

## FORWARD

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Journal guest editor GEORGE THOMAS KAPELOS, FRAIC MCIP, is Associate Professor of Architecture at Ryerson University and a Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto. A native of London Ontario, he received his Master of Architecture from Yale and a Master of City Planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

His research focuses on the interrelationship between humans and their environments, through critical investigations of architecture, landscape, and urbanism in the modern and post-modern period. Themes of phenomenology, health and environment, and Canadian modernity are explored. He was Chair of the Ryerson University Department of Architectural Science from 2002-2007, during which time he oversaw revisions to the undergraduate curriculum and introduced two new graduate programs, including the professional Master of Architecture. He is past president of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada and became a fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in 2007.



FIG. 1. RYERSON UNIVERSITY PANORAMA (DETAIL). | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY.

The 2009 Conference of the Society held at Ryerson University in May 2009 explored the theme “From theory into practice: thinking critically about architecture, history and theory.” The papers included in this issue of the Journal are a selection of presentations from the meeting, which addressed a range of issues under that theme.

Alena Prochazka’s Lambert Prize-winning thesis, summarized here, addresses tensions between architectural innovation and continuity in Montreal. Developing the theme of the “Montrealness of Montreal” originally advanced by architect Melvin Charney in 1980, the author postulates that Montreal’s contemporary architectural energy derives from the capacity of its architects to innovate while respecting established traditions and paradigms.

Innovation is the theme of two papers which address contemporary architecture in Toronto and the development of that city’s design culture. George Baird contextualizes the apparent tensions found on Toronto’s architectural scene, where a number of recent high-profile projects have been designed by architectural firms based elsewhere. Noting that Toronto’s architectural culture has continually been nurtured and enriched by the arrival of architects “from away,” he suggests that the real issue is one of the long-term contribution to the city and its built environment of those architects who come from elsewhere, but chose to make Toronto their homes, and the concomitant imprint that such a decision may have on the city and its culture. Imen Ben Jemia presents

an in-depth exploration of one recent project—the competition for the addition to the Royal Ontario Museum—and the imagery utilized by designers in promoting their specific design approach to the jury. In this case, city referents are intrinsic to the architectural dialogue engaged in by competition entrants.

Since its inception in 1974, the SSAC has been the venue for explorations of the role of the built environment in Canadian society. Such explorations have been at the site-specific or local level, while others have addressed broad themes and subjects. Such is certainly the case with this year's papers. Elsa Lam's Martin Eli Weil Prize paper, which was presented at the conference and published previously in vol. 35, no. 1, provides valuable insight into the role played by Canadian Pacific Railway's "ready-made farms program" and the ways such a program shaped the cultural landscape of the prairies in the early part of the twentieth century. In awarding the prize, the Society sadly marked the passing of Martin Eli Weil, a founding member of the SSAC and the sponsor of this award, who died earlier in 2009.

The breadth of investigations by Society members is explored in other papers, presented at the conference and published here. Jennifer McKendry's in-depth reassessment of one building in Kingston, Elizabeth Cottage, its history and the provenance of the gothic revival in this building demonstrates the importance of building research and documentation in support of local identity, history, and urban fabric. By contrast, Marie-Dina Salvione's approach to the use and role of light in modern churches utilizes experiential and phenomenological readings to assess the place of luminosity in modern sacred spaces. Marybeth McTeague unpacks the complex dynamics at work in

the founding of the Ryerson Polytechnic Institute, the conference venue. Her paper outlines the significant place held by ideology in shaping the built form of the campus in the 1940s and 1950s.

The interplay between the built environment and culture, interpreted through heritage studies, remains as an underlying theme of the Society's explorations. Lucie K. Morriset continues a discussion started in Montreal in 2007 on the meaning of "heritage" and the understanding of heritage values. In this issue she initiates a dialogue which explores language and ways in which it shapes an understanding of meaning in heritage. Her essay provokes further investigation, which, it is hoped, will continue to enliven debates at future meetings of the Society.

This issue of the Journal also features the report from Parks Canada to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, prepared by Andrew Waldron, outgoing president of the SSAC. The report outlines the rationale for the Board's 2006 nomination of the Manitoba Theatre Centre and its subsequent designation as a National Historic Site in 2009. It is certainly laudable to see buildings representing significant moments in Canada's postwar architecture being recognized nationally and the ongoing support of Parks Canada to the SSAC is gratefully acknowledged.

The Parks Canada report, the 2009 SSAC conference papers, and the selection presented here from that event underscore the vitality of current investigations in architecture in Canada. In organizing the conference sessions and preparing this issue of the Journal, the following groups and individuals are acknowledged and thanked: Ryerson University, Ontario Ministry of Culture, Canadian Forum for Public Research on Heritage, Institut du

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#### NOTE

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