

Fig. 1. *Saving Face* (University Theatre façade / 10 Bellair Avenue Condominiums, 100 Bloor Street West) Luis Jacob, 2001.  
(digital print from set of six, 38.1 x 30.5 cm)

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This essay was written to accompany the exhibition *Eric Arthur: Practical Visions* presently on view at the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, University of Toronto. The show opened November 22, 2001 and will close on January 31, 2002.

JSSAC / JSÉAC 26, n° 1, 2 (2001) ; 33-42.

## Michelangelo Sabatino

### Eric Arthur: Practical Visions

A master of any art avoids excess and defect, but seeks the intermediate and chooses this — the intermediate not in the object but relatively to us.

(Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, n. 6)

Forced to contend with the aftermath of the Age of Historicism, the practice of contemporary architecture has oscillated unrelentingly between anxiety over the new and desire for continuity with the old. Consequently, it is not surprising that the act of remembering has often been more opportunistic than opportune. Why remember Eric Ross Arthur, the New Zealander who, following architectural studies in England, immigrated to Canada in order to teach at the University of Toronto? Why is an exhibition that assesses the work and legacy of Arthur as architect and educator opportune today? Did his practical visions — a combination of ambitious idealism and astute realism — make a significant contribution to twentieth century Canadian architectural culture? Was Arthur more than a local hero or charismatic opinion maker? If so, how was his role distinctive in relationship to other architects in Canada of his generation?

For those who are familiar with the impact of Arthur in Toronto and across Canada during a productive professional life that spanned from the early 1920s to the early 1980s, the answers to these questions are typically affirmative. However, for those recent generations for which his name is unknown, the answers are less obvious. This exhibition is formulated as a response to these questions. Its aim is to solicit discussion within a disparate audience composed of novices and connoisseurs, by addressing two primary aspects of Arthur's professional and cultural identity: his role as architect and educator. This exhibition also investigates complementary activities such as his work as writer, activist and preservationist. This exhibition would like to demonstrate that the importance of Arthur's contribution lies principally in his attempt to interrelate these many activities as part of a cultural project whose scope went far beyond the conventional confines of the architectural profession.

Most defenders of the Arthur legacy emphasize his roles as historian of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings in Ontario and as preservationist. However, on closer examination of his writing, it is apparent that the title of historian is somewhat

inappropriate and misleading, and tends to compete unfairly with Arthur's primary identity as architect. When Arthur was not designing he was a writer interested in the history of buildings of Ontario, the province in which he exercised the majority of his practice. Arthur wrote from the viewpoint of a practicing architect. Arthur was not a "pure" historian and this explains why his writing about the past could — despite the perplexity of some architects — easily coexist with his design activity. His practice of history was not like the narrative form of the architectural historian Peter Collins — to cite the example of another illustrious adopted Canadian — and was more akin to the "operative criticism" discussed by Manfredo Tafuri in his seminal text *Theories and History of Architecture* (1968). Arthur's writing on history shared more affinities with the straightforwardness of the chronicler than with the history of "changing ideals" dear to Collins. Arthur wrote as a practising architect, not as a trained historian. However he believed that he could teach architectural design and history equally well, and he did so at the University of Toronto from the mid 1920s until his retirement in 1966. Throughout his teaching career Arthur taught several different history courses ranging from "The Renaissance in Italy, France and England" to "Modern Architecture". He did so while teaching courses on "Housing" and "Architectural Design" in which, as he put it "Form, scale and proportion are studied". Today, with the rise of specialisation in the field of architectural history, it is hardly possible to think that one could continue the Arthur trajectory.

Even in the role of preservationist, Arthur revealed an identity that was closer to that of architect than that of historian. Arthur was a discerning preservationist; he was not interested in saving everything in the way a "pure" historian is often forced to, but made strategic choices and was selective in directing his attention. Notwithstanding this, when he became involved in preservation projects he was objective and chose to bring landmarks, as much as possible, back to their original state in a way which protagonists of creative restoration, such as the Italian architect Carlo Scarpa, did not. Arthur most certainly would not have endorsed the phenomenon of "Saving Face" that has developed in Toronto (although some notable exceptions do exist) in recent years whereby the historic building is virtually destroyed and only the original façade is reintegrated into the new building (see the work of contemporary Toronto-based artist Luis Jacob featured as a *coda* to this exhibition) (Fig. 1).

The general awareness of Arthur's publications, his activism and his preservation work seems greater than the awareness of his built *œuvre*. There is, for example, no systematic catalogue of

his built work. Furthermore, compared to the masterworks of twentieth century architecture and city planning, Arthur's work appears modest. Rather than express a judgement that fails to capture the historical specificity of Arthur's work, it is more productive to ask why he — clearly informed about the broad spectrum of contemporary architecture — would self-consciously choose to design informed yet modest architecture. Arguably, for Arthur, this was the result of his commitment to an *educated Modernism* and not simply arrived at by default. It is no coincidence that from the very onset of his professional life Arthur was extremely interested in the *buildings* (whereby this term denotes architecture not designed by professionally trained architects) of Ontario. It would seem that Arthur, raised in an austere Presbyterian family, endorsed the Aristotelian ethic of the "intermediate" that saw in the lack of "excess and defect" the quintessence of mastery in art. Or, to borrow an expression used in the late 1920s by the Italian art historian Lionello Venturi, Arthur expressed "pride in modesty". Paradoxically this self-imposed understatement has been detrimental to the historical understanding of his work, especially now, in a moment when the interest in architectural authorship has escalated to the degree of cult status.

### Architect and Educator

Arthur left his native New Zealand and moved to England where he received his Bachelor of Architecture from the Liverpool University School of Architecture in 1922. Despite a few heroic exceptions, the artistic and architectural culture that Arthur was exposed to in England immediately after the First World War had yet to be reshaped by the radical continental modernism of German refugees. Notwithstanding the rise of industry in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century and the opportunities it afforded in the development of a new building culture, English architecture was still the domain of Victorian eclecticism and Edwardian classicism. Reluctant to embrace the *Neues Bauen*, most of England continued to indulge in the splendid isolation of the anachronistic. The mainstream appreciation for the "calculated restraint" and the "educated architecture" of the Renaissance advocated by Geoffrey Scott (*The Architecture of Humanism*, London 1914) and by John Betjeman (*Ghastly Good Taste*, London 1933) respectively played a significant formative role for Arthur throughout his professional life. Even when Arthur was to abandon classicism he would always retain an interest in the virtue of restraint, which the English acknowledged as part of the Renaissance legacy.

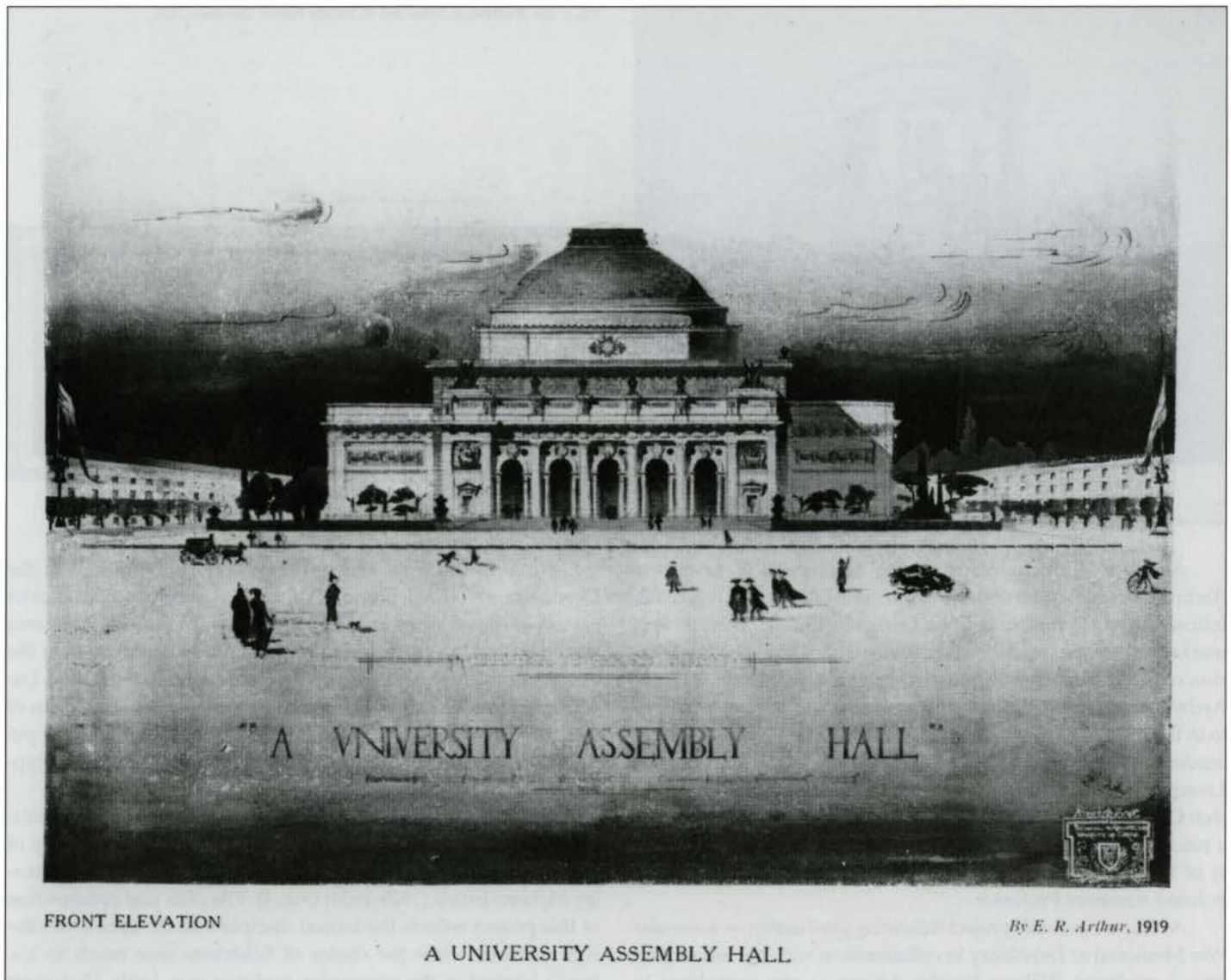


Fig. 2. "A University Assembly Hall", Eric Arthur, 1919.  
(courtesy of the University of Liverpool Library)

Under the leadership of the architect and professor Charles Reilly, the Liverpool School was suspended in a precarious equilibrium between art and science, or to put it more directly, between the legacy of the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* and that of the *Ecole Polytechnique*. Reilly's interest in Beaux-Arts architecture and city planning was filtered through his admiration for the American firm of McKim, Mead, & White, on which he wrote the first book to be published in England. In this 1924 text Reilly claimed the American firm had: "...Brought the architectural world round to this eminently sane position [towards work based on Roman and Italian inspiration] after the vagaries of the Gothic Revival and Richardson Romanesque...an achievement one can compare in magnitude to that of Wren or Jones" (C. Reilly, *McKim, Mead & White*, London 1924, p. 9, 1972 reprint).

Reilly was writing this book during the very years that Arthur was working to obtain his Bachelor of Architecture

Degree. Two of Arthur's student projects (published in *The Liverpool University Architectural Sketchbook*, 1920) reflect the Beaux-arts teaching method of the Liverpool School. After his first year in the school, Arthur was awarded the Lever Prize in Architecture and Civic Design (1919) for his project "A University Assembly Hall". The project was articulated in three drawings (front elevation, section, and plan) all signed and dated 26/11/19 (Fig. 2) (the original of the front elevation is now at the University of Toronto Archives). Arthur playfully inscribed the names of his professors (Reilly, Abercrombie, Budden, Adami, Pearson, Elton, Bonfanquet) into the frieze of his proposed design. During the following years, Arthur competed and succeeded three times in being selected as finalist for the Rome Scholarship. Of these three projects only one set remains and it is of a project for "Courts of Justice" dated 1920.



Fig. 3. War Memorial, E. Arthur and W. Naseby Adams, Dewsbury, 1924.

Arthur's student dossier at the University of Liverpool Archives states that he obtained first class honours in July 1922, followed by a Certificate in Civic Design in 1923. In 1924, having worked under the supervision of Reilly throughout the final session of his architecture degree, Arthur was awarded a Master of Architecture degree *in absentia* because he had moved to Toronto in the meantime. The numerous awards he received during his academic career attest to the prominence of Arthur amongst the Liverpool students. Immediately after he obtained his Civic Design Certificate in 1923 C. H. C. Wright invited Arthur to assume a teaching position at the School of Architecture of the University of Toronto. Arthur lectured for one year and by 1924 was appointed Assistant Professor.

Arthur's first built project following graduation — a circular War Memorial at Dewsbury in collaboration with his fellow Liverpool graduate, William Naseby Adams — was completed in 1924 when Arthur was already in Canada (Fig. 3). This project, influenced by St. George's Hall in Liverpool, attests to Arthur's continued interest in classicism that his student work had clearly demonstrated. Design collaboration was a notable aspect of this early project, something that Arthur would pursue throughout his entire professional life. This advocacy of collective work "to which no definite name and no definite personality can be attached" seems to have been formative in Arthur's development. It is not unlikely that Reilly, a juror of the competition, had also influenced Arthur's choice to work with Adams. Reilly had praised the method of group practice endorsed by McKim, Mead, & White: "That sublime quality which makes great buildings akin to the permanent works of nature, the eternal quality in great architecture, is one which is more likely to arise in work to which no definite name and no definite personality can be attached, but which, like the work of McKim, Mead and White, sums up the finest aspirations of a great people at a great epoch" (C. Reilly, *McKim, Mead & White*, London 1924, p. 9, 1972 reprint).

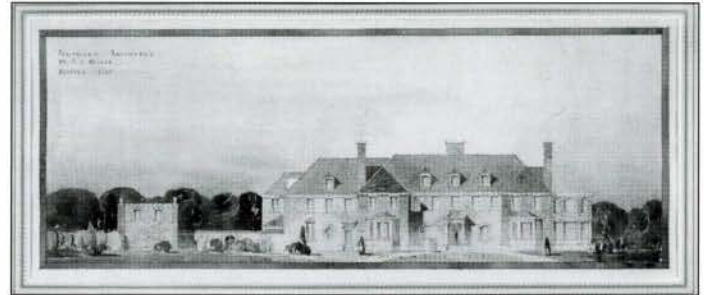


Fig. 4. James Stanley McLean Estate, E. Arthur with George, Moorhouse &amp; King, Toronto, 1929-1934.

While in England, and contemporary to the design of the Dewsbury memorial project, Arthur was employed for a brief period in the office of Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), who was then engaged in the design of Imperial Delhi. Judging from the work Arthur produced immediately after employment with Lutyens, it seems that it was not so much the austere classicism of Imperial Delhi that impressed Arthur but rather, it was the peculiar combination of classical and the vernacular traditions typical of Lutyens's domestic architecture.

Following Arthur's move to Toronto in 1923 and appointment as Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Toronto in 1924, his first major commission was the James Stanley McLean Estate (1929-1934) (Fig. 4). The plan and composition of this project reflects the formal discipline of the Beaux-arts design method, while the choice of fieldstone owe much to Lutyens's interest in the vernacular tradition (e.g. Little Thakeham [1902] and Grey Walls [1900]). The design for the McLean Estate also reflects Arthur's growing interest in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial buildings of Ontario (Arthur self-consciously uses the term buildings in the place of architecture). In the years immediately following his arrival to Canada, he took his University of Toronto students on field trips to important historical buildings in Ontario and executed measured drawings with them (these measured drawings are now at the Archives of Ontario). Characteristically, he was fascinated by buildings in which it was possible to see the classical and vernacular interacting, as with the neo-Palladian, 18<sup>th</sup> century Barnum house in Grafton, Ontario. Many of the buildings that Arthur was intrigued by in the 1920s and 1930s were not designed by professionally trained architects, but by builders that had "no definite name and no definite personality." (See *The Early Buildings of Ontario*, 1938.) In his design of the McLean Estate he merges "high", classical forms and motifs, and "low", vernacular construction techniques such as fieldstone walls. Two other early projects published in *Canadian Homes and Gardens* demonstrate Arthur's interest in the dialect of

Fig. 6. Stelco Trend Series, *Small Town Arena* (Trend n° 48, 1977), G. Baird.  
(Baird Sampson Associates)

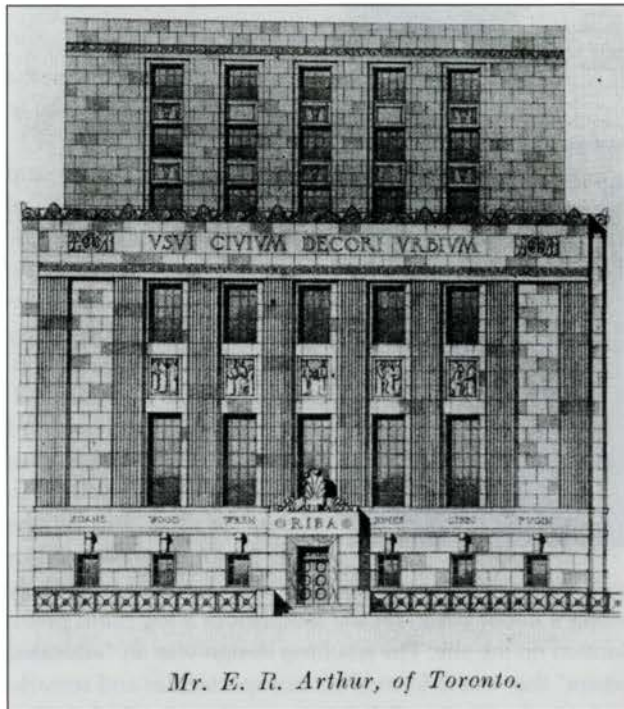
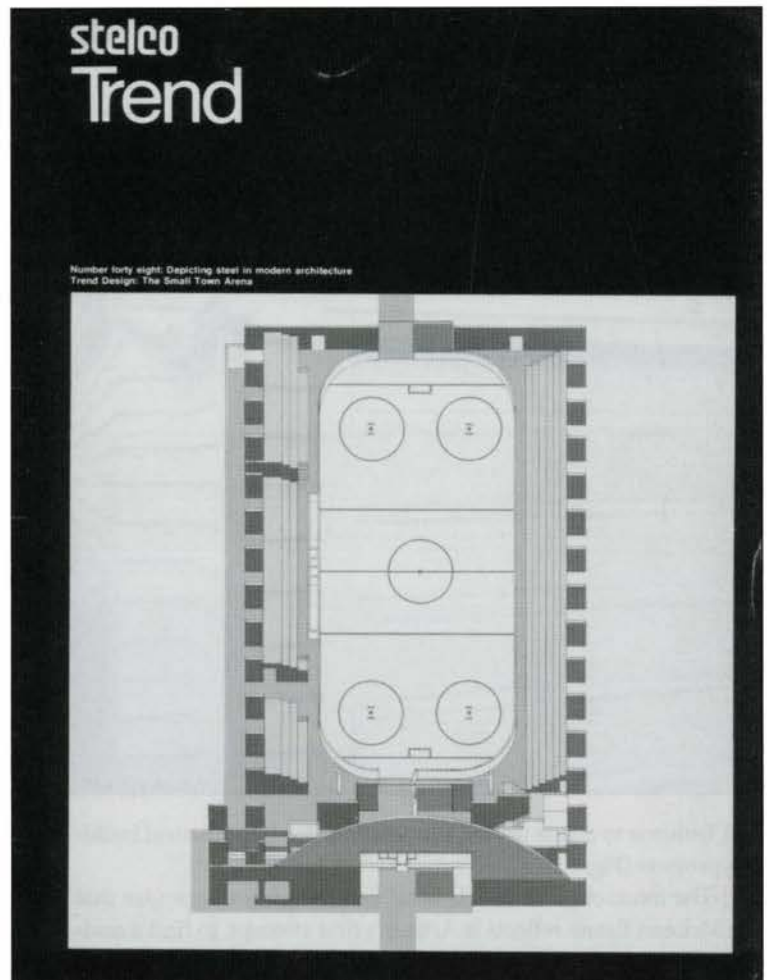


Fig. 5. RIBA competition entry, E. Arthur with J. Ryrie and D. Reed, 1931.

high/low: House at Bayview (1936) and House of H. A. Mc Taggart (1936).

This new interest that Arthur shared with others, in the previously neglected eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Ontario, led to the founding in 1933 of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Arthur wrote extensively on the history of local domestic and public buildings. The numerous pamphlets that he published with the University of Toronto before the Second World War are exclusively dedicated to sites in Ontario. In these pamphlets, Arthur published his measured drawings and those by colleagues and students, as well as new photography taken during the field trips. All this research activity shared much in common with the project that Ramsay Traquair had carried out in Quebec years earlier that also involved producing measured drawings and taking new photography. The work of Traquair and Arthur paralleled the regional preoccupation already expressed in the arts by the Group of Seven for Ontario and Emily Carr for the West Coast.

During the design and execution of the McLean Estate, Arthur produced a design proposal for the competition held in 1931 for the new headquarters of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in London, England (Fig. 5). The symmetrical



plan and the employment of classical language (the inscribed frieze: *Usui Civium Decori Urbium* – For the Use of the Citizens) reflect his continuing interest in classicism and its appropriateness for urban buildings. Though Arthur did not win the competition, what is particularly interesting about this design is his collaboration with his former University of Toronto students Jack Ryrie (B. Arch, 1925) and Donald John Reed (B. Arch, 1931) (My recent discovery of a 1930s scrapbook belonging to Ryrie makes this attribution possible). Arthur collaborated with Ryrie and Reed for several measured drawings executed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Throughout his entire academic career Arthur tried to promote reciprocity between school and practice. Like his mentor Reilly, Arthur promoted his students both within and outside the school. During Arthur's direction from 1937 until 1955 of what was at the time the leading national architecture magazine of Canada, *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, he promoted the work of his former students across the country. As well, Arthur was involved in the national Massey Medals award programme that were later to become known as the Governor General's Awards. In his involvement from 1961 to 1982 as architectural consultant for the Stelco Steel Trend Series, he called upon teaching colleagues like Eberhard Zeidler and former students such as George Baird, Raymond Moriyama, and



Fig. 7. Scotsdale Farmer's House, E. Arthur with Fleury and Piersol, Georgetown, 1939-1941.  
(photo by Lisa Kannako, 2001)

Ted Teshima to create design propositions for hypothetical building projects (Fig. 6).

The interaction of the classical and the local vernacular that the McLean Estate reflects is Arthur's first attempt, to find a middle way between the characteristics of local architecture and an architectural identity for a Canadian society within the greater context of the western world. While Arthur was interested in colonial building culture he was not interested in employing decorative motifs in the form of local flora and fauna, as did the Ontario architect John Lyle. For Arthur, the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings of Southern Ontario were simple but not simplistic, and appealed to his sense of modernist purity notwithstanding their traditional craftsmanship and use of traditional building materials such as wood and fieldstone. These buildings aspired to the calculated understatement of the English country gentleman, which publications like the *British Country Life* promoted and *Canadian Homes and Gardens* worked to emulate. It would seem that Arthur also aspired to the moral virtues of the *Simple Home* as described by Charles Keeler in his book of 1904. Although Arthur was educated in the "Home Country", as an outsider from New Zealand, another British Commonwealth country, he was likely more equipped to see the potential for a distinctive Canadian architecture. He had the necessary "distance" to recognise the need of addressing the difficult issue, especially for a young nation like Canada, of reception of foreign models and was prepared to promote a gradual awareness of a national identity in architecture that could go beyond neo-colonial emulation. It is no coincidence that after the Second World War, Arthur was asked to write the *Special Report on Architecture* for the Massey Commission (1949-1951), which tried to promote

renovated the existing homestead and also designed an entirely new farmer's house based on the footprint of a log cabin previously located on the site. The resulting design was an "educated architecture" that was informed yet not spectacular and remarkably similar to the "Beehive", Bobcaygeon, Ontario which Arthur had presumably "measured and drawn" (*mens et delti*) in the late 1920s early 1930s (Archives of Ontario). Yet, Arthur's design process ensured that the historical vernacular was not simply copied but always interpreted. His work was never merely archaeological. In his design for the farmer's house, Arthur used a traditional homestead plan that resulted in a two-storey volume. He introduced select classical motifs as well as the traditional vernacular white horizontal clapboard (weathering board) on the two-story volume and vertical board and batten on the rear one-story volume. Nearly fifteen years after the design of the farmer's house, for his own residence in Toronto in 1954, Arthur not only used clapboard on the front facade of the house, but he also reused the plan of the traditional homestead. Even late in his life Arthur would demonstrate a continuing interest in vernacular buildings. In 1972, Arthur published an important book on another type of vernacular building: *The Barn, A Vanishing Landmark in North America*. The collaboration for this book with photographer Dudley Witney also demonstrates Arthur's continuing interest in photography as a means through which to educate the greater public about architecture.

While Arthur remained dependent on the classical-vernacular formula for his domestic work, he found different architectural expressions of understatement for other commissions. Arthur's designs for Canada Packers Ltd. (company owned by J. S. McLean, client for the earlier estate design) plants in

a much needed debate on the state of Canadian identity in the Arts and Sciences.

In the late thirties and early forties, several of Arthur's designs for the Scotsdale farm in Georgetown, Ontario (in collaboration with architects Fleury and Piersol) still reflect an interest in local domestic culture, which is re-interpreted with the eyes of an architect educated in the classical tradition of the Beaux-Arts (Fig. 7). At Scotsdale, Arthur



Fig. 8. Canada Packers Plant, E. Arthur with Fleury and Piesol, Vancouver, 1935-1937.  
(photo by Marty Tessler, 2001)

Edmonton (1935-1936) and Vancouver (1935-1937) provided crucial experience in the field of industrial architecture. Designed together with Anthony Adamson, the Canada Packers project in Edmonton explored the possibilities of an *educated Modernism* that was open to innovation but did not radically undermine tradition with groundbreaking formal inventions or machine age aesthetic.

Although Arthur and Adamson used "new" materials in the Edmonton plant for efficiency, these were not particularly exalted for their aesthetic value. The reinforced concrete structure of the Edmonton Plant was left visible on the side and rear elevations, but masked with a continuous wall of brick in the principal facade. In this project there was no celebration of transparency and the result is closer to the Amsterdam school of Wilhem Dudok and sources of German expressionism than to such leading examples of the machine age aesthetic as the van Nelle tobacco factory in Rotterdam by Johannes Brinkmann &

Cornelius van der Vlugt (1927-1929) or the pre-eminent British example, the Boots factory by Sir Owen Williams (1931-1932).

The Canada Packers Plant in Vancouver designed with Fleury and Piersol on the other hand is based on principles of streamlined *Moderne* (Fig. 8). Though formally diverse, the design intentions underlying the Canada Packers plants in Edmonton and Vancouver show Arthur abandoning the educated architecture of the classically inspired Beaux-Arts tradition and cautiously embracing an educated Modernism. During a 1936 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio talk, Arthur acknowledges the onset of the machine age. Though Arthur is aware of the current developments of European modernism, he was not interested in embracing the more radical currents. Despite the move towards Modern building types and his acknowledgement of the rise of the machine age, Arthur chose not to exalt the machine age aesthetic. Unlike Gropius or Le Corbusier, Arthur did not celebrate the engineering culture that had



Fig. 9. Wymilwood Women's Union (Victoria University), E. Arthur with Fleury and Barclay, Toronto, 1951. (photo by Brent Wagler with Saeed Behrouzi, 2001)

the street in an openness and with an informality atypical for Toronto. [Fig. 9] Particularly interesting is the fact that Wymilwood is attached to a historic building. The Arthur project expresses a suspended judgement on the past. While it does not ignore the existing Jacobean building, it makes no attempt (other than using the same dark coloured brick and by ensuring that the scale of the new building did not overwhelm the existing one) to really engage it. The 1959 Women's Athletic Building, designed in collaboration with Barclay and Fleury, shares the formal urban austerity of Arthur's design for the Psychology Building at Queens University

made the new monumentality of the Canadian grain elevator a modern icon. During the 1920s, shortly after being appointed Assistant Professor of Architecture in the University of Toronto Department of Architecture, (which was originally part of the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering) Arthur the "humanist" must have felt somewhat out of place in a heavily engineering oriented environment. The Department was renamed School of Architecture in 1931 and in 1948 became an independent academic division of the University of Toronto.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the School of Architecture acquired greater autonomy and status. Undoubtedly, Arthur came to exercise his ambitious cultural project with greater freedom. In the 1950s, with his associates Barclay and Fleury, Arthur designed Wymilwood Women's Union (1951) for Victoria University and the Women's Athletic Building (1959) on the west side of the University of Toronto St. George Campus. Wymilwood is a mixture of Northern European models and local building culture: the use of wood cladding, a generous balcony and sunken landscaped courtyard, are all elements that interact with

(1967), a project that concluded his major design activity.

Despite Arthur's growing authority in the post war period within the University of Toronto Architecture School, and his well-known aspirations to become dean, he was not appointed dean. Of the many reasons possible, one explanation could be found in the controversy in the 1950s over the Toronto New City Hall competition. Notwithstanding the existence of a scheme by Mathers & Haldenby prepared in 1954, Arthur organized an open international competition with a renowned jury that included C. E. Pratt, E. Saarinen, E. N. Rogers, W. Holfrod, and G. Stevenson. This jury selected a scheme (n° 401) by the Finish architect Viljo Revell. No doubt the Revell scheme, which established a functional and symbolic theatre-like relationship between the public (audience) and the stage (the council chamber and offices), met with Arthur's desire for a modern architecture of a "human scale". Shortly after the announcement of the winner in Toronto, Arthur was asked to be professional advisor for both the Hamilton City Hall and later on for the Fathers of Confederation Memorial Centre in Charlottetown, P.E.I. These

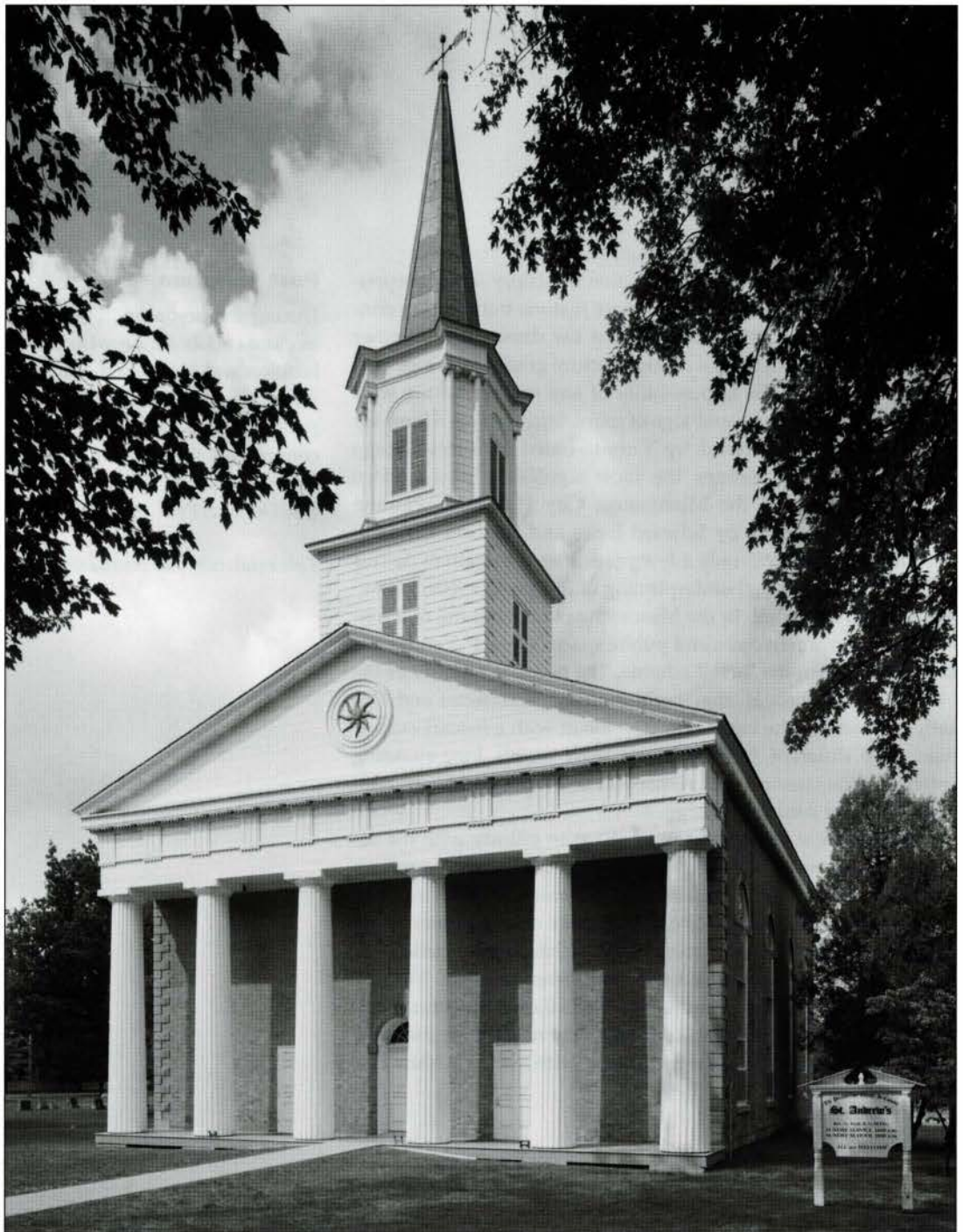


Fig. 10. St. Andrew's Church,  
Niagara-on-the-Lake.  
Restoration by E. Arthur, 1937.  
(photo by Brenda Liu, 2001)

examples of professional advising along with the editorship of the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, which was the country's leading journal of architecture (until November 1955 when *Canadian Architect* was founded), demonstrate how Arthur's sphere of influence was not limited to Toronto but extended to all of Canada.

During the last part of his career Arthur was simultaneously involved in activism for new architecture and as professional advisor for the preservation of historic landmarks. During the construction of the New City Hall which was to become one of the city's most important landmarks, Arthur was completing his own research for *Toronto, No Mean City* (1964) which itself became a benchmark in the architectural history of 19<sup>th</sup> century Toronto. At this point in his career, Arthur had become a public figure and opinion maker who reached out to a large audience, in the manner of Kenneth Clark in England and Lewis Mumford and Philip Johnson in the United States, though not with an equal international stature.

Arthur also used his growing influence to promote important preservation campaigns for St. Lawrence Hall (restored in 1967) and for University College (restored from 1964-1982). The commitment that these projects required was much greater than that required of him from his first preservation project in the late 1930s for St. Andrews Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake (Fig. 10). Arthur's activism in the late 1960s helped save some important architecture that faced demolition during the 1960s, a period that



saw Toronto aggressively expanding and anxious to cancel its past in favour of a new and "progressive" image of the international city. During the late 1950s and early 1960s great debate over the legacy of the Modern Movement was generated. It is from this debate, that some time later, terms like "critical regionalism" and "post-modernism" would emerge.

Arthur lived to witness the rise of a new generation of architects for whom history and memory acquired a meaning and status that many of his own generation had refused to assign. That this use (and abuse) of history and memory was very

different from Arthur's practical vision of history is not surprising. Though interested in the legacy of historic buildings in contemporary design, Arthur never went the direction of another illustrious Liverpool School of Architecture graduate, James Stirling, who asserted the impossibility of any real continuity with the past via an ironic assemblage of relics. Stirling, was a juror for the competition organized by Toronto-based architect George Baird for what is perhaps the most significant post-modern building in Canada, the Mississauga City Hall. The winning scheme was designed by Edward Jones and Michael Kirkland and completed in 1985 only a few years after the death of Arthur in 1982. The conceptual underpinning of this project reflects Revells Toronto City Hall. In the Mississauga City Hall the relationship between architecture and public space (stage and audience) share much with the Revell scheme. The peculiar mixture of the classical (seen through the "revolutionary" architects) and Ontario vernacular (the barn) reflect — albeit with a formal expression very different from Arthur's own — his long-standing interest in the classical and vernacular traditions and his pursuit of history as a source of design.

The *practical visions* of Arthur share an affinity with the activity of the water diviner, Royland, in Margaret Laurence's novel *The Diviner*. A combination of the practical and visionary, the scientific and the intuitive, the practice of the diviner is not dissimilar to Arthurs own quest for an architectural practice that could combine astute realism with ambitious idealism. This exhibition celebrates the promise that Canadian architectural culture today might respond to contemporary needs with the same courage, generosity and determination with which Arthur distinguished himself.

### **Post scriptum**

During the preparation of the exhibition and this text I worked in close collaboration with Dean Larry Wayne Richards. The exhibition and text owe much to his constant insight and thoughtful feedback. Stephen Otto was also particularly helpful and patient at all stages of preparation. Many other people read and commented this text: Prof. George Baird, Adele Freedman, Prof. Kenneth Hayes, Robert G. Hill, Dr. Harold Kalman, Prof. Joe MacDonald, Prof. Alina Payne and Prof. Douglas Richardson.

*This exhibition and essay are for Joe. (Toronto-Boston/Venice-Toronto)*