

revitalization as if it were a theory of conservation. A theory of economic revitalization answers the question, "How does one improve the economy of . . ." A theory of conservation answers the question, "Which buildings should one save, and why." By confining itself to its shopping centre model, Heritage Canada even obscures its underlying assertion that heritage buildings are an exploitable resource, an assertion that is troubling it itself, and only partly true. Heritage Canada seems prepared to pin heritage conservation to the vagaries of the bottom line. The indifferent glass boxes of popular myth are a true expression of the bottom line as a determinant of form. Surely one of the chief purposes of the heritage movement is to preserve the view that builders and owners have social responsibilities separate from the mean requirements of profit.

Even as a theory of economic revitalization, the shopping centre model is not entirely adequate. Shopping centres are acknowledged to be "machines for selling"; an organic metaphor would better represent Main Street. The marketing canon itself abounds with business successes that resulted from creative entrepreneurs moving in a direction markedly different from the general trend. Such entrepreneurs succeeded by increasing the choice available in the marketplace, not by creating more of the same. Main Street is ineradicably different from a shopping centre. A main Street that glories in its difference, and makes creative use of it, will have a firmly rooted success, independent of the forces which support shopping centres.

The heritage movement has the beginnings of a sophisticated theory of conservation. We no longer save buildings solely because of their historical associations. By our consideration of context or social heritage we have moved some way towards a theory that accommodates social, economic and cultural factors. Ecology and systems theory have devices which allow them to deal with complex, non-linear relationships. I believe that the heritage movement, too, must learn how to deal with non-linear relationships in its theory of conservation. With a sound theory of conservation, heritage could take its place with urban design and other disciplines in the management of the built environment. But to do so it must work for its strengths, which have to do with the cultural values of buildings, and the dynamics of collective memory in the built environment. It is in a well-managed built environment, rich or poor, that heritage buildings are safest. They are safe because, while they have an economic function, they are understood to have other important functions as well.

Heritage Canada's theory of economic revitalization does seem to work. One cannot be entirely certain, since Heritage Canada has chosen to report neither its measures of success, nor its data. Independent observation would affirm that in the Main Streets to which Heritage Canada has devoted its attention a number of buildings have been rehabilitated. I suspect that Heritage Canada operates on an unstated theory of conservation whilst professing its theory of economic revitalization. Its labours have resulted in some Main Streets more handsome than they were before. On this level the Foundation can be congratulated.

Heritage Canada is now in the position of promoting a single analysis and a single solution to the Main Street problem. The remuddled facades we now deplore in Main Street were created according to an equally simplistic prescription. Furthermore, this prescription, too, was effective. It met the pragmatic test so well that it was applied regularly for more than thirty years. In the absence of a theory of conservation, today's newly renovated facades are just as much a faddish applique as the aluminum or Vitralite they replace.

By all means buy *Reviving Main Street* to give to any philistines who cross your path. It speaks their language. The arguments it contains may well still come as a surprise to some local politicians and decision makers. In such cases it will insinuate the idea that older buildings are a positive, exploitable resource. While this is not an entirely happy attitude, it is better than the belief that old buildings are a drag on a community. The shortcomings of the book should provoke those to whom its content is old hat into working on a better theory of conservation. Let us hope that one soon emerges. □

by Gregory P. Utas

Gregory Utas is an architectural historian and restoration architect with Public Works Canada. In this capacity he has surveyed federal buildings in many towns across Canada and has cultivated an appreciation for small scale streetscapes. A longtime SSAC member, Mr. Utas is a frequent contributor to the Cityscape column of the Ottawa Citizen.

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D. W. Lovell, MAIBC, MRAIC
EDITOR SSAC BULLETIN
2875 Haldy Crescent,
Nanaimo, B.C. V9S 3N1

Norman Allan
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR
SSAC BULLETIN
10 Findlay Avenue,
Ottawa, Ont. K1S 2T9

Editorial Board / Membership Secretary
S.S.A.C.
P.O. Box 2302
Station D,
Ottawa, Ont. K1P 5W5

NOTICE

The following SSAC Members have moved without forwarding their new addresses. Anyone with information as to their new local is requested to contact the SSAC Membership Secretary.

Nancy Burgoyne
Don Schuster
Edward M. Ledohowski
Inci Kislaeioglu

News From Across Canada

DALHOUSIE ART GALLERY

Andrew Cobb: The Vision of Dalhousie is an exhibit at the Dalhousie Art Gallery, Dalhousie University, until 6 April 1986. Andrew Cobb designed five well known campus buildings between 1913 and 1924. The architect's drawings, elevations and plans of the library, faculty club, chemistry building, clinical research centre and pharmacy building are the basis of the display.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

The School of Architecture at Waterloo is arranging eight (8) guest lecturers for the 1986 winter term. Visitors and topics will include:

- Adele Freedman on Peter Dickinson
- Graham Owen on new Architecture in South Africa
- Grady Clay on Ephemeral Places
- Michael Wilford on Stirling & Wilford's current work
- Eric Fiss and Nan Legate on Canadian Folk Architecture
- Robert Harbison on Space and Imagination

Michael Wilford, London, England, has been appointed as the "Ariscraft Visiting Lecturer in Building Materials and Construction" for the 1986 winter term, and will give his opening lecture on Monday, March 3rd. Other dates not yet available.

Further Information: Ena Wrighton (519) 885-0394.

TORONTO

YESTERDAY'S NEWSMAKERS FOCUS OF MARKET GALLERY PHOTO EXHIBIT. The people, places and events that made news during the turbulent decade of the 1930s are the focus of more than 100 Globe and Mail photographs on display February 8 - May 4, 1986 at The Market Gallery of the City of Toronto Archives.

Chosen for their historical interest and impact, these images represent the work of pioneer photojournalists, most notably John Boyd (1898 - 1971), the Globe's first staff photographer. Significant political and social events documented in "The '30s: A Photo Legacy from the Globe and Mail," include the City's 1934 Centennial, demonstrations by the unemployed at Queen's Park, Labour Day and May Day parades, construction of landmark buildings, the annual Canadian National Exhibition, the 1934 visit of film star Mary Pickford, the 1939 royal visit, and home-front activities at the outbreak of the Second World War.

"In addition to providing insights into the interests and concerns of Torontonians during a benchmark decade in the City's development, this exhibition proves how valuable newspaper photo collections can be as unique historical resources for researchers and the public," says Karen Teeple of the City of Toronto Archives, curator of the show. "This exhibition only begins to tap the rich body of historically-significant images donated to the City by the Globe and Mail."

ABOVE IT ALL May 10 - July 6

The Market Gallery, Toronto, is staging a multi-media exhibition to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the CN Tower in June, 1986. This landmark show will tell how the world's tallest free-standing structure captured the imagination of residents and visitors alike from the day it was announced to its breathtaking "topping off" using a Sikorsky helicopter.