation of St. John's had grown so much that a new, stone Gothic Revival parish hall was built to complement the mother church next door. In addition to the grand hall the building housed the Eliza Merrington Memorial Chapel with its stunning stained glass window by renowned artist Guido Nincheri. The inscription on the chapel door was a proclamation:

> To the greater Glory of God and in memory of her family, this chapel was given by Eliza Merrington, A.D. 1930. Enter. Rest. Pray.

It is worth noting the zeitgeist of Prescott at that time, a time of hardship – the Great Depression, global economies crippled and stuck between wars, a time when God and Country (especially for Loyalists) seemed to anchor congregations with steely rootedness in their small town.

Local masons, carpenters and tradesmen of every kind found some employment in the project although many provided labour as volunteers for the "greater glory." The hall cost $35,000 – about $500,000 today, almost three times the cost of the church.

In addition to the chapel where weddings and funerals took place and a simplified Saturday service for the working man, the hall itself was home to many different church societies. The Parish Guild (circa 1887), the Evening Guild (circa 1948), the Canterbury Club (circa 1954), the Women's Auxiliary, the list goes on. By 1959 expansion was again necessary with a deep need for classrooms and space for educational pursuits. In the late '50s and early '60s the parish had over 400 kids from 100 families in Sunday School.

This time it was local architect Edwin B. Youlden from Brockville, who refashioned the building by excavating the basement to build classrooms while keeping the hall above for church and community functions.

Longtime Prescott resident and former church warden, Ms. Deborah Hayes, told me,

> I remember going to Sunday school there, and helping Mom with the kindergarten class, and attending

> Girls' Auxiliary ... When I got older, I taught Sunday school too. As a young person, I remember the whole complex being a very busy place with lots of people and good times. Most churches were like that, until the '70s.

Indeed, the once-bustling parish hall and the basement classrooms fell practically silent during the '70s and '80s. The large Sunday school was no longer necessary, the rooms abandoned. That's when Lillian Smith (Deborah's Mom) and fellow Anglican Church Women (ACW) member Ida Morris started the New-to-You Shop. Deborah says,

> Nothing was more than $10 and that would be for something big like a winter coat, usually fur. And classy people donated stuff – one lady must have been Mom's size because she'd come home with some lovely outfits from Creeds or Holt Renfrew! The best part about this repurpose of the old school was that we were able to expand into most of the old classrooms. Donations rolled in and the shop allowed the ACW women to donate about $10,000 a year to operation of the church.

Sadly, as the ACW got older, there were fewer volunteers to mind the shop. As Deborah explains, "By the 1990s the Salvation Army had a shop downtown and I think the CWL started one too, so the ACW closed up."

Repairs to the church roof in 1993 cost more than $145,000. Contractors were able to reuse some of the original slate tiles which came to Prescott as ballast in ocean-going ships, but more repair and restoration work was needed. Inevitably the mothballed parish hall had to be sold. After years on the market, the building was truly showing signs of neglect.

During renovations inside the Parish Hall. **Photo** *Bonita Slunder, 2014*

My husband and I went to see it on January 1, 2013. Empty and unheated for years, the interior was mouldy and cold and smelled like old wet wood and a muddy cellar. Plaster had come off in large chunks and was encrusted in the dirty hardwood floor. In the basement the classrooms seemed more like jail cells from a horror movie and the great hall was a sad dusty relic of its once glorious self. At a time when folks our age are downsizing, we fell madly in love with the hall and put in an offer to buy it. (But that's another story.) Suffice to say that this lovely example of simple Gothic Revival architecture has been reclaimed and repurposed once again, this time as a residence – and perhaps the Prescott Wedding Chapel? Time will tell.

As for the church itself? Lots of caring folks are working hard to find ways to save and restore it. The dream is to have it ready for its bicentennial in 2022. Fundraising has started but a large donation or benefactor are needed.

About the author

Bonita Slunder is the owner of the Parish Hall/ Prescott Wedding Chapel and is Community Engagement Coordinator for Friends of St. John Roof & Restoration Committee.

One Spadina

Knox College to Daniels School

by Dale Duncan

Originally conceived as the termination of a vista from the lake up Spadina Avenue – and later home to the Knox College Theological Seminary and Connaught Laboratories – One Spadina Crescent is one of Toronto's most prominent and historic addresses.

The iconic site is now undergoing a dramatic transformation that will rehabilitate the south-facing Gothic Revival building at its centre and build out the unrealized northern face of the circle with a contemporary addition. Designed by the Boston-based firm NADAAA, the complex will soon be the new home of the University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design.

Listed on the City of Toronto's inventory of heritage properties in 1973, and designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 1976, One Spadina has had a storied past. The original building, designed by the firm of Smith & Gemmel and completed in 1875, was the original Knox College Theological Seminary. It became the Spadina Military Hospital during the First World War (where Amelia Earhart volunteered at the time), and, from 1943 to 1972, was home to Connaught Laboratories – where penicillin and polio vaccines were developed and produced.

In the 1960s, when Spadina Avenue was under threat of being transformed into an expressway, the monumental building suffered from neglect. In the following decades, it was used by a wide variety of groups and institutions – the Eye Bank of Canada, the student publication The Newspaper, and U of T's Visual Studies program, among others. Over time, however, it grew more disconnected from its surroundings. Subsequent additions had eclipsed the site's grandeur, darkening its corridors, which were originally designed to receive light from an interior courtyard. A large parking lot occupied the northern part of the circle.

But all that is about to change.

The renewal of One Spadina represents the largest architecture school expansion ever undertaken in Canada. In revitalizing the site, the Daniels Faculty hopes to reconnect it to the broader city and establish a hub where urbanists, city builders and others

Eastern face of One Spadina. **Rendering** *by NADAAA, courtesy of the Daniels Faculty, 2013*

can, to quote the Faculty, "engage in discussion and debate on how to build more beautiful, sustainable, and socially just cities and landscapes."

Of course, restoring the heritage building at One Spadina Crescent hasn't been without its challenges. As Andrew Pruss, principal at ERA, explains, very little had been invested in maintaining the site over the past 50 years. As the project's preservation architects, ERA has been working closely with NADAAA to provide expertise and advice on the treatment of the structure's heritage features.

"It's a spectacular building in a great location but it needed a lot of work," says Pruss. "When we started, it still had all its original windows, which were in poor condition; it had its original heating system, and the roof needed substantial repair."

ERA's first job was helping the NADAAA better understand both the values and challenges associated with the site. They then assisted them in thinking strategically about improvements that would allow the original cloister to perform, in conjunction with the contemporary addition and landscape, as a twenty-first century building.

Haphazard additions made over the years were demolished, new windows were installed. the roof was insulated and repaired, and masonry was restored. Internally, wood detailing was uncovered and brought back to life, original wood floors were retained throughout, and original brick was left exposed.

Katie Faulkner, principal at NADAAA, who along with Nader Tehrani designed the new complex at One Spadina, says, "Almost every decision was made to complement the original building."

"The expressive verticals and the roof line on the addition is meant to be a response to the spires, dormers, peaks and valleys of the existing building, and the materials were chosen to complement the beautiful golden brick," says Faulkner. "Fluctuations and built elements in the landscape are meant to respond to the architecture of the original building as well."

View of construction from the north. **Photo** *Richard Longley, 2016*

The new complex at One Spadina will more than double the space for the Daniels Faculty, enhancing its research potential and allowing for better public outreach and engagement. The Principal Hall, in the heart of the new addition, will provide flexible spaces for the Faculty's popular public lecture series. Meanwhile, a double-height, 8,000 square-foot (743 square-metre) Architecture and Design Gallery in the sub-level of the addition will allow for professionally curated exhibitions of international significance, and provide a forum for established and emerging talent within Canada.

The contemporary addition will give a northern face to the site, with graduate and undergraduate studios on the second and third floors overlooking Spadina Avenue and a state-of-the-art fabrication lab on the ground level. A series of pavilions fanning out from the main addition will house the Global Cities Institute, a model cities theatre and laboratory, and a new Institute of Architecture and Health.

A public "street" along the east-west axis through the centre of the building establishes a bridge between the Harbord Village neighbourhood to the west and the university to the east, while a belvedere – a terrace where people may gather outside the building's grand south-facing entrance – pays homage to the original plan for the site, pre-Knox College, as a prospect to the lake.

The careful planning and thoughtful design has not gone unnoticed. In 2014, NADAAA was recognized with a Holcim Award. The international jury commended the design for creating a dialogue between the past and the present and called the project "a rare approach towards bringing a heritage building back to life."

Toronto's City Planning staff also praised the new design calling the rehabilitation of the landmark property "a fantastic opportunity for on-site awareness of heritage conservation, design and practice." They also noted that "The University of Toronto, NADAAA Inc. and ERA Architects Inc. are to be commended for achieving something that is very difficult: designing a bold, modern addition to a landmark heritage building with subtlety and elegance."

About the author

Dale Anne Duncan is a communications officer at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the University of Toronto.

The Three Rs in London

Riverview, Ryerson and Lord Roberts schools

by Arthur McClelland and Maggie Whalley

The three Rs in this case do not refer to reading, writing and arithmetic but to three schools in London whose names begin with 'R' which all opened in 1916. Although all three are 100 years old, Riverview, Lord Roberts and Ryerson were built in very different architectural styles and have subsequently encountered different fates.

Schools occupy a slightly uncomfortable niche in Canadian urban architectural history as they are not only significant barometers of growth but also are victims of it. They are at the mercy of the shifting tides of demographics; a newly thriving suburb becomes – all too soon – a neighbourhood of an aging population whilst the young families move ever outwards. Schools not only accommodate pupils but the current, and constantly changing, educational theory.

Riverview School. **Photo** *Arthur McClelland and Maggie Whalley, 2016*

These 100-year-old schools provide exemplars of what can happen: one survived as a school, one changed its use slightly and the other became something else entirely. Luckily none faced the final stage: demolition and disappearance.

These three Rs were flagships of residential suburbs and all three remain as significant cultural markers of London's growth. Two of them, Lord Roberts and Riverview, were located in suburbs just outside the core. Lord Roberts School took on the pupils from a previous Princess Avenue school which was two blocks closer to the core and was itself built in the already well-developed neighbourhood of Woodfield. It was the notable site of Bleak House, built in 1853, the place where London's pre-eminent settler and colonizer Colonel Thomas Talbot allegedly died. At Riverview School in the area of Riverforks (as it is known today) scratch and ad hoc remedies had been applied to satisfy the growing demand. The school actually started life in a cottage on Riverview Avenue housing first grade, with second grade students later joining them in the dining room and kitchen. Later, another class was housed in a large tent pitched by the river.

These schools were not only fulfilling a need for space, but also accommodated new ideas in education. They were built at a time when educational theory was being refreshed by incorporating physical fitness and outdoor activities into the curriculum. Lord Roberts School actually had a swimming pool in the basement and Ryerson School was the most innovative of all – it was actually designed around a central gymnasium and the classrooms fanned out from all sides. Kindergartens were also relatively new and were carefully designed, often occupying separate wings with windows on all sides. Lord Roberts had fireplaces in the second floor kindergarten and Riverview's kindergarten was lit by stained glass windows portraying scenes from nursery rhymes. On the floor above was another innovation – a classroom for household and manual training.

Riverview School was nicknamed "the Bastille" by some of its former pupils because of its fortress-like quality, with two substantial wings from a central core with high walls punctuated by small windows. However, the demand for light and fresh air was met by ranks of large windows at the ends of the wings. Lord Roberts School is a contemporary rendition of Collegiate Gothic style with Art Deco details. The blocky and tall symmetrical facade looms over the neighbourhood as a bastion of modern education. For both of these schools the architecture demonstrates modernity, but this is provided less through structural elements and massing and more from brick and concrete Art Deco details. Riverview has herring-bone and picture frame brick detailing, with concrete diamonds and cartouches. Lord Roberts exhibits vertical ranks of brickwork, and bays are highlighted with concrete entablatures and columns. Its modernity is ensured by the large windows throughout.

Ryerson School, digital rendering, 2016

The sprawling Ryerson School was different. Designed in a Moderne style with Arts and Crafts elements, it received accolades and visitors from across Canada and the outside world. Access to open air was important from the outset with classrooms lit by large windows and skylights and doors leading directly outside from them. Situated on Victoria Street in London's Old North, it was surrounded by fields when built. Pupils tended gardens across the road and the produce was sold. This area of London was, and still is, an architectural showcase – and Ryerson was no exception. The one-storey building had a ranch-like feel, presaging the Prairie style of later decades with its strong horizontal lines.

It is probably not the innovative design that preserved Ryerson as the only bona fide public school of London's three Rs. Once again demographics are the determining factor. Old North, the fashionable suburb largely of the 1920s–40s, has retained its appeal. The houses are spacious and gracious and many families like to live here. Unusually for a new suburb, Old North never had a church as an anchor and focus for the community. Ryerson School thus filled this role and it is the only institutional building in the exclusively residential neighbourhood.

Like Ryerson, the viability of the neighbourhood was a determining factor in Lord Roberts' survival. Woodfield, arguably London's first high status suburb, is in a locale positioned between downtown and what was the industrial area of Old East. After a long period of decline, this largely Victorian neighbourhood has seen a renaissance, especially since it became a Heritage Conservation District, and it is still attracting families. The school, however, is the "transitional" one of the three. In 1985 it became the first completely French immersion public school in London.

Riverview then is the only one that has completely changed its role. Lord Roberts had been nestled into an already well established neighbourhood, and Ryerson was at the frontier of a growing new community. Riverview's location was a little awkward, tucked into a corner on the riverbank flanking Wharncliffe Road. This became even more parlous as Wharncliffe turned into a major arterial road and divided the neighbourhood in a decisive way. Riverview's catchment area had never achieved the cohesiveness of the previous two. It closed as a school in 1978 when it had fewer than 100 pupils attending (contrasted to 359 in 1969). But it has undergone a sparkling metamorphosis as Canada's first Children's Museum, opening its doors in 1981 and boasting London's only dinosaur in its grounds. This is an entirely appropriate example of adaptive reuse.

Schools are large, built specific to purpose and thus are unwieldy objects for appropriate reuse. They pose challenges to one of the first principles of conservation, which is successful and often imaginative adaption.

The future is not clear. The North American demographic is predicated on continuing growth and this has led to bigger "collector" schools (mostly high schools) found in the fields beyond existing suburbs where the student body is entirely bused or transported in. Neighbourhood schools have, in many cases, been displaced by fortresses of education surrounded by oceans of space. What happens next?

Lord Roberts School, digital rendering, 2016

About the authors

Arthur McClelland is ACO London's programme secretary as well as earning his living as the Librarian of the London Room, the local history archive at the London Public Library. He and his team organize walks, bus outings, talks and other events for ACO London. Maggie Whalley is Past President of the branch and has been on and off the executive since the early 1990s.

The David Dunlap Observatory

A centre for education and public outreach

by Karen Mortfield

Opened in 1935 as a cornerstone of astronomy education, the David Dunlap Observatory in Richmond Hill, Ontario, was the culmination of a long, arduous journey.

It was the dream of Dr. Clarence Chant, who was the University of Toronto's first (and for many years its only) astronomy professor.

In 1907, he began offering public lectures and talks, promoting the idea of a world-class observatory for Toronto. Year after year he taught the first generation of Canadian astronomers, fitting in public talks and interviews whenever time permitted.

However, it wasn't until 1921 that he attracted the attention of mining executive David Dunlap, who seemed interested in funding the grand scheme. Mr. Dunlap's untimely death in 1924 left the plan in limbo. Dr. Chant persevered, and in 1926 approached David's widow, Jessie Donalda Dunlap, to discuss building an observatory as a memorial to her husband.

Entranced by the idea, Jessie Dunlap agreed, becoming one of the first women to endow a major scientific institution. She and Dr. Chant spent long months searching for the perfect location and settled on a 72.8 hectare parcel of farmland in Richmond Hill, Ontario.

The observatory itself is a marvel of engineering in the midst of a prosaic suburban landscape. The 72 tonne copper observatory dome, 18.5 metres in diameter, rises out of the green landscape like an atomic age spacecraft. The telescope inside remains the largest optical telescope in Canada, little changed from the day it was installed.

Adjacent to the observatory, the Administration Building houses offices, classrooms, laboratories and machine shops in grand style. Andre Scheinmann, in his report to Richmond Hill Town Council in 2008, enthused:

> The Administration Building is a major architectural achievement. Mathers and Haldenby successfully combined an eloquent memorial to the patron's husband, David Dunlap, with a functional administrative and research facility supporting the Observatory. Literally at its core the building integrates the sacred and scientific …

In this congenial atmosphere, the David Dunlap Observatory was the training ground for generations of Canadian astronomers. It was never easy, though. Canadian weather, both in summer and winter, left scientists with far fewer clear nights than they would like to observe the night sky.

Astronomers took every opportunity – every clear night hour – to watch and study and learn.

Dr. Helen Sawyer Hogg, one of the female pioneers in the field, produced cutting-edge research on globular star clusters and for years wrote a popular column on astronomy in The Toronto Star. Tom Bolton's careful analysis of data provided by the DDO telescope provided the first direct evidence that Cygnus X-1 was a black hole.

The university's astronomy department was housed there for many years and graduate students remember the long nights of observing while coyotes howled in the surrounding landscape.

But research interests change, equipment ages and in the case of the Dunlap Observatory, light pollution

Adjacent to the David Dunlap Observatory in Richmond Hill is the administrative building by Mathers and Haldenby of 1935. **Photo** *Richard Longley, 2016*

from the Greater Toronto Area continued to encroach.

Faculty research needs were increasingly filled using newer, bigger telescopes located in darker locations, such as Hawaii and Chile and, of course, out in space.

Finally, in 2008, the university made the decision to sell the David Dunlap Observatory and the lands that surround it. While the sale of the site to developers was controversial, the funds allowed the university to create the Dunlap Institute.

Professor Bryan Gaensler is the Director of the Dunlap Institute, leading the next chapter in the Dunlap legacy. He says:

> The Dunlap Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics is the scientific successor to the David Dunlap Observatory, both in letter and spirit. Now based on the U. of T. campus in Toronto, the Dunlap Institute continues the vision of Clarence Chant and of the Dunlap family: to push back the boundaries of knowledge, and to share the wonder of science with the wider public. Through a variety of initiatives, including ongoing partnerships with the DDO, the Dunlap Institute is deeply committed to utilizing the latest astronomy technology to make major breakthroughs, and to train the next generation of astrophysicists and cosmologists.

As for the now 81-year-old Observatory and Administration Building, it remains in operation as an education and public outreach facility, rescued by a dedicated volunteer team. Members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Toronto Centre, have spent the past seven years maintaining and operating the heritage facility.

The volunteers offer educational programs ranging from public observing nights and guest lectures to Girl Guide and Scout tours, special event programs and school visits. The public program nights, designed to appeal to both non-astronomers and knowledgeable visitors, have become so popular that tickets for each program sell out months ahead of time.

The observatory is open for special events and educational programs today. **Photo** *Karen Mortfield, 2016*

The amateur astronomers undertaking this labour of love are intent on providing a personal experience for each visitor, creating a series of one-on-one interactions. This approach encourages guests to feel they're part of the DDO story.

Chris Vaughan of AstroGeo: Science Outreach Specialists runs daytime school programs at the Observatory. He believes, "The DDO offers a unique opportunity for me to blend the science of astronomy with the history of the observatory. I like to tell the story of Professor Chant and the Dunlaps, and paint a picture of the world of the early 1930s – including the limitations of international travel in that era."

Chris, a geophysicist by training and an astronomy educator by inclination, says the heritage architecture and enormous old telescope have a significant impact on students, even today:

> Opening the enormous shutters, rotating the massive dome, and moving with one hand the well-balanced enormous telescope, never fails to elicit gasps of excitement from the students and teachers. While seeing the telescope and learning how it works thrills the young science students, the experience of seeing firsthand the gears and mechanisms of the engineering and design of the telescope and dome also appeals to the less academically inclined students.

The Dunlap family has publicly praised the Observatory's new role as a centre for education and public outreach, describing the outreach programs and the Dunlap Institute's educational work as legacies that would make Jessie Donalda Dunlap proud.

About the author

Karen Mortfield is an executive consultant, providing customer care, crisis communication and media relations counsel. She has served the David Dunlap Observatory as a volunteer with the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada since 2009.

Thinking Big

Raymond Moriyama's Ontario Science Centre

by Mary Jane Conboy and Elgin Cleckley

"Science and technology are empty without a relationship to humanity and nature," says Raymond Moriyama, principal architect of the Ontario Science Centre.

On July 8, 2016, we had the opportunity to sit down with award-winning, trailblazing architect Raymond Moriyama to speak about the Ontario Science Centre, a monumental project he undertook nearly 50 years ago.

Since opening in 1969, the Ontario Science Centre has welcomed more than 50 million visitors through its doors. In 2019, the Science Centre will celebrate 50 years of engaging the public in science experiences on a wide range of topics ranging from human anatomy to China, circuses to sport, and space to magic.

A gift from the province to celebrate Canada's centennial, the provincial government commissioned Moriyama & Teshima Architects to design the centre in 1964. Initially, principal architect Raymond Moriyama refused the job, acknowledging it was a huge undertaking for his small, four-person firm. However, given the growing sense of optimism in Canada at the time, he reconsidered: "I think Canadians sensed that we could do something different."

And different is what Moriyama achieved.

The building of the Ontario Science Centre was ground-breaking, signalling a dramatic shift from the traditional science museum model. Rather than static display cases and explanatory panels, Moriyama, in collaboration with Ontario Science Centre chief exhibit designer Taizo Miyake, created an interactive wonderland that engaged visitors in creative, hands-on learning experience.

At the time, Moriyama's revolutionary museological approach was met with much resistance. Moriyama recalls being invited to conferences, where he would sit before museum curators and administrators:

> They were throwing invisible rotten tomatoes at me: you crazy architect! This is not what a science museum is all about. What a bad idea.

When the Centre opened to widespread positive acclaim, the controversy dissipated and hundreds of other science and technology museums have since adopted Moriyama's approach.

During the 1960s, brutalist architecture was the style commonly adopted for government and public buildings, and the Ontario Science Centre was no different. Although Moriyama toyed with a number of innovative design ideas including hovercraft and unwalled, open-air models, the provincial government specified a sturdy structure was required.

Moriyama cleverly used brutalism to his advantage to further his belief that the

Raymond Moriyama, Moriyama & Teshima Architects, was principal architect of the Ontario Science Centre. Opened in 1969 it is located at 770 Don Mills Road in Toronto. Additions designed by Eb Zeidler in 1996 and Jack Diamond in 2006 expanded the iconic attraction. **Photo** *Ontario Science Centre, 2007*

building – not only its contents – should be experiential. He was adamant that everything had to be tactile: "I didn't want slick walls. I wanted something to attract people to touch." Central to this approach are the textured, concrete walls – with their uneven, hand-chipped surfaces – found both inside and outside the Centre.

In other areas the concrete is flat and embedded with wood grain and pebbles that evoke the nearby Don River and recall industrial wood mills from days gone by. While symbolic, these textures are both durable and touchable, again reinforcing Moriyama's interactive philosophy.

For Moriyama, science, technology and nature are intricately intertwined. The heavily-wooded ravine site provided a unique opportunity to highlight this interconnectivity through creative architecture while conserving and optimizing the stunning, natural setting. The result: three separate, cylindrical structures – or towers – that intersect in the building's central Great Hall to form the shape of a trillium, Ontario's provincial flower.

Moriyama learned that people typically take in 20,000 square feet (1858 square metres) of exhibition space before tiring. With this in mind, Moriyama designed the building's transitional spaces to include windows to outdoor spaces, the natural light allowing visitors to reflect and prepare for the next part of their journey. An excellent example of this architectural approach is the Great Hall, a two-storey, cathedral-like space that boasts floor-to-ceiling windows and provides a breathtaking view of the river valley below.

To further emphasize the correlation between science, technology and nature, Moriyama included a 70-metre glass-enclosed, pedestrian bridge that traverses a lush valley and a network of escalators built into the valley that descend 27 metres to the ravine floor, providing unobstructed views of the local flora and fauna.

"The building was always designed as a tool – a black box with services to allow you to do whatever you want," says Moriyama. "There was a recognition that approaches to content would evolve and that the exhibit halls needed to be flexible enough to allow for rapid and dramatic changes."

Over the years, this built-in flexibility has allowed the Ontario Science Centre to provide a more responsive approach to engaging visitors of all ages. The building has undergone a number of physical transformations since 1969, including the addition of the province's first OMNIMAX® theatre in 1996; the building of the unique learn-through-play space for kids eight and under – *KidSpark* – in 2003; the design of the innovative outdoor exploration plaza TELUSCAPE in 2006; and the creation of the entirely experimental Weston Family Innovation Centre in 2007.

"Interactive engagement with visitors has always been an area where the Ontario Science Centre excels," says Moriyama.

Today, there are many cultural attractions that offer interactive experiences, competing for visitor attention and time. As the Ontario Science Centre looks towards the next 50 years, it is poised for a creative leap to continue serving the community and growing and nurturing its relationship with visitors.

The textured concrete walls support Moriyama's vision that everything be tactile. **Photo** *Ontario Science Centre, 2016*

Moriyama's advice on how to meet the needs of the future?

> Be aggressively imaginative … there should be collaboration between the content and the container. Don't be dragged down by practical and conservative answers … The future is in the hands of people with imagination. Imagination costs nothing and thinking big has its rewards for the public and the future.

About the authors

Mary Jane Conboy is the Director of Science Content and Design at the OSC. Since 2010, she has led the development of exhibitions including Imaginate *and* The AstraZeneca Human Edge *and the renewal of the Weston Family Innovation Centre. She has an MSc in Geology and Biology and a PhD in Land Resource Science.*

Elgin Cleckley has been the 3D Group Leader and Senior Exhibit Designer, Science Content and Design Department at the OSC since 2001. He was the Design Coordinator on the Agents of Change Project, and has worked on the Weston Family Innovation Centre interactive experience model. He has also designed exhibits for Imaginate, Forest Lane *and the Cohon Family Nature Escape.*

St. Catharines Success Stories

by Gail E. Benjafield and Brian Narhi

Throughout Ontario, old buildings once treasured by their communities have been demolished for more modern, serviceable structures. The great age of destruction was during the 1960s. In St. Catharines, three old schools have been left standing, all successfully adapted for other uses.

St. Catharines (then part of Grantham Township) had fewer early schools than in the Town of Niagara (Niagara-on-the-Lake). Most children were taught at home, although wealthier families sent their children to boarding schools. The first school in St. Catharines was in a log building, constructed around 1799, and used until at least 1827. It was near the first church, on land donated by the merchant Robert Hamilton. Between 1829 and 1853, several private schools were opened. These were in addition to the "Ward Schools," as well as a Separate School, and a "School for Coloured Children."

Robertson School

The oldest and most central of all the schools is Robertson School, in the heart of the city. More than 185 years old, it is still a striking building despite some alterations.

By 1827, the city's population had significantly increased and the need was felt for the establishment of an "Academy." Land was donated by William Hamilton Merritt, and fundraising for the building commenced. Designed by William Allen, the building was Neo-Classical or Classical Revival in style. In 1829, The Colonial Advocate newspaper noted that St. Catharines contained "a handsome Academy, built of brick." The St. Catharines Journal in the same year described it as being two storeys, "with a neat cupola and spires" and a "bell of good size." The bell was donated by Oliver Phelps, a contractor on the first Welland Canal. The school rests on a fieldstone foundation, and the interior has its original hand-hewn timbers.

The building opened for classes in 1829 as a private boys' school. It then became a "Grammar School" in 1845, and was renamed the "St. Catharines Collegiate Institute" in 1872.

The former Robertson Public School, now the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre. **Photo** *Brian Narhi, 2016*

Wings were added in 1873, and a tower at the front was constructed in 1880. The building then assumed an Italianate appearance.

In 1923, a new "Collegiate Institute" was opened. Between 1924 and 1977, the old Academy was used as the W. J. Robertson Public School.

The structure was renovated at various times during the past sixty years. Gables at either end of the building were removed, so the structure now features a hipped roof. The cupola on the tower was also removed, leaving it truncated at the level of the eaves. Ornate, pediment-shaped window heads were removed. Extra windows were added to provide more interior light. The building was given a sandblasting 30 years ago. Despite this, the building still retains much of its nineteenth-century appearance.

Since its closure as a school, it has been used for a variety of purposes: as an Alternative school, and as the home of various arts groups, known as the Lincoln Arts Centre. It is now used by the St. Catharines Folk Arts Council and Multicultural Centre. The Folk Arts Centre offers English as a Second Language classes and helps new immigrants adjust to life in the region.

Old Parnall School

In the nineteenth century, Grantham Township was divided into "School Sections." The north-west part of the township fell within "School Section No. 3." Two schools for this section were built on the Stephen Parnall farm, the first in 1850. The second school was demolished during construction of the

Parnall School today. **Photo** *Brian Narhi, 2016*

third Welland Canal. The third school was erected in 1875, at the south-west corner of the Parnall farm.

This structure was a one-storey, rough-cast building, with three windows in each of the sidewalls. End walls each contained an enclosed entry porch. The south gable contained a date stone, identifying the School Section. The interior contained one or two rooms. Drinking water was provided by a pump in the yard. This school was photographed by Parnall around 1935–40, and was mentioned in his newspaper column. The school was used until about 1949, when it was replaced by the present Parnall School.

After closure the property was sold and the building converted into a private residence. It lost its chimney, date stone, and porches. New windows were installed in the building. Nevertheless, this house is recognizable as being a former school.

Victoria School

Victoria School was built in 1911–12 when older ward schools were bursting at the seams. It was designed by Thomas Husted Wiley, a noted St. Catharines architect, in a style referred to as "Edwardian Classicism", typical of many institutions of its time. The three-storey, red brick structure features a striking carved stone frontispiece, with the name of the school over the main entrance. The third-storey roof line directly above it is Dutch or Flemish in style, characteristic of the various "Colonial Revival" styles which gained popularity in the early 1900s. It was enlarged in 1928.

Victoria School, 1911–12. **Photo** *Brian Narhi, 2016*

In 1983, Victoria School was featured in MGM Studios' *A Christmas Story*, and was selected as the best looking building to represent an American public school during the 1950s. The interior sets and actors' costumes were appropriate to the period. A flagpole sporting an American flag was an important feature in the film; a child actor had to stick his tongue on the pole in winter, with the inevitable results.

With declining enrollment, the decision was made to close Victoria in 2002. After much fundraising, it became the home of "Women's Place." The first women's shelter in the downtown had been established in 1977 by volunteers in smaller quarters. The need for additional space grew, and Victoria closed just when the shelter was searching for a new home. The shelter has been a success and was named "Gillian's Place," after the first executive director, Gillian Dooley.

About the authors

Brian Narhi and Gail Benjafield are both members of the St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee and the Historical Society of St. Catharines. Brian is employed as a historian by Archaeological Services Inc. Gail is a retired librarian/local history archivist, and a member of the ACO and the local branch.

Heritage Trades Education in Perth

by Andrew Pamenter

"I noticed that you have changed your windows. Were you having some problems with them?"

"No, they were just old and we thought that we should get new ones…."

This is a conversation that I have had several times with various home owners here in Perth and, for me, speaks to why the work that we do at Algonquin College is so important. We are training the carpenters and masons who can meet the challenges presented by historical building materials and techniques. Educating the craftsperson is only part of the task though — the clients often need to be educated as well.

We develop the skills of our students so that they can assess, reproduce and repair the structure and elements of our older buildings. These are critical aspects for the continued survival of these buildings, but we are challenged by the pervading desire of society at large for convenience and instant gratification. "The windows were old" is seen by some as a justification for replacing 100-year-old windows with vinyl inserts rather than evidence that they could very well last another 100 years with regular and thoughtful maintenance.

I believe that we encourage our students to be champions for the value of older buildings: their scale, context, patina, materials, adaptability, embodied energy, etc. A building that has value is a building that will be used, cared for. Once educated themselves, our graduates often find themselves seeking to educate their clients and even their employers about the benefits of working with the materials and inherent value of older buildings.

The Heritage Programs in Perth got their start in the mid-1980s when a pilot project for the new Main Street Program was launched. A wave of tradespeople and professionals worked together to rejuvenate the wonderful architecture of Perth's downtown core. This collection of people with interest and skills working with historical fabric observed that these skills and the knowledge needed were concentrated in the hands of a few and that the next generation was largely missing all together.

Antique moulding plane at the Perth Campus, Algonquin College. **Photo** *Roy Timm, 2012*

The Perth Campus of Algonquin College began developing a Heritage Carpentry program to supply this demand for skilled tradespeople. Several years later the Heritage Masonry program was created followed by a program focused on contemporary and energy efficient construction, the Advanced Housing Program. From the germ of an idea in a small Ontario town three unique and specialized trades programs were born.

Our students come from all corners of the country and beyond, from a variety of disciplines, ages and motivation, but they are largely united in their fascination with the craft and materials encountered in older buildings.

The average age of our students is 28, which includes 17-year-old high school graduates and 67-year-old retirees. Many of our students take a significant pause in their lives to pursue study at the college. Upon graduation, our students

are employed with contractors specializing in heritage work, others in custom house construction or renovations. Many of our carpenters and masons are currently working on restorations on Parliament Hill. We have graduates operating their own companies building timber frames, straw bale houses, vacation homes in the Caribbean, and custom doors and windows. There are even double graduates offering carpentry and masonry services.

Two ACO chapters — Port Hope and London Region — have created scholarships in recognition of the value of tradespeople trained to be sympathetic to historic buildings and have supported a number of students over the years to attend institutions like Algonquin.

The impact of conserving our heritage buildings reaches beyond the buildings themselves. The labour and materials required to work with older buildings is often locally sourced, while the tradespeople are generally more highly skilled and therefore hopefully better paid, thus further contributing to the local economy. The adaptability, durability, energy efficiency and carbon footprint of older building stock has been demonstrated to have less impact on the environment than much new construction.

The scale, form, context and cultural history of older buildings also significantly impact the quality of life in our communities. Thus, heritage education involves more than people who already value those buildings and cultural landscapes — it must also focus on demonstrating that value to a much broader audience.

Timber frame joinery at Gibson Timber Frames. **Photo** *Andrew Edmondson, 2012*

About the author

Andrew Pamenter is an instructor of Heritage Carpentry at Algonquin College's Perth campus. Andrew's work in the industry has focused on finish carpentry demanding patience and attention to precision. A graduate of Algonquin College, Andrew subsequently worked as a carpenter on heritage projects for several different companies, including restoring Osgoode Hall with the J.D. Strachan company.

Building a Better Tomorrow

The schools of the Toronto Board of Education, 1950–1965

by Robert Moffatt

As the 1950s dawned, the Toronto Board of Education faced a population crisis: a massive growth in student enrollment, stemming from a combination of the postwar Baby Boom, expanded immigration, increased education levels, and accelerated migration to the city from across Canada. Compounding the problem was the state of Toronto's existing school buildings; the lack of funds during the Depression and the Second World War left many in dire need of major upgrades or replacement.

In response to these looming demands, in the 1950s and early 1960s the Toronto board undertook an ambitious program of school construction, at the time one of the largest in North America. Leading the drive was chief architect Frederick Etherington and primary design architect Peter Pennington, supported by an in-house team of architects, draftsmen and engineers. Drawing upon Modernist design principles, Etherington and Pennington created fresh, lively and inventive school buildings that focused upon the experience of the child and supported the progressive classroom pedagogies of the postwar period. "We attempted to take some of the ordinary elements of a school," wrote Pennington in 1961, "and make them extraordinary."

Toronto native Etherington had spent almost his entire career designing schools; his retirement in 1965 capped 42 years with the Toronto board. Pennington had recently arrived in Canada from architectural training in Manchester, England. Etherington determined which projects would be handled in-house – usually the more programmatically interesting and technically challenging – and which would be assigned to outside firms. He also proved highly adept at navigating through bureaucracy, persuasively aligning building projects with institutional priorities to gain approvals. And the school buildings were built to last; construction costs per square foot were comparable to those of Toronto's downtown office towers.

An exemplar of their approach is Lord Lansdowne Public School, completed in 1961 at 33 Robert Street. Influenced by the 1951 Festival of Britain, Lansdowne is a whimsical, animated confection of exuberant colours, textures and forms. The main classroom block is a nine-sided circular pavilion, topped by a serrated zig-zag roof of folded concrete plates and ringed by tapered steel columns that project like rockets into the sky. The zig-zag roofs continue atop the adjoining administrative and gymnasium blocks, helping to unify these otherwise disparate elements. Vertical planes of black, brown and tan brick break up the building mass, held together by linear zips of white trim and punctuated by spandrel panels in lemon yellow, marine blue and tomato red. Visually balancing the composition is the freestanding exhaust stack, wrapped in matching candycane stripes. But the fun was also purposeful. The circular classroom block saved space on the constricted site; progressively lighter-toned wall panels in the hallways guided children toward the stairways and exits; ground-level windows in the kindergarten classrooms provided close-up views of the greenery outside; and a specially lowered section of the main reception desk allowed the smallest child to deal face-to-face with school administrators.

Lord Lansdowne Public School at 33 Robert Street in Toronto. **Photo** *Richard Longley, 2016*

For the 1963 Parkway Vocational School (now the City Adult Learning Centre), perched above the Don Valley Parkway at 1 Danforth Avenue, that same sense of innovation and exuberance sent a powerful message of inclusion to its vocational students, many who were unsuccessful academically and at risk of leaving school. Parkway represented a substantial societal investment in these students and their future as productive citizens. Here, students could train in trades from auto mechanics to food preparation to furniture making in a school complex that, in addition to providing state-of-the-art technical facilities, served as an appealing home away from home. A spacious cafetorium doubled as a dining hall and an auditorium, complete with intriguingly staggered floors, an undulating ceiling and wood-panelled walls to create a club-like gathering space. An adjoining east-facing sun deck, covered by a Jetsons-styled concrete canopy, overlooked landscaped gardens and drew students and staff together for morning coffee. A sizable indoor swimming pool with terraced seating further promoted physical and social well-being. On the exterior, the complex is composed of three distinct blocks, enlivened by advancing and retreating wall planes, contrasting colours and materials and the sinuously curved vehicle ramps extending from the automotive building.

Another specialized school, and one currently under threat of redevelopment, is the combined Davisville Junior Public School and Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf at 43 Millwood Road. Opened in 1962, the school has been a key institution for Toronto's deaf and hard of hearing community for over five decades. A design priority was to reduce the apparent size of the school to a scale less intimidating to small children and more home-like. To this end, Pennington divided the building into four distinct modules of three storeys each, flanked to the west by a lower module enclosing indoor and outdoor play areas. (The easternmost module is a later addition.) Staircases fill the gaps between the modules, unobtrusively set back and appearing to float in midair behind glass. Further reducing the visual mass are the tapered corner columns and arched gable roofs, designed as hyperbolic paraboloids, and the small-scaled window openings in playful vertical and horizontal rhythms. On the north side the main entrance module steps forward to the street, welcoming children with its upward-flaring roof and sheltering entrance canopy. Custom door handles of solid black walnut, smooth with decades of use, are set within a glass wall that allows the flanking walls of rough limestone to appear to pass seamlessly into the building lobby, visually connecting the indoors and outdoors. Matching stone frames a friendly entrance tree (the walls were constructed around a venerable earlier tree) and buffers the adjacent play area.

Parkway Vocational School, now The City Adult Learning Centre. **Photo** *Robert Moffatt, 2016*

Today, the best schools created by the Toronto Board of Education during the 1950s and early 1960s represent an important legacy: a fast-growing, forward-looking city that proudly supported quality public education not only as an economic driver, but also as a vital catalyst for forging citizenship, a sense of belonging to an inclusive and democratic society. This commitment to the potential of public education is exemplified by the school buildings themselves. In their thoughtful design, high-quality materials and careful craftsmanship, they communicate an important message to the young: you matter, and we care.

About the author

Robert Moffatt is the author of Toronto Modern, *a primary online resource for Toronto's heritage Modernist architecture. He is a marketer for architecture and design firms and has worked with the ACO and other heritage organizations in Toronto and Vancouver.*

Davisville Junior Public School

by Catherine Nasmith

While it is clear that the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), local parents, the school principal and Shelley Laskin, the local board Trustee, have no interest in conserving Davisville Junior Public School at 43 Millwood Road, ACO Toronto would love to change its future. We are at a critical juncture in the process. A Request for Proposal has been issued by the TDSB for an architect and the terms of reference assume that after the construction of the new school and community hub, the current school will be demolished to make way for a playground. The existing school will continue to be occupied only until the new one is complete.

Davisville Junior Public School. **Photo** *Robert Moffatt, 2016*

The decision to demolish was made several years ago by the TDSB. At that point the building, in spite of its obvious architectural interest, had not been listed or designated. One section of the current school was designed as a school for the deaf, with smaller than standard classrooms, yet the building has been used as a junior school with full programming for many years. Parents and teachers have been lobbying for another facility on the very large site near Yonge and Davisville and have explored several financing options, including developing a condo to pay for a new school.

At the same time as the TDSB has been looking to replace the school, the City of Toronto has been working to incorporate a community hub, with swimming pool and other amenities. It was not until an article appeared in The Toronto Star announcing provincial funding for a new school in late 2015 that the broader architectural community became aware that the existing building would not be part of the future development.

Since then a group of prominent Toronto architects – Kim Storey, Carol Kleinfeldt, Roman Mychajlowycz, Luigi Ferrara, Monica Contreras, as well as ACO Past President Lloyd Alter and I – dubbed ourselves the Mod Squad and set out on a rather Don Quixote-like mission to have other options considered. The quest was particularly poignant for Ms. Kleinfeldt who had worked for Peter Pennington, the architect of the school, later in his career. She spoke of him as a delightful, fun loving, exuberant designer and person.

It was clear when we started that the horse was heading out of the barn, but ACO has to at least try. There was a moment in the sun when the Toronto Preservation Board unanimously recommended that Council designate the property, but our hopes were dashed when the Preservation Board report was unanimously deferred indefinitely by Toronto East York Community Council, ignoring the Mod Squad's alternative site plan options that allowed for repurposing of the existing building. By the time we had them ready for consideration, no one was interested in considering new ideas. We were unceremoniously dismissed.

Davisville Public School/Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf, completed in 1962, is one of a significant set of post-war schools built by the Toronto District School Board's in-house team of Chief Architect F. C. Etherington and project architect Peter Pennington. Other schools in this group are Glen Ames Senior Public School, 1961 (18 Williamson Road), Lord Lansdowne Public School, 1961 (33 Robert Street), and Parkway

Vocational School, 1963 (1 Danforth Avenue).

At a time when the future was a good place, newly graduated architects were strutting their stuff – breaking out in all directions with new materials, creating a new style that we now call Modern Expressionist. The style has its roots in the Festival of Britain, American and European examples. As I watched Robert Moffatt's presentation on April 4, 2016, at the ACO Toronto lecture series, I felt a surge of local pride realizing that what was built in Toronto is more interesting than all the precedents. Alas, colonized Torontonians tend to think that nothing important happens here, hence the stunning lack of consideration of this building in the TDSB's development plans.

At Davisville, the building is arranged into house-like pavilions, each with a more flamboyant concrete plate roof than the last. The budget was commensurate with the task of educating the post-war generation, similar to expenditures on high-quality office buildings of the day.

So how did such a fine building become the "most expensive to maintain" and a candidate for demolition? Simply put, inadequate maintenance budgets combined with a provincial policy that favours new construction. At the core of the issue is that Ontario school boards are not required by the province to consider cultural value in their real estate decisions, nor does the province provide adequate funding to maintain its building stock. The Davisville Junior Public School is a victim of demolition by neglect, practiced wholesale by the TDSB because of poor provincial policy. It won't be long before other schools suffer the same fate.

The situation reminds me of myself as a kid walking in my nice new shoes through mud puddles so I could get more pairs of nice new shoes. My mother quickly put a stop to that!

Supremely ironic are the not-so-subtle lessons the TDSB is teaching its students by example:

- New is better than old,
- Why maintain when neglect gets you a new one,
- Architecture has no cultural value worth conserving, and
- Demolition and landfill are O.K.

The same institution that insists on good environmental practices when it comes to school lunch bags is blind to putting whole buildings into the garbage. I was astounded to hear Angelos Bacopoulos, Associate Director, Facilities and Urban Sustainability, Toronto District School Board explain to Community Council that because the school had been poorly maintained for a number of years it was now impossible to repair. He was looking forward to the 25 maintenance-free years a new building would offer. There is a lot wrong with this picture.

ACO Toronto will continue to argue for an option that includes the existing building, and move ahead to try to get the rest of this mid-century school collection designated. In the bigger picture, ACO will continue our advocacy at Queen's Park for education policies that place emphasis on conserving financial, environmental and cultural resources.

About the author

Catherine Nasmith, OAA FRAIC CAHP, is an architect and heritage consultant. She is currently President of both ACO and ACO Toronto. More information about these schools is available on the ACO Toronto website.

Kim Storey, left, and Carol Kleinfeldt at Davisville Junior Public School. **Photo** *Dave LeBlanc, 2016*

Lessons Learned at Vineland School

by Carla Mackie and Brett House

A landmark worth saving

Vineland's school house was one of the best remaining examples of the late-1800s, one-room school architectural vernacular in Ontario. The last nineteenth-century public building in the village, it formed the focal point of Vineland's main street. Built through private donations, the 1895 schoolhouse was a stand-out use of the high-quality brick once fabricated in nearby Beamsville. Its high quality of education was recognized in 1909 when the Ontario Minister of Education's annual report prominently cited the school's horticultural programme and gardens. At its centenary in 1995, many families celebrated five generations of their children learning in the schoolhouse. It remained structurally sound with a functioning kindergarten until just days prior to its destruction.

Its loss tells of a community's valiant attempts to save a valued treasure, and their frustration and anger with government, legislation and unfeeling bureaucracy.

Lack of local heritage policy to prevent schoolhouse's destruction

In response to declining enrollment, the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) held Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) meetings to discuss plans to consolidate students from four west Niagara village schools in one purpose-built facility. They excluded heritage discussions from these meetings.

The ARC recommended construction of a new merged school on the Vineland Public School site and closure of the three other facilities, as well as plans to demolish Vineland's schoolhouse to create three parking spaces for the new mega-school.

Vineland's 1895 schoolhouse façade prior to its demolition. **Photo** *Carla Mackie, 2014*

Lincoln's Municipal Heritage Committee immediately and repeatedly throughout 2013 asked the DSBN to agree to preservation and municipal heritage designation of the schoolhouse. The DSBN refused or ignored these requests. As a result, the MHC asked the Town of Lincoln in December 2013 to move forward on a unilateral designation of the schoolhouse. The Town Council and staff refused to take action. Though Lincoln had no formal heritage policy, officials claimed an informal "practice" to designate only with the consent of a property's owner. It's sadly ironic because the DSBN never paid for Vineland's schoolhouse, but rather received it through a donation to one of its predecessor boards.

Having watched the Town Council ignore its Heritage Committee, citizens formed an advocacy group – Friends of Vineland Public School 1895 (www.vps1895.ca) – to mobilize the community to save its school house.

Exhausting every policy channel

Throughout 2014, we exhausted every channel to have Vineland's schoolhouse designated a municipal heritage site:

- Multiple presentations to the school board, Town of Lincoln, and provincial representatives.
- Canvassed Vineland, collected thousands of signatures, and raised awareness at local festivals.
- Established a Facebook page and a website to tell our story.
- Press releases and stories in print, TV, and radio.
- Involved in the October 2014 municipal election.
- Ongoing letter campaign to

all levels of government generated hundreds of messages urging the preservation of Vineland's schoolhouse.

Local MPP, former Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak, took on our cause and met with then-Minister Coteau. He raised the schoolhouse in question period at Queen's Park, and tried to broker a cooperative effort by the DSBN, town, and Province to save the schoolhouse. Our local officials ignored him.

Minister Coteau refused our request for provincial heritage designation, deferring to the municipality. He did not exercise his powers under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

When all else fails, seek help from the courts

In July 2015 we filed an application for judicial review of the Province and town's failures to designate Vineland's schoolhouse a heritage site. We also received an emergency injunction to prevent demolition of the schoolhouse during the review.

Hours after we informed the DSBN of our action, the Board's contractor moved a large excavator across the school site and punched a hole in the front of the schoolhouse. The Board claimed the timing was coincidental.

In our ensuing application to extend the injunction, the judge found that we had acted in good faith and that the failure to designate the schoolhouse was a serious point of law to be reviewed. But the court also had to balance two competing public interests: the imperative to preserve Ontario's heritage and need to complete the new school for September.

The Town of Lincoln claimed that the minor changes to the site plan – deleting three planned parking spaces – would take an unfathomable four months to approve, which would delay the new school's opening. For this reason, the magistrate ruled against an extension of the injunction.

The DSBN immediately demolished the schoolhouse and we withdrew our request for judicial review since it was moot. Although the DSBN and town came after us for legal costs, the judge denied their request since our case was in the public's interest.

The schoolhouse could have easily been saved if the DSBN and town had simply tried to work together. Instead, they chose to waste hundreds of thousands of tax dollars on lawyers' fees in order to build a parking lot in the schoolhouse's place.

Lessons learned

Our fight taught us many lessons:

- Get ahead of the game. Elect local officials who care about heritage. Educate your local officials on their powers under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Ensure heritage issues are included in your municipality's official plan, strategic plan, corporate priorities, and zoning by-laws. Many Ontario municipalities lack heritage policies; push your local officials to put official policy frameworks in place.
- Create community advocacy groups outside of government. Heritage needs an independent voice. It can take years to obtain the charitable status necessary to raise funds.
- Show that preservation is possible. Take arguments out of the abstract and lay out feasible steps for preservation. Demonstrate that costs are manageable by making them relatable, such as "two Tim's double-doubles per household" in the case of Vineland's schoolhouse. Demonstrate that outside funding is available. Enlist experts to corroborate your points.
- Know how your municipal government works. In our case, the school board understood the arcana of municipal subcommittees better than we initially did. The DSBN used an unexpected route to side-step a Town Council request for a feasibility study on designating the schoolhouse.
- Demonstrate community support. Canvass neighbourhoods, get petitions signed, collect donations, and educate at major community events. Bring your neighbours to Council meetings so that your officials must face them.
- Make it easy for media to tell your story. Use social media and buy low-cost targeted ads. Post brief bullet lists of key facts. Do public events that make for good visuals. Craft pointed press releases that provide pull quotes and essential information; ensure journalists can write about your cause even if they don't manage to interview you. Make it easy to contact you.
- Document everything you do. Show that you are exhausting every channel with all levels of government, even when you are ignored.
- Work with a public-interest law firm early. Find a lawyer willing to take your case for free before it's necessary. Our costs were eight times larger than our firm's initial projection.
- When they go low, you stay high. Remain upbeat and constructive.
- Don't rely on the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It's toothless. Work for its reform and the addition of a third-party appeal process for when governments fail to designate.
- Even when you fail, keep at it. In response to our work, Lincoln has begun enacting a proper heritage designation policy and process.

The authors dedicate this article to our doughty and constant supporter, Skip Gilham, who we recently lost to cancer.

Dundas District Lofts

A success against many odds

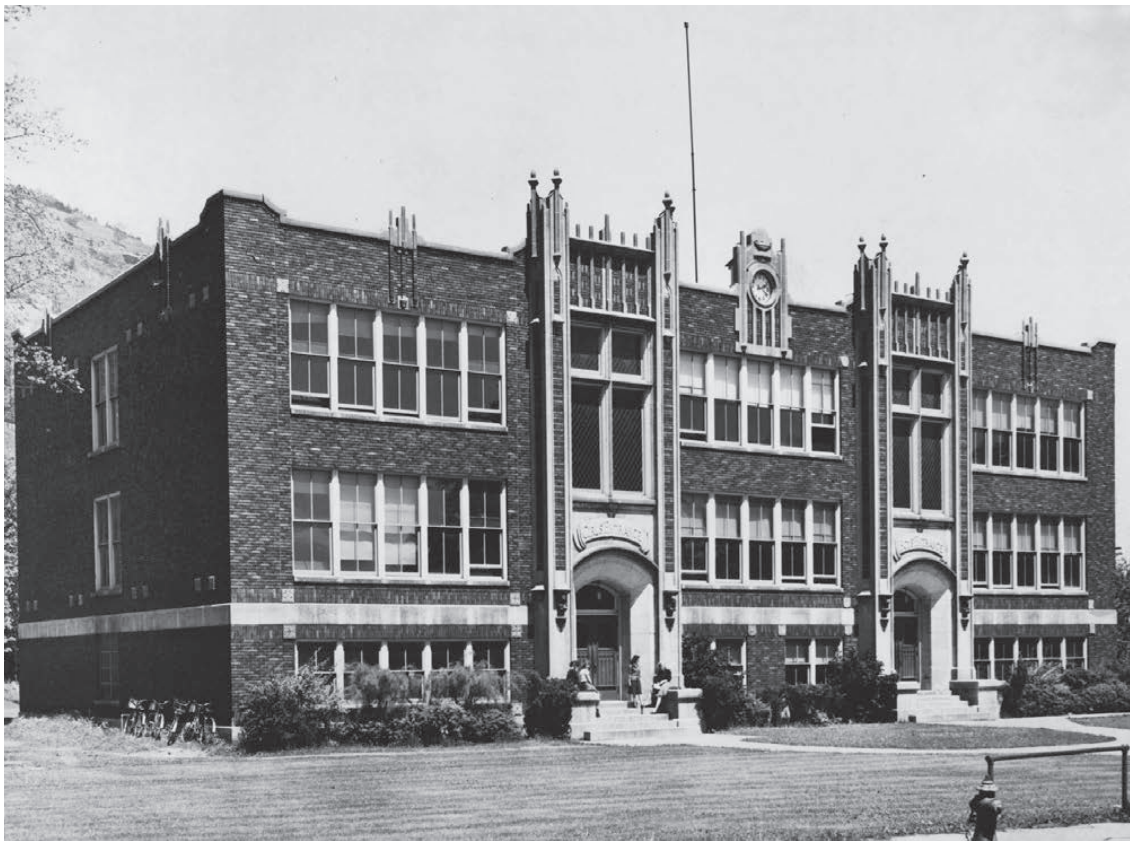
by Ann Gillespie

At a gala reception held at the Art Gallery of Hamilton on November 12th, 2015, in celebration of World Town Planning Day, the City of Hamilton presented its annual Urban Design and Architecture Awards to the owners and design teams of recently completed successful projects in 10 categories including architecture, adaptive reuse, heritage restoration, and urban design. As a resident of Dundas, graduate of the former Dundas District High School, heritage professional, and participant in the original battle to save the school building and playing field, I was particularly excited to learn that Dundas District Lofts at 397 King Street West, Dundas, had received the Award of Excellence in Adaptive Re-Use. The award was given jointly to the developer Valvasori Properties,[1] owned by Michael and David Valvasori, the project architect, KNY Architects Inc.,[2] and their planning team, IBI Group.[3] The jury made the following comments:

> Dundas District High School was built in 1929 and designed by Hamilton architect William J. Walsh in the Collegiate Gothic style. The school closed in 2007, at which point conversion of the property to residential condominiums began. This restoration and conversion required a number of challenging upgrades such as environmental measures, extensive tree and shrub planting to enhance the forested edge of the property, enhanced flood control at the base of the Spencer Creek Waterfall, and permeable paving in the parking areas. The façades were carefully restored to their original splendour along with a variety of fine stone details and carvings such as gothic style ornaments, gargoyles, pinnacles and decorative crests. The conversion also required implementing heritage conservation measures for the front and side façades to preserve the appearance of these façades. Private balconies were sensitively located at the rear of the property to avoid altering the architectural character of the protected façades, and provide residents with breathtaking views of the Niagara Escarpment.

The jury also complimented the sophisticated design approach of the project architects in transforming the school into high-end residential units, and the passion and vision of the developer in overcoming major obstacles posed by the complex site, through a variety of creative engineering solutions. The result was "an exemplary project perched above Dundas with excellent views of the escarpment, the local downtown, and the Valley."[4]

There is a story behind the Dundas District Lofts. The property, first



1930s view of Dundas District High School from King Street West. **Photo** *courtesy of Dundas Museum & Archives, P-1982*

acquired by the Dundas School Board from John Fisher & Sons Ltd. in 1928, comprised two parcels of land divided by King Street at the far west end of Dundas. The Fisher family generously agreed to donate their mill property on the north side of King and a parcel of vacant land to the south to the Board, but with a stipulation placed on the deed of transfer that the entire property be kept in perpetuity for educational and public playground use. The handsomely designed and solidly-constructed fireproof building, with a cladding of rug brick and carved stone trim, was built on the north parcel and officially opened in January 1930 as Dundas High School. Its large sports field was located on the south parcel.

Rear façade of Dundas District Lofts and the north garage structure, incorporating the crash wall. **Photo** *Ann Gillespie, 2016*

Subsequently enlarged in several phases and renamed Dundas District High School (DDHS) in 1956, the school closed in 1982. From 1991 until its closure in 2007, it served as a senior elementary school but its students were subsequently transferred to the newly built Sir William Osler Elementary School. With a picturesque location backing onto the Dundas escarpment and bordered to the west by Spencer Creek, heritage-minded residents of Dundas immediately saw the former school property's potential for adaptive reuse. However, before this goal could be achieved much groundwork had to be laid.

With so many school buildings in the Hamilton area facing closure and an uncertain future, it is worth sharing a success story that involved citizen engagement and political commitment at the local level, and the vision and financial investment of a local developer. Soon after the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) announced its plans to sell the DDHS property, a group of concerned citizens and members of arts and youth organizations began meeting under the leadership of local resident and community activist Julia Kollek to share their concerns about the fate of this landmark building and its green open space. This ad hoc group named itself the Dundas District Innovation Group (DDIG).

DDIG initially envisaged the conversion of the school building to a mixed-use community facility, with the south parcel retained as recreational open space. However, since the school building was not designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, it had no protection from demolition. The potential sale of the entire property to a single developer, followed by demolition of the school and loss of public open space was, therefore, an alarming prospect. This scenario had already become a reality in the case of two other Dundas school properties.

Strategically, the top priority for DDIG became the preservation of the south parcel as public parkland, which would restrict any potential development to the north parcel. The next step was to appeal to Russ Powers, then Ward 13 Councillor — a DDHS graduate — to support the DDIG vision and convince fellow councillors that the City of Hamilton should purchase the south portion of the property for a much needed public park and soccer field to serve this part of Dundas. With the support of Councillor Powers, diligent behind-the-scenes work by his Executive Assistant, Arlene VanderBeek, a letter-writing blitz by Dundas residents, and lobbying by the Dundas Youth Soccer Club, this goal was achieved and the south parcel was purchased by the City in July 2008. The official opening and naming of Fisher's Mill Park was celebrated by a jubilant crowd on September 20, 2008. The park has since been well-used, particularly by Dundas youth soccer teams. It also features a magnificent Chinquapin Oak tree, with an estimated age of 150

years, that has been recognized by the Ontario Heritage Tree program through the efforts of the Dundas Valley Tree Keepers.[5]

This accomplishment opened a window of opportunity to the Valvasori brothers: a financially viable option to purchase the north parcel for their most ambitious condominium loft conversion to date, and the first to be located outside downtown Hamilton. As soon as the north parcel was purchased in April 2009, planning and sales got underway. However, the project proved to be even more daunting than initially imagined. The Canadian National Railway, with tracks running along the adjacent escarpment face, required a 22-inch-thick (more than half a metre) reinforced concrete crash wall on the north side of the property, directly behind the school building. The Valvasori brothers and their architect responded creatively to this challenge by incorporating the retaining wall into the rear wall of the north parking structure, one of three providing secure, enclosed parking in individual garages. They admit that without the support and assistance of Councillor Powers, negotiations with CNR might well have posed an insurmountable obstacle.

While the property was not designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, it is now protected under a Heritage Conservation Easement Agreement,[6] which Valvasori Properties Ltd. entered into with the City of Hamilton in July 2014. In exchange, the company received a full exemption from development fees for the adaptive reuse of a protected heritage property.

Dundas District Lofts was substantially completed and occupied by December 2014. That month, Dave Valvasori conducted an enthusiastic tour for a small group of both the exterior complex and accessible interior spaces. We were most impressed with their vision, the quality of workmanship and sensitivity to the heritage features of the original east, west and south facades and two main stairwells with restored stained glass windows. The building is now fully occupied, with the first condominium units already selling at a premium price.

As illustrated by this example, successful preservation and adaptive reuse projects, especially ones as challenging as the Dundas District Lofts, typically begin at the grass roots level with citizen involvement but only gain momentum with positive support from local politicians and municipal staff. In this case, the stage was thus set for a developer with the vision, creativity, financial resources, and tenacity to commit to an ambitious project and push it through many hurdles to a successful conclusion.

The story of Dundas District Lofts and Fisher's Mill Park culminated in the preservation of a significant cultural landscape, combining built and natural heritage components, which include an architectural landmark, an historic waterway and a rare old Chinquapin Oak.

Finally, we must never forget that this successful outcome was truly a collaborative effort for which all contributing parties deserve full credit. The community of Dundas should be very proud that Dundas District Lofts has been most deservedly recognized by the City of Hamilton as an excellent example of adaptive reuse. Congratulations to the Valvasori brothers and their design and planning teams!

Notes

1. This local development company had previously completed several other successful condominium conversions of buildings located in downtown Hamilton, including the former Allenby Public School on Hunter Street (now Allenby Lofts).

2. An award-winning Burlington-based architectural firm: www.knyarchitects.com

3. A successful Hamilton-based land development consulting firm: www.ibigroup.com

4. www.hamilton.ca/city-awards/urban-design-and-architecture-awards/urban-design-architecture-awards-winners

5. Visit www.dundastrees.ca to view the DVTK's 2014 pamphlet: "A Walking Tour of Heritage Trees in Downtown Dundas".

6. A Heritage Conservation Easement Agreement is a voluntary legal agreement between the municipality and a property owner to protect the heritage features of a property. In 2013 Heritage staff for the City of Hamilton were of the opinion that the Heritage Conservation Easement Agreement could be used in place of municipal designation to adequately protect the cultural heritage features of the property; and accordingly, recommended that the Council-approved "Requests to Designate Properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act*: Priorities" be amended to remove the designation of 397 King Street West (Dundas) from the staff work program.*

About the author

Ann Gillespie, MA, CAHP, is a long-standing member of the ACO and contributor to ACORN. She is a part-time heritage consultant (Gillespie Heritage Consulting) and is actively involved as a volunteer with the Research & Inventory Working Group of the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee, the Dundas Valley Tree Keepers, and the Beach Canal Lighthouse Group.

She would like to acknowledge the editorial assistance received from Stewart Patch and Jeanne Beck.

New Life for Limerick's Old School

by Lindi Pierce

S.S. No. 3 Limerick of 1921, now The Old Ormsby Schoolhouse Tearoom. **Photo** *Lindi Pierce, 2013*

Ormsby, Ontario, with a population of 20 located a twenty-minute drive south of Bancroft, is home to The Old Ormsby Schoolhouse tearoom, a carefully restored 1920s era one-room school. The plain white frame building is snuggled into a forest clearing on the Old Hastings Road, one of the settlement roads built in the 1850s.

Ormsby, once a thriving settlement on the Central Ontario Railway, was a ghost town when talented brothers Ernie and Gary Pattison and their equally talented wives Debbie Pattison and Lillian Oakley Pattison undertook its transformation in the late 1990s. Gary and Lillian recreated the former Ormsby General Store as the popular Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery, as well as breathing new life into the hamlet's historic church. Ernie and Debbie tackled the old schoolhouse, S. S. No. 3 Limerick, closed in 1964.

During the summer of 1997, the young couple restored the school as a venue for their wedding reception. They applied fresh white paint to the faded exterior and replaced the old school bell. They stripped paint from interior ash wainscoting, and discovered pressed tin ceilings and walls under tongue and groove panelling. A photo of the wedding reception shows the orchestra, featuring Debbie on fiddle, scant days after the couple put the finishing touches on the gleaming maple floors.

The motto of the establishment is "Educated Dining." The tearoom is an informal education museum, providing visitors with an inviting – and very appetizing – history experience. Guests are free to browse old school photos, or sit at wooden desks and leaf through tattered schoolbooks which the pupils might have used once. Vignettes recreate old school days. A washing station with enamel pail, dipper and basin – and a health studies book – illustrates the role of early schools in promoting health education. The teacher's desk is topped with an oil lamp and piled with dusty readers; the parlour organ offers old sheet music for anyone wishing to try. A portrait of Her Majesty presides over the schoolroom with its cast iron stove and stovepipes, wood and cast iron desks with flip-up seats, blackboards, oil lamps, the familiar Neilson's-sponsored pull-down geography wall map, school bells and a wooden schoolhouse clock. Ernie is a charming host, sharing anecdotes from the brothers' early school days in the area.

A sign in the window attests to the delightful fare on offer: "Attention: Carrot cake and other valuables are not kept on the premises at night," providing a comical warning to would-be burglars in search of this popular treat. The tearoom offers lunch, dinner, and traditional afternoon tea with china cups and three-tiered cake plates. Along the way, the Old Ormsby Schoolhouse provides a generous helping of heritage education combined with delightful nostalgia, and illustrates how a forgotten piece of our built heritage can be resurrected.

The Old Ormsby Schoolhouse illustrates what determined people with creative vision and heritage values can achieve. The little white schoolhouse, once reduced to a hay storage shed, has once again become a centre of the Ormsby community.

About the author

Lindi Pierce is a Belleville-based heritage writer and a regular contributor to County and Quinte Living, Country Roads, and Outlook, *the newsletter of the Hastings County Historical Society. She shares her passion for heritage architecture on her blog Ancestral Roofs. Lindi is a member of ACO Quinte and contributed to* 80 for 80: Celebrating Eighty Years of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.

Heritage Conservation

Of course

by Ron Bean

Post-secondary education in heritage conservation at Canada's colleges and universities varies greatly. Most programs which include a heritage conservation component tend to focus on educating future designers, consultants and heritage tradespersons. However, real decision making on whether to conserve an existing building or build new usually remains in the domain of the building owner or developer and their representatives. Although there are some very enlightened building owners and developers who do have a penchant for conserving buildings, many would agree their numbers are small. This also seems to correlate in the lack of available heritage conservation education focused on building owners and their representatives.

One unique program that is making inroads in integrating heritage conservation as part of its curriculum is the Architecture Project and Facility Management program at Conestoga College in Cambridge, Ontario. Referred to as APFM, APFM is a four-year, full-time honours co-op Bachelor of Applied Technology degree program that includes a strong focus on educating future facility managers.

Facility management is a growing profession that focuses on the full life-cycle of the built environment. Facility managers, who represent building owners, are often the key participant in deciding the fate of existing buildings. Within the program there is strong recognition that the majority of building projects deal with existing buildings and that adaptive reuse is a valuable approach in heritage conservation projects.

Conestoga's APFM program is also unique as Canada's only undergraduate degree program with a focus on facility management which is also accredited with the International Facility Management Association, IFMA.

New this year in the APFM program is a course in Heritage Conservation, recognizing that heritage education is of real value to the education of future project and facility managers. This course stresses that cultural heritage value, environmental value and economic value can go hand in hand. Students are introduced to various approaches to heritage conservation as well as the broad spectrum of tangible and intangible heritage artifacts.

Architecture Project and Facility Management students at Waterloo Region Museum Conservation Labs. **Photo** *Ron Bean, 2016*

Students have also been involved in field trips including visiting the heritage conservation labs at the Waterloo Region Museum, touring Cambridge's downtown Heritage Conservation District and participating in on-site research at Weston's (Toronto) Heritage Conservation District phase 2.

As an architect and professor, I developed this new course in heritage conservation to address one of the real weaknesses in the heritage industry which is the lack of heritage conservation education for owners. I'm hoping that our students will develop a better appreciation of the role that heritage conservation can play in building projects as they head into careers as future managers of our built environment.

Conestoga College describes the Architecture Project and Facility Management program as "the only one of its kind in Canada, highlighting both project management and facility management." Following three years of work experience, graduates are eligible to become Certified Facility Managers. In the workplace, they will be able to foster understanding of the importance of heritage conservation with their colleagues and employers – especially building owners.

About the author

Ron Bean OAA, MRAIC, CAHP, LEED AP is a professor at the School of Engineering and Information Technology at Conestoga College in Cambridge. Ron continues his professional practice with +VG Architects in Brantford and is a member of ACO.

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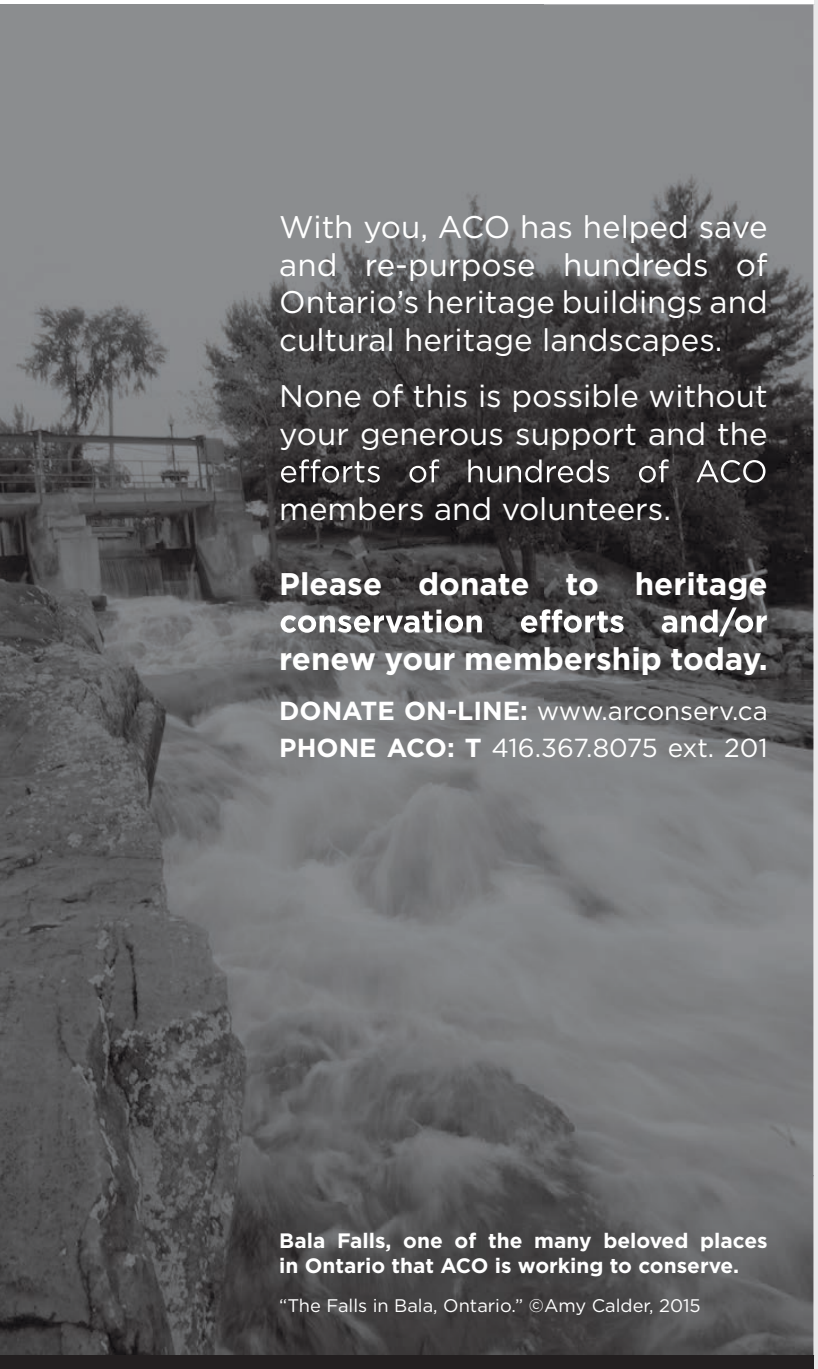

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