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SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE IN CANADA

# BULLETIN

SOCIÉTÉ POUR L'ÉTUDE DE L'ARCHITECTURE AU CANADA

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## THE DALY BUILDING

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## PUBLIC WORKS CANADA

On June 16, 1904, sod was turned to begin construction of the Daly Building on Rideau Street between MacKenzie Avenue and Sussex Street. The owner-developer was the Clemow Estate, then a major real estate force in Ottawa; the prime tenant was the T. Lindsay Company, an established clothing business which proposed to expand as Ottawa's first department store. The architect was Moses Chamberlain Edey, of Ottawa. The store was opened on June 14, 1905. 1 It lasted until Mr. Lindsay's death in 1909, when it was replaced by the A.E. Rae department store, a chain run from Toronto, which was in turn succeeded by the H.J. Daly Company, around 1918.

In 1913 the two upper stories and the four north bays were added in the original style. At this time, apparently, the original entrance at Rideau and MacKenzie was closed. In 1915 the Federal government rented offices in the building; in September, 1921, the Daly Company sold the building to the government for one million dollars. In the following year the entrance at the Rideau-Sussex corner was "altered to permit an arcade to pass through..."2 and the windows were altered to their present form. Since that time the interior has been extensively altered to accommodate various federal tenants, but the exterior had been changed only by the bridges to the Daly Annex, 1942 (now demolished) by the removal of the cornice, 1964, and by minor alterations to the ground floor fenestration.

The architect, Moses Chamberlain Edey, was born in Onslow, Quebec, in 1845. He was educated in a country school and possibly in the Art School in Ottawa. In 1864-65 he studied the building trade under a Mr. Thomas of Toronto, followed in 1865-68 by study with architect A.D. Stearns of Moravia, New York. He seems to have been practicing in Ottawa in the mid-1880's, but only appears in the Ottawa directories from 1895 to 1918, 3 the year of his death. He was mentioned in the Canadian Architect and Builder's 1895 round-up as one of a few Ottawa architects with work in progress. 4 In 1906 he was credited with the McLeod Street Methodist Church, a Gothic exercise; the Garland Building on Queen Street, remembered as a Second Empire commercial building; the Monroe Block; the Aberdeen Pavilion (now the Cow Palace) and model stock

barns at Landsdowne Park; a cast-iron bandstand on the Commission Driveway; and a number of residences. Outside of Ottawa he designed buildings for the Shawville Agricultural Fair, and a number of smaller projects. 5

This is a typically eclectic collection, but contains little evidence of modern leanings. This supports the notion that the client strongly influenced the architect. Certainly the architect's brief included a strong injunction to modernity; W.F. Powell, the manager of the Clemow Estate, travelled to New York, and possibly other points, to view the latest in department store design. Both the Journal and the Citizen reported that the Daly Building was modelled after Macy's new Broadway store, 6,7 but the visual resemblance between the two stores is very slight. In fact it was mentioned elsewhere in the Citizen that the new store "will have even more glass than Macy's".8 Clearly Edey was a compliant architect; it is the verve with which he adopted the Chicago Style that is unusual. Some of this verve may be attributed to the presence in his office of F.C. Sullivan, who worked on the Daly Building as a draughtsman, and who later became a disciple and colleague of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The Daly Building as first built was a four-storey building, seven bays on Rideau by five bays on Sussex and MacKenzie, with entrances on MacKenzie Avenue and Sussex Street, a major entrance occupying all of the centre bay on Rideau, and a "large arch entrance at the corner of MacKenzie Avenue and Rideau Street". The basement is exposed by the grade of Rideau Street to show a full storey on Sussex. The building is a structural steel cage with concrete slab floors. External columns are minimally clad in Gloucester limestone in alternating dressed and rock-face courses; corner columns are double size. The roughness of the stone may speak to local masonry tradition, but in no way disguises the openness of the frame. The thinness of the columns makes it perfectly clear that the stone is mere applique, with no structural purpose. The remainder of each bay is glass, with a minimal ledge marking the exterior beams. The columns rise without interruption, except at the first floor, where a small moulding supports a slightly expanded spandrel panel. The large windows were in three lights separated by minimal mullions. Each pane was mounted to pivot around its vertical axis. The wood sections were ambitiously slender for windows of this size. Much heavier frames were needed in the 1922 reglazing. This window arrangement is a clear reference to the Chicago Style, but it is not properly a "Chicago window". The building

Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada

Paper Call: Newfoundland Meeting, July 28 - 31, 1983

The 1983 Meeting will be held in Newfoundland and will see a change in meeting format. Starting in St. John's with a number of paper sessions the following day the meeting will tour Conception Bay (Brigus, Harbour Grace and Carbonear) and cross into Trinity Bay (Heart's Content). That evenings' sessions will be held in Clarenville. The following day will involve a tour of Trinity, Bonavista and nearby towns returning to St. John's that evening. On Sunday there will be further sessions in St. John's with an afternoon tour of the city.

Papers will be given in the following topics:

- Maritime Architecture: Adaptation and Response to the Environment and the Economy.
- Aspects of Contemporary Architecture in Canada.
- Greed and the Built Form: Planned Communities/Industrial Towns.
- History of Canadian Building Technology.
- Atlantic Region Architecture: Sources and Analogues.
- Housescape, Streetscape, Townscape: The Interaction of Building and Site.
- General Session

Those interested in presenting a paper at the meeting should send a 500 word abstract accompanied by a curriculum vitae to:

Shane O'Dea or Gerald Pocius  
Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1B 3X9

by September 15, 1982 for consideration by the paper committee.

Société pour l'étude de l'architecture au Canada

Rencontre de Terre-Neuve, du 28 au 31 juillet 1985

Invitation à soumettre des propositions de conférences.

La rencontre de 1982 aura lieu à Terre-Neuve et suivra une formule différente des années précédentes. Après une journée de conférences à Saint-Jean, les participants visiteront Conception Bay (Brigus, Harbour Grace et Carbonear); ils traverseront ensuite à Trinity Bay (Heart's Content). Les conférences de cette deuxième journée se tiendront le soir à Clarenville. Le jour suivant, on prévoit de visiter Trinity, Bonavista, ainsi que les villes avoisinantes, et de revenir en soirée à Saint-Jean. Le dimanche se passera à Saint-Jean: on présentera d'autres conférences, et un Tour de ville est prévu pour l'après midi.

Les conférences se partageront entre les sujets suivants:

- Architecture maritime: intégration à l'environnement et aux conditions économiques.
- Aspects de l'architecture contemporaine au Canada.
- La spéculation et le domaine bâti: planification urbaine/croissance industrielle.
- Histoire des techniques de construction au Canada.
- Architecture de la région atlantique: sources et comparaisons.
- Les relations entre la forme construite et le site: la maison, la rue, la ville.
- Sujets divers.

Les personnes intéressées à proposer une conférence pour cette rencontre doivent en faire parvenir, d'ici au 15 septembre 1982, un résumé de 500 mots, accompagné de leur curriculum vitae, à:

Shane O'Dea or Gerald Pocius  
Société pour l'étude de l'architecture au Canada  
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Saint-Jean, Terre-Neuve  
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ended in a vaguely Classical cornice, apparently in pressed tin, without parapet.

The 1913 additions followed the original detailing exactly, except for additional very thin spandrel panels at the bottoms of the windows.

There is no longer much evidence of the original interior appearance of the building, beyond some minimally ornamented elevators and areas of conventional pressed-tin ceiling. The interior was remarkable to early observers for its lack of internal partitions. Columns were encased in a dressed cement; display tables surrounded alternate columns, but there was no high shelving. There were staircases with "balconies where ladies (might) rest or take a survey of each flat," 9 but these have disappeared. The 1913 addition contains a steel and marble staircase simply ornamented and spacially none-too-complex, but of enormous width; its landings provide no overview of the interior.

In the first part of the 20th century Ottawa finally began self-consciously to beautify itself. The capital felt it should be the jewel of the Dominion. There was a great upsurge in national and civic pride; a new energy and importance was given to the amenities of civilized life. In 1889 Laurier began a process which led to the formation of the Ottawa Improvement Commission, which in 1903 began making gardens and scenic driveways throughout Ottawa. The Federal government directed its expansion towards the conventional City Beautiful. A rigorously Classical plan for a government precinct in Major's Hill Park was prepared, and a national architectural competition for the centrepiece Supreme Court building was held, although its results were never built. Embedded in this formal and somewhat backward-looking aesthetic, a private builder nevertheless chose a futuristic and daring alternative. On what was universally understood to be one of the most prominent sites in Ottawa, he chose to build in the Chicago Style. By this time the Chicago Style was hardly avant garde, but it was little understood and less imitated outside of Chicago and its Mid-western hinterland. The Chicago Style had arisen in the 1880's out of an economic need, a new technology, and the rationalizing, functionalist stream of 19th Century thought. The Chicago Style building frankly expressed its structure and technological accomplishments. In Louis Sullivan's version the style was also poetic, making beauty of motion and bringing a certain grace to upward striving. The style, though structurally expressive, remained faintly eclectic, with an innocent, decidedly American

exuberance. Later, the same technological concerns given a careful European intellectualization gave rise to the Modern movement.

The department store was a 19th Century invention which, like the railroad station, early received architectural treatments expressive of new building technologies. Early built-to-purpose grands magasins in Paris made extensive and daring use of cast iron. Towards the turn of the century this tradition was adapted to the Art Nouveau, a primarily stylistic advance, but not entirely without structural daring as well, as in Baron Horta's Innovation in Brussels (1900), with its substantial glass surfaces. Late in the 19th Century the German department stores were structurally very advanced. Hermann Tietz in Berlin (1898) has a fully-resolved glass curtain wall, one of the first in the world. Jelmoli, in Zurich (1899) has an equally daring glass curtain wall in an experimental style related to the Sezession. Early American department stores do not display the same structural or stylistic venturesomeness, except in Chicago, where first H.H. Richardson (Marshall Fields) and then Louis Sullivan (Carson, Pirie, Scott) gave important architectural expression to the department store.

In Canada department stores were consistently conservative architecturally. The early part of Morgan's in Montreal is a massy Romanesque pile. Both Eaton's and Simpson's in Toronto occupied buildings which concealed their modern structural systems in somewhat historicizing envelopes. It is almost certain, although exhaustive research has not been possible, that the Daly Building was stylistically the most advanced or venturesome built-to-purpose department store in Canada at that time. In this way the Daly Building is in the best tradition of department store design. When we remember that the Carson, Pirie, Scott store was only just finished in 1904 we can realize that the Daly Building builders were unusually in step with their times.

One of the oddest aspects of the Daly Building is this contemporaneity. Built at a time, and in a town, dedicated to historicizing architecture, it stands as a lonely harbinger of Modern architecture. Its limited influence is clear enough: all of its neighbours are younger, and all are revivals of something. But one ~~rather~~ admires the gesture.



1. NCC Historian, Notes on the Daly Building, 1964..
2. Canada. Department of Public Works, Report, 1923, "Report of the Chief Architect" (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1923), p. 17.
3. C.J. Taylor and Janet Wright, The Daly Building, Historic Sites and Monuments Board Agenda Paper, 1978 (?) p. 355.
4. Canadian Architect and Builder, Vol. 8, 1895, p. 10.
5. Anson A. Gard, Pioneers of the Upper Ottawa and Humors of the Valley (Ottawa: Ermson Press, 1906)pp.57-58.
6. Citizen (Ottawa), June 13, 1904, p.9.
7. Evening Journal (Ottawa), June 13, 1904, p.8.
8. Citizen (Ottawa), December 1, 1904, p.10
9. Evening Journal (Ottawa), June 13, 1904,p.8.
10. Remember that neither the Chateau Laurier nor the Union Station was yet built.