

THE DREAM (AND LIE) OF PROGRESS

Modern Heritage, Regionalism, and Folk Traditions in Atlantic Canada¹

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In the second half of the twentieth century, modern buildings were a key symbol of progress across Canada, embodying society's aspirations for economic, social, and technological progress. Modernist forms, shared internationally through improved communications and travel, and paid for by global industrialization, engendered a strong tendency to internationalism, perceptions of equivalency between diverse places, and the establishment of universal "type" solutions to common problems and concerns.

COLONIALISM AND CRITICAL REGIONALISM

Often the coming of modernity to the regions worked as a kind of colonialism. Advanced techniques were received with wonder and gratitude by local populations anxious to be "in step" with the world outside. Hence the breathless prose of the Halifax newspapers in 1961, describing the new Canada Permanent Trust offices (fig. 1):²

A Tower of Glass and Steel [...] The City's First Completed Curtain Wall Structure [...] 7000 Square Feet of Glass, 2 Miles of Wire, 2000 Tons of Structural Steel.³

Construction work in its first phases has attracted hundreds of "sidewalk superintendents" in the last few weeks to the site at the corner of Barrington and Sackville streets.⁴

Seldom are transfers of advanced form and technique unadulterated by local conditions. In the Canada Permanent Building, the transferred techniques of steel structure and aluminium curtain wall



FIG. 1. CANADA PERMANENT BUILDING, 1961-1962, HALIFAX, NS. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: C.A. FOWLER AND COMPANY, ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS, HALIFAX, NS. DESIGN ARCHITECTS: CHARLES A. FOWLER, JAMIE MACDONALD. VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST, MAY 2001. | CHAD JAMIESON.



FIG. 2. CANADA PERMANENT BUILDING, “NOW OPEN!” ADVERTISEMENT FROM THE HALIFAX MAIL STAR, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22, 1962. | HALIFAX REGIONAL LIBRARY.

are tempered by a studied appreciation of the topography and block structure of the Halifax peninsula (fig. 2). Charles A. Fowler’s Halifax-based office had completed a number of projects for Canada Permanent Trust when a fire burned its Halifax headquarters. The Trust’s desire for another solid masonry building was ill-suited to the long, thin end block site, and Fowler convinced them that seven storeys of lightweight steel and thin curtain wall would result in more workable spaces. A lattice of silver aluminium mullions with light and dark grey enamel panels and glass infill runs along all three street faces, creating a unique “end cap” to the block. Built tight to the street lines and party walls, the prism of the upper floors reinforces the eighteenth-century block structure, while the slope of the site is exploited to create ground-level entrances at two different floors, connected by a sculptural terrazzo stair and pentagonal atrium. The Canada Permanent Building embodies what Kenneth Frampton defines



FIG. 3. DALHOUSIE ARTS CENTRE, DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY, 1969-1971, HALIFAX, NS. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: C.A. FOWLER BAULD AND MITCHELL LTD., HALIFAX, NS. DESIGN ARCHITECTS: CHARLES A. FOWLER, ANDREW LYNCH, JUNJI MIKAWA. DETAIL OF PRECAST CONCRETE CLADDING AND CONCRETE STRUCTURE, MAY 2001. | CHAD JAMIESON.

as Critical Regionalism, where universalizing paradigms are leavened by attention to local climate, topography, settlement patterns, and building types.⁵

Notions of “regional architecture” risk nostalgia and sentimentality, seeing only traces of some imagined, usually traditional or local, authenticity within buildings. A related risk is that of a patronizing reading of regional works as derivative, “behind the times” imitations of the important works of the metropolitan avant-garde. As the Canada Permanent Building example suggests, the actual workings of cultural exchange in modernity are more subtle and reciprocal than those suggested by the “march of history” of most textbooks. Modernity in the regions saw the creation of new territories of the imagination instigated by the increased mobility of individuals and ideas, while regional work led to inflection and enrichment of the ideas received from the centre.

During the late 1960s, Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, began an ambitious modernizing project, transforming its academic programs and offerings from those of a small regional college to embrace aspirations of a comprehensive university operating on a national stage. In parallel the university undertook a major building program, with prominent use of modern forms and spatial ideas and extensive use of concrete, under the leadership of university architect Jim Sykes, a former employee of John Andrews. Dalhousie’s academic and campus modernization project was a reflection of the contemporary modernizing and democratizing of universities across Canada. By far the most radical of the new buildings is the Dalhousie Arts Centre (fig. 3).⁶ A phantasmagoric composition, both a giant-scale insect carapace and a fragment of a Japanese Metabolist cityscape, the Dalhousie Arts Centre takes its place in the parade of “big facades” along University Avenue, undermining

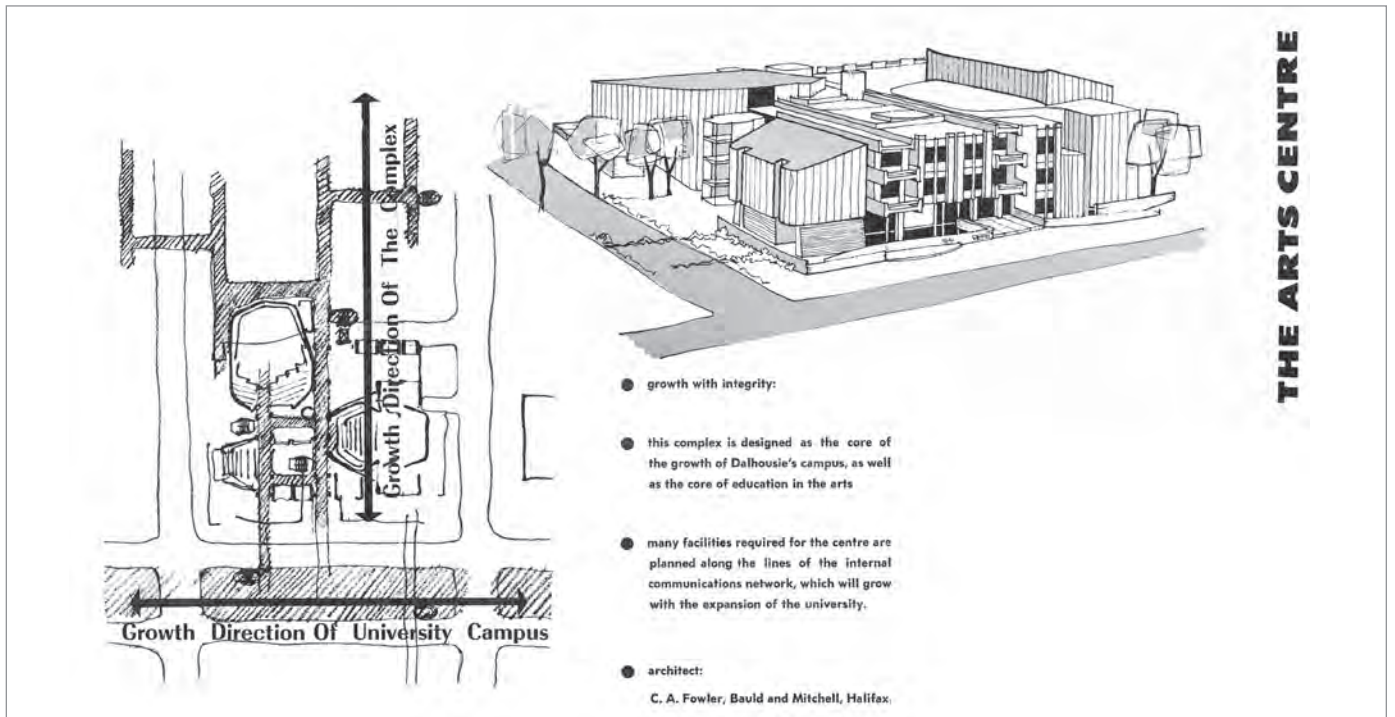


FIG. 4. DALHOUSIE ARTS CENTRE. DIAGRAM SHOWING PROPOSED BRIDGE CONNECTIONS TO CAMPUS BUILDINGS, AND AERIAL PERSPECTIVE PRESENTATION DRAWING FROM BROCHURE "THE ARTS CENTRE," DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX, NS, N.D. [1967]. | JUNJI MIKAWA COLLECTION.

the stuffy proprieties of neighbouring buildings while conforming to the general typology of a formal frontage. Stubs of concrete bridges animate the facades, and suggest the potential of connections across University Avenue and over the flanking streets to connect to future neighbours (fig. 4). An elevated terrace at the rear begins an exterior route up to the secret theatre space of the roof terrace, a space which now lies dormant, awaiting the imagination of the Dalhousie community. The obsessive connection-making of the exterior carries forward in the main lobby, a wonderfully fluid multi-storey landscape of stairs and balconies rendered in concrete and glass (fig. 5).

The Arts Centre is perhaps Canada's only authentic Metabolist building, the product of a curious collaboration between an established Halifax firm and a young avant-garde Japanese architect on a work exchange. Junji Mikawa was responsible for the overall form and planning of the

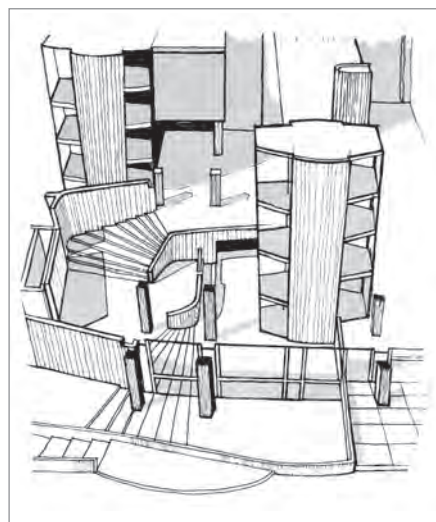


FIG. 5. DALHOUSIE ARTS CENTRE. ENTRY LOBBY AND SCULPTURE GALLERY, DESIGN PRESENTATION DRAWING FROM BROCHURE "THE ARTS CENTRE," DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX, NS, N.D. [1967]. | JUNJI MIKAWA COLLECTION.

Arts Centre, and the result of his brief stay in Canada is a building of international significance, and a locus for ongoing cultural exchange. Mikawa came to Canada



FIG. 6. DALHOUSIE ARTS CENTRE. "LEVEL 3" PLAN, PRESENTATION DRAWING, N.D. INK AND TONE ON MYLAR. | FOWLER, BAULD & MITCHELL COLLECTION.

after working on Kunio Mayekawa's Tokyo Metropolitan Hall, and brought Metabolist ideas to Halifax where they were given room for expression (fig. 6).⁷



FIG. 7. HOLY REDEEMER CHURCH. EXTERIOR VIEW TOWARDS ENTRY AND TOWER, APRIL 2001. | CHAD JAMIESON.

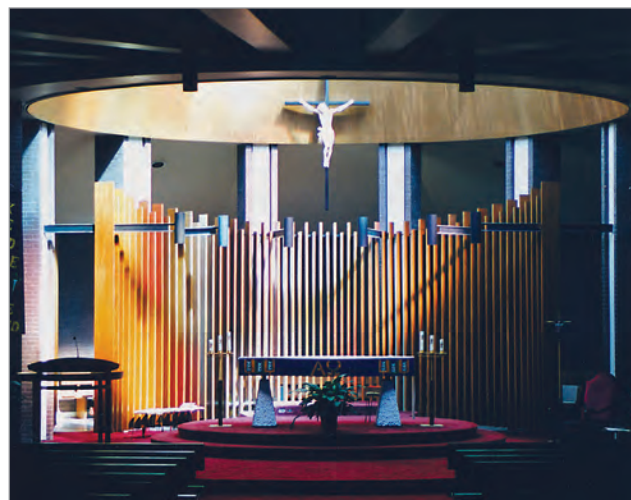


FIG. 8. HOLY REDEEMER ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1962-1964, CHARLOTTETOWN, PE. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: ALFRED J. HENNESSEY ARCHITECT, CHARLOTTETOWN, PE. DESIGN ARCHITECT: ALFRED HENNESSEY. VIEW OF THE ALTAR, APRIL 2001. | CHAD JAMIESON.

Mikawa returned to take up a teaching post in Japan; for years afterward Japanese architecture students turned up in Halifax, looking to visit sensei's masterwork.

To early twenty-first-century eyes, Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, appears to be a very typical Roman Catholic church, with its fan-shaped plan enclosed by low perimeter walls, covered by a prominent roof supporting an expressive spire (fig. 7).⁸ A masterful play of light and darkness animates the interior. Radial lines of shadow in the folded plate beams lead to a blast of tinted light beneath the central lantern (fig. 8). The rich, coarse textures of the brick interior walls and stone floor ripple in the light, while the ragged geometries of plan and section provide additional pools of darkness.

An examination of the timelines shows that Holy Redeemer is in fact a prototype of what became a widespread late-twentieth-century church form. The first session of the Second Vatican Council convened in October 1962, while Holy Redeemer Church was in the design phase,

and according to its Charlottetown-born architect Alfred Hennessey, "changes were made to the drawings as Vatican II was unfolding."⁹ The bishop of Charlottetown was an advocate of progress, and as the Council progressed, the bishop telegraphed the implications from Rome back to Hennessey in Charlottetown. The church reflects the liturgical reforms: the celebrant priest is behind the altar, facing the congregation in pews arranged for optimal view and participation in the mass, which is now in the vernacular rather than in Latin (fig. 9). These formal and liturgical innovations, product of an international push for modernity, have since become a commonplace of church architecture. Holy Redeemer Church, a small parish in a small city on an island province, stands as a very pure (and very early) architectural expression of liturgical progress.

French philosopher Paul Ricoeur marks the distinction in modernity between culture (a local, particular phenomenon) and civilization (a dominant, universal phenomenon).¹⁰ More crucially, Kenneth Frampton notes that Ricoeur calls for the cross-fertilization of culture and civilization

to create a hybrid "world culture" drawing upon "the capacity of regional culture to recreate a rooted tradition while approaching foreign influences at the level of both culture and civilization."¹¹ The enriching transnational cultural exchanges embodied in both the Arts Centre and the Holy Redeemer Church are the result of individual mobility, media transmission of ideas and forms, and the local resonance of international cultural movements. These exchanges produced local buildings of international significance, embodiments of this resistant "world culture."

THE DREAM AND LIE OF PROGRESS

Modernity has always existed in uneasy relationship to local vernaculars, especially in the many regions of Canada outside the major population centres. Here modernity is a work in progress, imperfectly achieved or perhaps never truly begun. Federal government-funded industrialization and regional development strategies create massive disruptions of traditional cultures defined largely by resource extraction and traditional harvest economies. Each wave

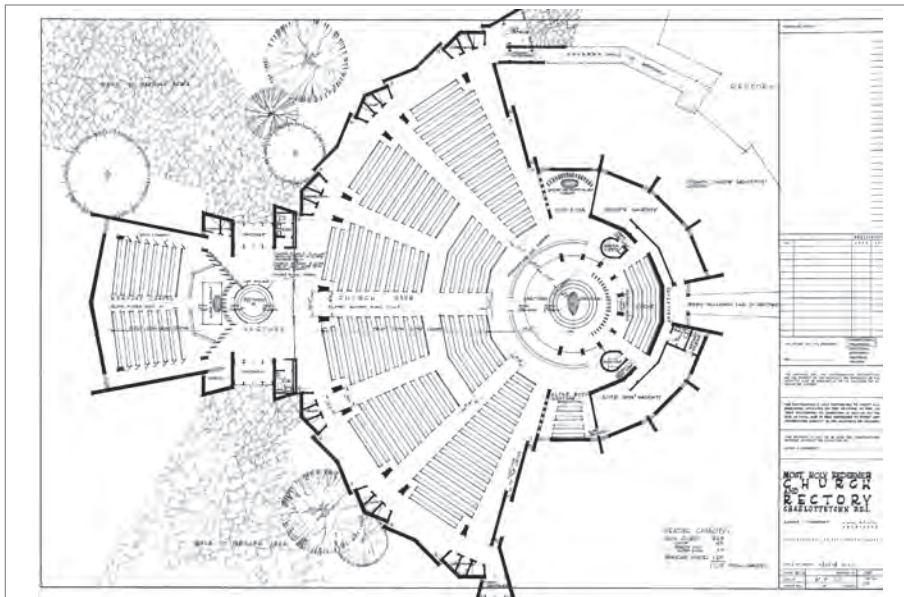


FIG. 9. HOLY REDEEMER CHURCH. "CHURCH PLAN" DESIGN PRESENTATION DRAWING, DECEMBER 1962. DELINEATOR: CHM [CLAUDE MAURICE]. BLACK INK, SEPIA INK, AND PENCIL ON VELLUM. | ALFRED HENNESSEY COLLECTION.

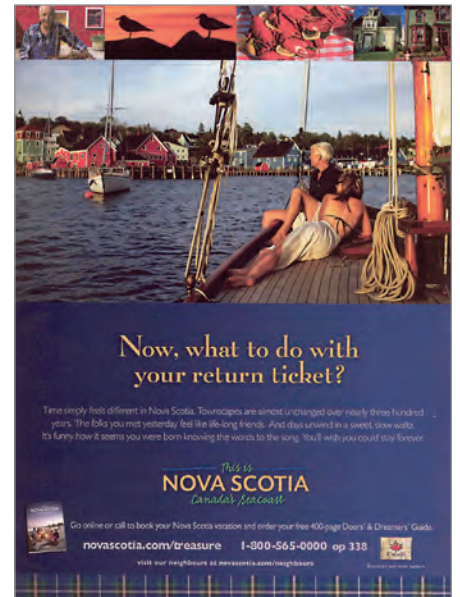


FIG. 10. NOVA SCOTIA TOURISM MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT, 2005. A CLEARLY ANTIMODERN IMAGE OF PLACE, PRESENTED TO ELICIT TOURISTIC DESIRE. | NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURE.

of economic development proves no less capricious than the traditional harvest economies, while the "modernization" of farming, forestry, and fishing results in increased overhead and indebtedness, destroying traditional subsistence economies. With no substantial, lasting industrialization, these societies have jumped directly from premodern resource extraction to postmodern service economies. Young people are left with a choice between low-paying jobs in call centres and restaurants, or "goin' down the road" to Toronto or Fort MacMurray, the Canadian version of the internal migrant worker exile common around the world.

TOURISM, ANTI-MODERNISM, AND THE QUEST OF THE FOLK

Mass tourism is the late twentieth century's answer to the failure of industrialization and the loss of subsistence. Official and popular reception of modern architecture in Atlantic Canada is poised on an uneasy edge between the desire to

be "up-to-date" and progressive and the need to serve the folksy image marketed by the tourism industry. Beginning in the 1930s, the rise of the tourist industry in the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland has been accompanied by the development of the notion of an Atlantic Canadian "folk." The region's tourist image is a carefully constructed amalgam of unspoiled nature and premodern buildings and settlements. Ethnographic fieldwork since the 1930s has built a body of folk songs and stories, and of traditional crafts and folkways. This documentary evidence has been supplemented by a series of invented "folk" elements, including heraldry, handicraft patterns, and myths of origin, intended to create a seamless image of tradition and simplicity for consumption by visitors "from away" (fig. 10). Evangeline, Anne of Green Gables, Gaelic New Scotland, the all-pervasive Nova Scotia tartan, the hooked mat, all have been invented or perfected since the 1930s, supported by schools devoted to bagpipes, weaving, and step dance. According to Ian McKay,

who has studied the development of the folk image in Nova Scotia:

Between 1935 and 1964 the government of Nova Scotia pursued a consistent policy of developing historical resources to promote tourism and respond to a public hungry for a reassuring "presence of the past." The revival of a golden age, with its restored fortresses and tall ships, was an applied romantic antimodernism.¹²

The romance of the distant past has little place for the dreams of modernity and progress of the more recent past. Tourism marketers in Nova Scotia (quickly imitated in the rest of the Atlantic region) developed a storyline emphasizing that "[t]he province was essentially innocent of the complication and anxieties of twentieth-century modernity."¹³ Preservation of pre-Confederation buildings and precincts was a key element of the development of the tourist industry in the 1970s, while the desire to express the comforts of the distant past (when there were still cod to



FIG. 11. BOWRING BROTHERS STORE, 1950S, ST. JOHN'S, NL. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: CUMMINGS AND CAMPBELL, ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS, ST. JOHN'S, NL. DESIGN ARCHITECT: ANGUS CAMPBELL. VIEW OF THE PARKING RAMP AND STAIR TOWER AT THE BACK OF THE BUILDING FACING THE HARBOUR, 2001. | STEVEN MANNELL.

fish) has kept postmodern historicism alive as the expression of choice for many new buildings in the region. Buildings with modern expression spoil the illusion, and as a result many have been “historicized” to keep to the tourism storyline—for example, the pseudo-traditional brick wallpaper applied to the street frontage of Angus Campbell’s Bowring building in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador.¹⁴ The wonderful modern composition of stair tower, ramp, and deck, out of sight facing the harbour, remains intact (fig. 11), while inch-thick veneer of a past that never was now replaces the former breathtaking concrete canopy and plate glass window that negotiated the bend in the street (figs. 12-13). Robert Bevan, discussing the selective destruction and neglect of certain modes of architecture, notes that “the erasure of the memories, history and identity attached to architecture and place—enforced forgetting—is the goal itself.”¹⁵



FIG. 12. BOWRING BROTHERS STORE. VIEW OF THE ORIGINAL STOREFRONT FACING WATER STREET, WITH CONTINUOUS PLATE GLASS DISPLAY WINDOWS AND CANTILEVERED CANOPY, 1970S. | ST. JOHN'S CITY ARCHIVE, 26-01-025.

Some early buildings serving the region’s tourism industry aspired to a critical framing of regional characteristics. Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefavre describe this as “defamiliarization”—the use of place-defining elements in a way that resists sentimentality.¹⁶ The Interpretive Centre at Port aux Basques, Newfoundland and Labrador, originally greeted travelers debarking the ferry from mainland Canada with an abstract white geometry of forms, capable of evoking alternately the sense of an iceberg on the ocean, rock formations of the local fjords and cliffs, schooner sails returning from the banks, or a traditional fishing shed or “lean” on an outport shore (fig. 14).¹⁷ Recent tourism marketing campaigns have repainted the centre and its companions across the province, covering the white superstructure with primary colours taken from fishing sheds, “re-familiarizing” the abstract forms by closing down the alternate readings in favour of the ruling folk narrative.

Le Pays de la Sagouine in Bouctouche, New Brunswick, is a more insidious manifestation of the folk imperative (fig. 15).¹⁸ In the absence of any actual premodern artefacts in the area, an ersatz Acadian village was constructed of whole cloth, a physical embodiment of a fictional



FIG. 13. BOWRING BROTHERS STORE. VIEW OF WATER STREET FRONTAGE AFTER THE APPLICATION OF A HISTORICIST VENEER OF BRICK AND PUNCHED WINDOWS IN THE 1990S, 2001. | STEVEN MANNELL.

place formerly existing only in Antonine Maillet’s popular tales of the Acadian charwoman “La Sagouine.” While the settlement pattern borrows more from theme parks and shopping malls than any study of traditional villages, the architectural expression employs the elements and forms of a generalized “pastness” drawn from postmodern historicism, enhanced with selected recognizably Acadian motifs and details. This use of “familiarization” evokes a very quick, soothing nostalgia in the visitor, creating an emotional connection to a literally fictive past. Kenneth Frampton notes that such populist expression “seeks to evoke not a critical perception of reality, but rather the sublimation of a desire for direct experience through the provision of information. Its tactical aim is to attain, as economically as possible, a preconceived level of gratification.”¹⁹ As a place that allows real tourists to visit fictional locales in person, the Pays de la Sagouine stands in the tradition of “Green Gables,” on Prince Edward Island’s north shore, and “Evangeline,” at Grand-Pré, Nova Scotia. This tradition also includes the many simplified and romanticized interpretations of past peoples, traditions, and events that populate the touristic interpretations of actual historic sites throughout Atlantic Canada.



FIG. 14. PORT AUX BASQUES INTERPRETIVE CENTRE, 1976-1978, PORT AUX BASQUES, NL. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: BEATON SHEPPARD LTD., ST. JOHN'S, NL. DESIGN ARCHITECT: BEATON SHEPPARD. VIEW ACROSS THE DRIVEWAY, N.D. [1978]. | BEATON SHEPPARD COLLECTION.

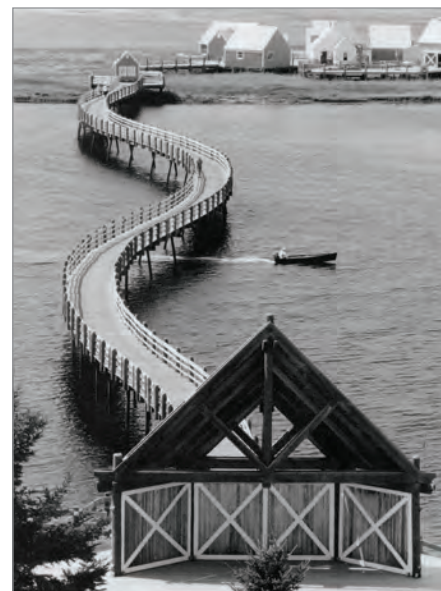


FIG. 15. LE PAYS DE LA SAGOINE, 1991 AND 1999, BOUCTOUCHE AND ÎLE-AUX-PUCES, NEW BRUNSWICK. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: ARCHITECTS FOUR LTD., MONCTON, NB. PRINCIPAL ARCHITECTS: ELIDE ALBERT AND DIANE VANDOMMELEN. DESIGN ARCHITECT: JEFF VANDOMMELEN. THE BOARDWALK LOOKING TOWARD ÎLE-AUX-PUCES, N.D. | ARCHITECTS FOUR COLLECTION.

The all-pervasive character of the tourist milieu has turned this outward image back upon the place and its people, with “quaint” and “folk” increasingly coming to define the self-image of Atlantic Canadians as well. According to Ian McKay, the mechanism was both external and internal: “From the 1920s on, the state systematically created a complex network of words and things to make the ‘outsiders’ experience of Innocence the ‘insiders’ lived life experience. The ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ were brought together.”²⁰ And further: “For outsiders who wanted to be insiders, for Nova Scotians torn between leaving and staying, the folk offered a way of conceptualizing identity and dealing with the painful uncertainties of modernity.”²¹ A clear and distinctive image of “the simple life” back home is especially important to Atlantic Canadian exiles, such as migrant construction workers from Cape Breton bunked up a dozen to a house working the Alberta oil sands. “Farewell to

Nova Scotia” is now the provincial anthem, and regret for a life we were told we once lived replaces our true memories of the place we left.

What does not fit this ruling narrative is dealt with rather ruthlessly. Cases in point are two projects that gave expression to an optimistic and progressive vision of the future of the region; now that these visions run counter to the myth of folk innocence, the buildings themselves are destroyed or abandoned to the elements.

Conceived in the early 1970s by the New Alchemy Institute, a Boston-based group devoted to a renewed integration of science and the humanities, the PEI Ark, Spry Point, Prince Edward Island, was powered by sun and wind, grew its own food on the grounds and in its greenhouse, and treated its own water and wastes (figs. 16-17).²² Like a traditional Prince Edward Island homestead, the Ark was intended to be

fully self-sufficient on its rural site. The technologies are in the spirit of the Whole Earth Catalog: an urban and science-based rediscovery of traditional country ways and means, deployed in resistance to the growth paradigms and input-output mentality of industrial modernism.²³ Architectural expression was self-described as “conservative modern.”²⁴ Abstract pitch-roof masses evoke local barns, while the site planning learns lessons in wind and solar advantage from vernacular examples. Traditional Island values are echoed in the Ark’s publicity, with an emphasis on “prudence—skill and good judgement in the use of resources” as the guiding principle of design and operation.²⁵ Here Island folkways are “defamiliarized” through a hippy reading and representation.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, prime minister of Canada and paragon of social progress, offered these remarks at the Ark’s opening in 1976: “This Island [...] is now



FIG. 16. THE PEI ARK, 1975-1976, SPRY POINT, LITTLE POND, PE (DEMOLISHED). ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: SOLSEARCH ARCHITECTURE, CHARLOTTETOWN, PE, AND CAMBRIDGE, MA. DESIGN ARCHITECTS: DAVID BERGMARK AND OLE HAMMARLUND. DAVID BERGMARK AND OLE HAMMARLUND IN FRONT OF THE SOUTH WALL AND SOLAR COLLECTOR PANELS, N.D. | BERGMARK HAMMARLUND JONES COLLECTION.



FIG. 18. NEWFOUNDLAND HOUSE. | PAINTING BY REGINALD SHEPHERD, 1964. OIL ON CANVAS. WILLIAM SMALLWOOD COLLECTION.

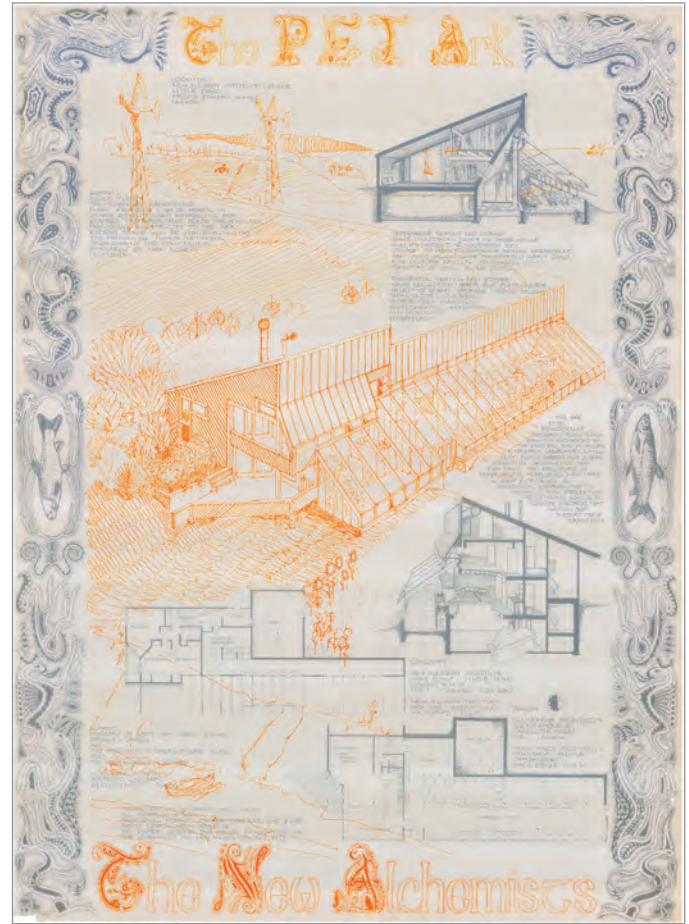


FIG. 17. "THE PEI ARK: THE NEW ALCHEMISTS" POSTER, N.D. [1978]. | BERGMARK HAMMARLUND JONES COLLECTION.

providing hospitality to a new commitment, a commitment that the environmentalists refer to as 'living lightly on the earth.'"²⁶ The Ark was conceived at a time of enormous optimism and appetite for the future in Canada. But the remote site and the emphasis on self-sufficiency suggest a retreat from organized society. In fact, "The Ark" was so-called because the project was designed to survive the coming economic holocaust expected by its promoters. Other young "new pioneers" moved to the rural Maritimes in the 1970's based on their estimation of the fallout patterns from a nuclear strike on the United States eastern seaboard. In this contradiction, the Ark reflects the

unresolved motives of the back to the land movement, attempting to build an Arcadian, and Acadian, utopia while at the same time securing an escape from a coming technological apocalypse.

The Ark had a chequered career, especially with the rediscovery of cheap oil and consumerism in the 1980s. For a short while the Ark was converted to a bed-and-breakfast inn, but it was abundantly clear that Anne of Green Gables never slept there. The image of the Ark and the social and ecological ideals it expressed were irreconcilable with the preferred image of green gables, red soil, and jolly fiddlers that had been presold to its guests. Its demolition

in 2000 came just too soon for the Ark to be rediscovered as a pioneering work of sustainable design. The Ark embodies an important but suppressed story in recent Maritime history, that of the draft dodgers, hippies, and back-to-the-landers of the 1960s and 1970s. Their legacy of social justice and environmental activism remains mostly undimmed in Atlantic Canada, thanks to a shortage of local opportunities to sell out to "the Man." As yet, there is no official hippy tartan, and little place for this episode of history in either school curricula or tourism guides.

The Newfoundland House was commissioned by Premier Joey Smallwood as part

of his controversial Russwood Ranch pig farm at Roaches Line, Newfoundland and Labrador (fig. 18).²⁷ The Newfoundland House was conceived as the central villa to Smallwood's personal experiment in modernity and progress, a large-scale pork ranch. While traditional outport houses and outbuildings are able to be "launched" due to their lack of permanent foundations, the Newfoundland House is rooted in its knoll, emphasizing its tie to place and symbolizing the need for the agricultural and industrial workers of Newfoundland's future to be rooted to the land, in contrast to the restlessness of fisherfolk.²⁸ The extensive development of the landscape, with encircling carriage drive, reflecting pond, stone walls, and gates, also contrasts with traditional settlement patterns that either neglect the ground altogether, or fence off areas for pasture or kitchen gardens. While the house responds in subtle ways to the character of its site and climate, the forms and geometry offer little to Newfoundlanders that is familiar; instead, like Smallwood himself, the Newfoundland House is a provoking symbol of coming progress and change.

The house is the focus of a prominent view across the reflecting pond from Roaches Line, and was long an inescapable landmark on the route from St. John's to the summer vacation area of Conception Bay South. A gas station and restaurant across the road provided travellers with an ideal vantage point to take in Joey Smallwood's house and his vision of progress (fig. 19). Smallwood was a pariah in Newfoundland for his role in the referendum that ended independence (fig. 20). Architect Angus Campbell was known by the nickname "Angles" in St. John's, and liked to incorporate mathematical references and jokes in his designs. The geometrically adventurous "vee" plan of the house

contains the living room at the prow, with a monumental fireplace crowned by a folded plate ceiling. Two wings branch back from the prow to enclose an exterior court. One wing slightly larger than the other, some say a subtle reminder (from Campbell, or Smallwood himself) of the 51% to 49% split of the vote in the 1949 referendum on Confederation with Canada (fig. 21).

As premier of the new province, Smallwood was evangelical in his desire for progress and modernity, with mega-projects like the Churchill Falls dam and power plant and the trans-Newfoundland highway, myriad industrial and mining projects, and above all the forced relocation of numerous outport fishing settlements in an effort at physical and cultural modernization. The Newfoundland House, commissioned by the Newfoundland premier from a Newfoundland architect, was a far from reassuring image to Newfoundlanders feeling the uncertainties of confederation and relocation.

Joey Smallwood gave the house to the people of Newfoundland as a continuing symbol of his legacy of modernization, but no subsequent government has been willing to fulfil this wish. Instead, a Smallwood centre exists at Gambo, Joey's tiny and remote home village, keeping the Smallwood legacy at a healthy distance from St. John's and emphasizing his early, pre-Confederation, pre-modernization policy years. The Newfoundland House stands in dire straits, abandoned by the province. Even the regional road system has been redesigned to move the main route well away from views to the house. The Newfoundland House offers the potential to accommodate a significant interpretive centre of Smallwood and post-Confederation Newfoundland, easily accessible to tourists and

Newfoundlanders alike. Such an institution would be an important step for Newfoundland in coming to terms with the difficulties of the recent past.²⁹

In the PEI Ark, the aim was to be consoling; in the Newfoundland House, to provoke; but in both projects the specifics of place, landscape, and climate are embodied, tempering the cultural material brought from away. In each case the result is an image that is neither reassuring nor easily commodified in the folk/tourist market. The architectural images challenge viewers to think critically about the culture and destiny of place. The sad neglect of the "Newfoundland House" and the demolition of the PEI Ark indicate the postmodern retreat from a positive view of progress and the future, and exemplify the cold disregard paid to authentic cultural artefacts that no longer fit the ruling folk/tourist narrative.

WHY WORRY ABOUT MODERN HERITAGE?

In *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, Robert Bevan quotes George Orwell's statement of 1943 on the desire of elite groups in society to control the shape of the past:

The implied objective [...] is a nightmare world in which the Leader or some other ruling clique controls not only the future but the past. If the Leader says of such and such an event, "It never happened"—well, it never happened [...] This prospect frightens me much more than bombs—and after our experiences of the last few years, that is not a frivolous statement.³⁰

While the destruction or neglect of modern built heritage, in Atlantic Canada or elsewhere, is not occurring in the face of military conflict, it is certainly part and parcel of the ongoing cultural wars



FIG. 20. NEWFOUNDLAND HOUSE (JOEY SMALLWOOD RESIDENCE), 1958-1960, ROACHES LINE, NL. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: CUMMINGS AND CAMPBELL, ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS, ST. JOHN'S, NL. DESIGN ARCHITECT: ANGUS CAMPBELL. PREMIER JOSEPH SMALLWOOD IN THE LIVING ROOM OF NEWFOUNDLAND HOUSE, 1961. | BOB BROOKS. FROM JAMES Y. NICHOL, "PUGNACIOUS JOEY: THE WHIRLING DERVISH FROM NEWFOUNDLAND," *THE STAR WEEKLY* TORONTO, APRIL 22, 1961, P. 8-9. TORONTO REFERENCE LIBRARY.



FIG. 19. GAS STATION AND DAIRY BAR, 1963, ROACHES LINE, NL. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: CUMMINGS AND CAMPBELL, ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS, ST. JOHN'S, NL. DESIGN ARCHITECT: ANGUS CAMPBELL. THE GAS STATION AND DAIRY BAR WAS ONE OF MANY BUILDINGS DESIGNED FOR JOEY SMALLWOOD BY ANGUS CAMPBELL, AND WAS LOCATED DIRECTLY ACROSS THE ROAD FROM NEWFOUNDLAND HOUSE, APRIL 2001. | CHAD JAMIESON.

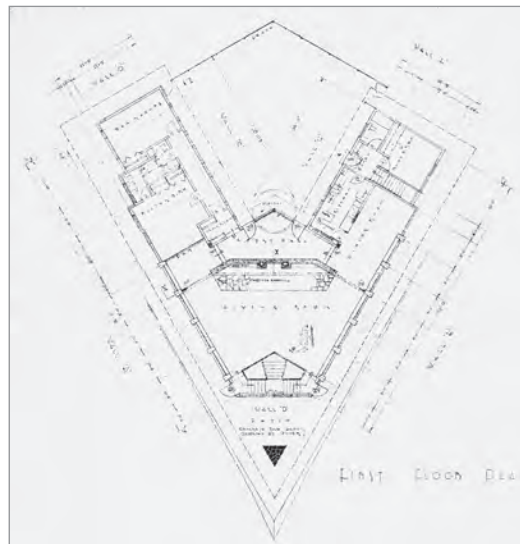


FIG. 21. NEWFOUNDLAND HOUSE. DETAIL OF "FIRST FLOOR PLAN" CONTRACT DRAWING #3, JUNE 1958. | DELINEATOR: ANGUS CAMPBELL. SEPIA PRINT: ANGUS CAMPBELL COLLECTION.

instigated by neo-liberalism and the proponents of global market economies.

So why worry about modern heritage in a region where many feel that modernity has failed? There are the worthy reasons, including the obligation to bear witness to the continuum of our heritage, not just to an imagined, once-upon-a-time "golden

age." Ian McKay observes that the problem with touristic narratives, whether imposed on or adopted, is that, "full and free citizenship in a society of equals requires an open dialogue with the past, and such an open dialogue becomes increasingly unlikely if canons of significance, criteria of identity, and the very concept of community all come to be structured according

to commercial criteria."³¹ Our built modern heritage is a legacy of ambition, will, and symbolism, left for our benefit and use by those who came before us; it is folly to ignore the significant embodied energy, both cultural and material, in modern buildings. It is puzzling that contemporary Atlantic Canadians are easily motivated to conserve buildings from the premodern



FIG. 22. ATLANTIC PROVINCES PAVILION, EXPO 67. MODEL. | PHOTOGRAPH: ERNEST MAUNDER. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA.



FIG. 23. ATLANTIC PROVINCES PAVILION, EXPO 67, 1967, ÎLE NOTRE-DAME, MONTREAL, QC (DEMOLISHED). ARCHITECTURAL FIRM: DUFFUS ROMANS SINGLE AND KUNDZINS, HALIFAX. DESIGN CONSULTANTS: PROF. OJARS BISKAPS AND PROF. DOUGLAS SHADBOLT, SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, NOVA SCOTIA TECHNICAL COLLEGE, HALIFAX. GENERAL VIEW SHOWING BLACK SPRUCE ROOF CANOPY AND CONCRETE RAMPS, WITH THE MONORAIL TRACK AT RIGHT, 1967. | PHOTOGRAPH: ERNEST MAUNDER. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA.



FIG. 24. ATLANTIC PROVINCES PAVILION, EXPO 67. VIEW SHOWING THE EXPO "MINIRAIL" RUNNING BENEATH THE BLACK SPRUCE CANOPY, 1967. IN THE FOREGROUND BELOW IS "WHALE WALL," AN ARRANGEMENT OF WHALE SKELETONS SUGGESTING THE FORM OF A VIKING SHIP, BY WITOLD KURYLLOWICZ AND JOHN SCHREIBER. | PHOTOGRAPH: FROM DE LORIMIER, EXPO 67 - MONTREAL, CANADA, P. 132.

era, a time that most would find oppressive to inhabit in social, political, and economic terms, yet are uncomfortable recognizing the value of the built heritage of the postwar era, which expresses such legacies as democratization, human rights, social mobility, access to education and health care, access to decent housing and the arts, women's and minority rights, and improved standards of living. When we casually destroy the buildings, what exactly do we say about the values they express?

CODA - ATLANTIC PROVINCES PAVILION, EXPO 67

A nostalgic glance at the Atlantic Provinces Pavilion at Expo 67, on Île Notre-Dame in Montreal, provides an example of an alternative conciliatory approach, one that embraces regional tradition and folkways within modern forms and expression.

A pan-Atlantic project, the pavilion was designed by the Halifax firm of Duffus Romans Single and Kundzins, Halifax, with design consultants Professor Ojars Biskaps and Professor Douglas Shadbolt of the newly-founded School of Architecture at Nova Scotia Technical College. The pavilion's agenda (as described in text and expressed in form and material) was a conscious hybrid of tradition and innovation, speaking to the optimism of the day regarding the reconciliation of (local) culture and (universal) civilization. So the big shelter is formed by unequal-length (up to seventy-five feet) black spruce cantilever roof trusses, embodying an exhibition of the uses of eastern spruce, and was the largest cantilevered wooden roof in North America (figs. 22-23).³² Outside the pavilion was a fifty-foot tall spruce flagpole/signal mast—during Charles de Gaulle's visit, the signal flags on mast spelled out "God

Save Canada" in answer to de Gaulle's "*Vive le Québec libre!*"³³

One of the Expo monorail lines (the "Minirail") was drawn right through the pavilion, flanking the chowder bar seating two hundred and fifty people. The many visitors waiting for their dose of seafood lined up along an indoor-outdoor promenade that passed by integrated contemporary artworks by Brigid Grant, Molly Boback, Marjory Donaldson, Paul Tacon, Anne Roberts, and John Corey, most often involving heritage themes and incorporating found artefacts. Marjorie Lorain embedded marine plants in a series of luminous translucent fibreglass panels. Witold Kurylłowicz and John Schreiber's "Whale Wall" arranged whale skeletons from Trinity Bay to suggest a Viking ship (fig. 24). Prospective chowder-hounds were also offered views of a boatbuilding exhibition (figs. 25-26).



FIG. 25. ATLANTIC PROVINCES PAVILION, EXPO 67. VIEW OF ATLANTICA UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN THE BOATYARD UNDER THE CANOPY, WITH THE VIEWING GALLERY BEHIND, 1967. | PHOTOGRAPH: FROM DE LORIMIER, EXPO 67 - MONTREAL, CANADA, P. 133.



FIG. 26. ATLANTIC PROVINCES PAVILION, EXPO 67. SCHOONER "ATLANTICA" UNDER CONSTRUCTION, WITH BUILDER DAVID STEVENS. | PHOTOGRAPH: ERNEST MAUNDER. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA.

Over the course of the fair, the forty-seven-foot schooner *Atlantica* was constructed under the supervision of David Stevens of Lunenburg. *Atlantica* was launched on October 11, which was designated by Expo organizers as the Atlantic Provinces special day, accompanied by a band from Trinidad and Tobago and a West Indian choir, signifying traditional relations between the Atlantic Provinces and West Indies. *Atlantica* then sailed south to the Caribbean on a goodwill tour.³⁴

According to the pavilion brochure, the building and exhibition were meant to give the impression "of a vigorous area looking to the future with confidence and wanting the world to know it."³⁵



FIG. 27. NOVA SCOTIA TOURISM MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT, 2008. A MORE COMPLEX AND SUGGESTIVE FOLK IMAGE, OFFERING A LIVING ENGAGEMENT OF FOLK TRADITION AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE. | NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURE.

A contemporary commentator, I. Kalin of the Federal Materials Branch, remarked that, "[w]hile trying to capture the spirit of the Atlantic Provinces, the designer[s] worked hard to avoid any 'quaint' effects. The result was an interesting contemporary building which helped to tell the desired story without duplicating actual Maritime-type structures."³⁶ Kalin's comments anticipate by several decades the notion of "defamiliarization" described by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefavre.

More than forty years ago, at the high watermark of modernist architecture in Canada, the Atlantic Provinces pavilion provides an exemplar of design that embodies a healthy vision of

fruitful relations between tradition and progress in Atlantic Canada. This relationship of modernity and tradition is built upon an understanding of regional character, craft values, and local culture but without the wilful, false humility projected by a tourism-driven self-image. Recently, even the region's tourism promoters have begun to embrace a more self-conscious image, for example the campaign slogan "Tradition doesn't always come with grey hair and a cane" (fig. 27). Whether the popular understanding of Atlantic Canada's built environment can adopt a similar embrace of the legacy of modernism remains to be seen.³⁷

NOTES

1. This article is a substantially extended version of the author's "Modern Heritage and Folk Culture in Atlantic Canada," *Docomomo International Journal*, no. 38, March 2008, p. 83-88, published here by permission of Docomomo International; the author acknowledges the useful comments of the *Docomomo International Journal* guest editor, Francine Vanlaethem. A significant portion of the research for this article was conducted in 2001, in preparation for the *Atlantic Modern* exhibition and book; the author acknowledges the substantial contribution of research assistants Chad Jamieson and Anita Regan. Earlier versions of this article were presented to the "4th Regional Meeting on the Identification and Documentation of Modern Heritage: North America" sponsored by the World Heritage Council UNESCO and the University of Florida, Miami Beach, in 2004; to members of the Nova Scotia Association of Architects; and to several architectural history and design classes at Dalhousie University in Halifax. This version was first presented at the SSAC-SEAC Annual Meeting, Yellowknife, NT, in 2008. In each case, the ensuing lively and sometimes passionate discussion has contributed to the development.
2. Mannell, Steven, 2004, *Atlantic Modern: The Architecture of the Atlantic Provinces 1050-2000*, Halifax, Tuns Press, p. 12-15.
3. "A Tower of Glass and Steel," *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, August 22, 1962, p. 6.
4. *Halifax Mail-Star*, December 1, 1961, p. 1.
5. Frampton, Kenneth, 1996, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," In Kate Nesbitt (ed.), *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press.
6. Mannell : 24-27.
7. Mikawa himself is less clear about a link to Metabolism, stating: "I'm sorry; I don't know what 'metabolism' means." (Email communication, Junji Mikawa to Henry Howard, April 13, 2003.) Designers are seldom the best categorizers of their own work, and certainly the Arts Centre exhibits many of the key ambitions and elements that characterize Metabolism.
8. Mannell : 52-57.
9. Mannell : 53.
10. Nesbitt, Kate, 1996, "Introduction" to "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," In Nesbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 469.
11. Frampton : 471.
12. McKay, Ian, 1993, "History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964," *Acadiensis*, vol. 22 no. 2, p. 102.
13. McKay, Ian, 1994, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, p. 30.
14. Bowring Brothers Store, 1950s, Water Street, St. John's, NL; architectural firm: Cummings and Campbell, Architects and Engineers, St. John's, NL; design architect: Angus Campbell. The brick facades were added in the 1990s, but the harbour side of the complex was left roughly in its original state.
15. Bevan, Robert, 2006, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, London, Reaktion Books, p. 8.
16. Tzonis, Alexander and Liane Lefaivre, 1996, "Why Critical Regionalism Today?" In Nesbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 489.
17. Mannell : 86-87.
18. Mannell : 44-46.
19. Frampton : 471.
20. McKay, 1994 : 35.
21. *Id.* : 219.
22. Mannell : 60-63.
23. Brand, Stewart, 1968, *The Whole Earth Catalog*, #1010, Menlo Park (CA), Portola Institute, and subsequent issues and books, including Stewart Brand, 1972, *The Last Whole Earth Catalog: Access to tools*, New York, Random House.
24. [Muir, R. Dalton], 1977, *A Most Prudent Ark*, Ottawa, Fisheries and Environment Canada, p. 6.
25. *Id.* : 13.
26. "Trudeau Officially Opens Ark at Spry Point," *Summerside Journal-Pioneer*, vol. 111, no. 290, September 22, 1976, p. 1.
27. Mannell : 74-77.
28. Mellin, Robert, 2003, *Tilting: House Launching, Slide Hauling, Potato Trenching, and Other Tales from a Newfoundland Fishing Village*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, p. 110-115.
29. I was offered direct insight into the challenges of the Smallwood legacy at my public curator's talk at the Arts and Culture Centre, St. John's, in 2002. My suggestion of a Smallwood interpretive centre at Roaches Line provoked an impassioned negative response from several audience members, one of whom shouted "You don't know what Joey did to us!" That this response came from a culturally sophisticated group (the sort that come out to hear curator's talks at art galleries) suggests that there is much cultural work yet to be done in Newfoundland and Labrador around the legacy of Smallwood, confederation, and modernization.
30. Orwell, George, 1943, "Looking back at the Spanish Civil War," in *New Road*, London (quoted in Bevan : 7).
31. McKay, 1994 : 40-41.
32. Kalin, I., 1969, *Expo 67: Survey of Building Materials, Systems and Techniques Used at the Universal and International Exhibition of 1967, Montreal, Canada, Ottawa, Canada Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Materials Branch [Queen's Printer]*, p. 6-7.
33. De Lorimier, Jean-Louis (ed.), 1968, *Expo 67 - Montreal, Canada: The Memorial Album of the First Category Universal and International Exhibition Held in Montreal from the Twenty-seventh of April to the Twenty-ninth of October 1967*, Toronto, Thomas Nelson and Son Canada, p. 134.
34. *Id.* : 131-132.
35. *Id.* : 131
36. Kalin : 7.
37. Signs of a positive move toward the recognition of modern heritage include the success of John Leroux's efforts in Fredericton, New Brunswick, which have resulted in the designation of the Centennial Building (Belanger and Roy, 1967) as a provincial heritage site, and the declaration of October 31, 2009 as "Modern Architecture Heritage Day" by the mayor of Fredericton.