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Ottawa's Plant Recreational Centre and Champagne Fitness Centre both celebrated their ninetieth anniversaries this year. When these two buildings were opened to the public in May of 1924, they were known simply as Plant Bath and Champagne Bath (figs. 1-2). This paper investigates how these two public baths, built in the working-class neighbourhoods of the city, evolved from civic baths to a recreational centre and a fitness centre, respectively. To trace this transition, I consider the factors that contributed to the construction of these two buildings, establishing their historical and social contexts. Furthermore, I explore the life of these buildings, and their changing roles in the community following their opening.

Over their ninety years of operation, the baths have proven to be a significant part of their communities. As a result, the study of these baths and their uses exposes facets of everyday life in Ottawa in the twentieth century. While the baths have received some attention by Heritage Ottawa through their *Newsletter*,² this paper provides a more comprehensive study of both buildings, pointing to their significance as makers and markers of community. Additionally, the history of public baths and bathing in Canada has not been studied in great detail.³ As a result, this paper aims to fill in a small part of a broader history that requires further research and examination.

My analysis in this paper reconsiders not only the bathing facilities themselves but also their historical context. As both baths would eventually be granted heritage



FIG. 1. CHAMPAGNE BATH, EXTERIOR FAÇADE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.



FIG. 2. CHAMPAGNE BATH, EXTERIOR FAÇADE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.

designation, another task set forward by this paper is to consider the reasons for their designation and compare them with the longer history of these buildings. In doing so, I raise several questions with regard to heritage and the collective identity of the community. Studying the longer life of each of the baths exposes the limitations of fixed, historically based reasons for designation, and highlights the richer understanding that can be gained from considering these buildings as palimpsests.

CLEANSING THE CITY: CRISIS AND RENEWAL IN THE MODERN CAPITAL

At the turn of the century, many Canadians, backed strongly by the federal government, felt that Ottawa needed to shift from an industrial lumber town to a thriving urban centre, one that would rival nearby Montreal and Toronto and reflect its role as the nation's capital.⁴ Modernization required removing

evidence of the lumber industry from the city's core, for until the turn of the century, the grandeur of Parliament Hill was undermined by the rugged lumber mills and yards that surrounded it.⁵ The transformation of Ottawa into a "modern" city did not rest solely in this removal, however, but in the development of other industries and the embrace of new technologies.⁶ The expansion of infrastructure, through the introduction of amenities such as electricity, allowed for the city not only to thrive industrially, but also signalled a hope for social improvement.⁷

Part of this modernization led to the development of an urban-industrial working class, which was required to maintain the infrastructure of the city as there was a shift in labour related to lumber toward the operation and repair of newly implemented systems, such as waterworks.⁸ Along with this working class, an urban bourgeoisie developed, which sought to bring social order and moral reform

to the expanding urban city.⁹ Concerns about the effect of urban life on social welfare were primarily expressed by this urban bourgeoisie, and their anxiety led to the social reform movement. This movement was initiated by loosely organized groups that focused on the identification and study of what they deemed "social problems," and was influential not only in Canada but also the United States and Britain.¹⁰ These "problems" generally referred to crime, poverty, gambling and prostitution, but the term was used liberally to indicate any type of "immoral" behaviour.¹¹ This movement also sought to provide aid to those afflicted by the negative influences of the city.¹² One method of providing aid to the poor and working classes was through the facilitation of physical cleanliness, viewed by reformists to be a means to moral cleanliness.¹³ The anxiety and desire to aid the lower classes would ultimately lead to the building of Plant and Champagne Baths; however, the city would go through several major events before they were commissioned.

The first is the Ottawa-Hull fire, on April 26, 1900, which swept across the west end of the city¹⁴ (fig. 3). The fire was so intense that the waterworks system, installed in the city in 1874, proved futile against the formidable inferno.¹⁵ The aftermath of the fire was devastating to the cityscape and destroyed "approximately fifteen per cent of Ottawa's total urban space"¹⁶ (fig. 4). At that time, a majority of the working class was living in either Lowertown or LeBreton Flats. Even though Lowertown was unaffected by the fire, LeBreton Flats was almost entirely destroyed by the flames, leaving a large population of primarily working-class citizens homeless¹⁷ (fig. 5). Rebuilding the area after the fire led to a concentration of working-class homes in the area, reinforcing social and economic division in the city.¹⁸



FIG. 3. FIRE IN HULL, OTTAWA-HULL FIRE, APRIL 1900. | LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, MIKAN NO. 3246703.

The second key factor that affected the built environment of the capital was the City Beautiful Movement, a design philosophy that was concerned with architecture and urban planning, but extended to notions of social reform in North America.¹⁹ The ideology supporting the movement indicated that “better design of cities would contribute to a safer, healthier and more harmonious society.”²⁰ In 1915, Edward H. Bennett, a Chicago architect who was a prominent figure in the City Beautiful Movement, designed a city plan that sought to unify and aestheticize Ottawa.²¹ His ideas appealed to those involved in the social reform movement, as they believed that the built environment could promote moral regeneration, and proper urban planning could benefit the poor and working classes.²² While never realized, Bennett’s plans reveal the contemporary belief that the built environment formed people’s sense of self and community.²³

The final key factor in Ottawa that was a catalyst for building the public baths was the Spanish flu epidemic that arrived in Ottawa in September of 1918.²⁴ By the end of October, four hundred and forty citizens had died as a result of contracting the virus.²⁵ The Spanish flu was contracted primarily in areas with greater human concentration and contact, as well

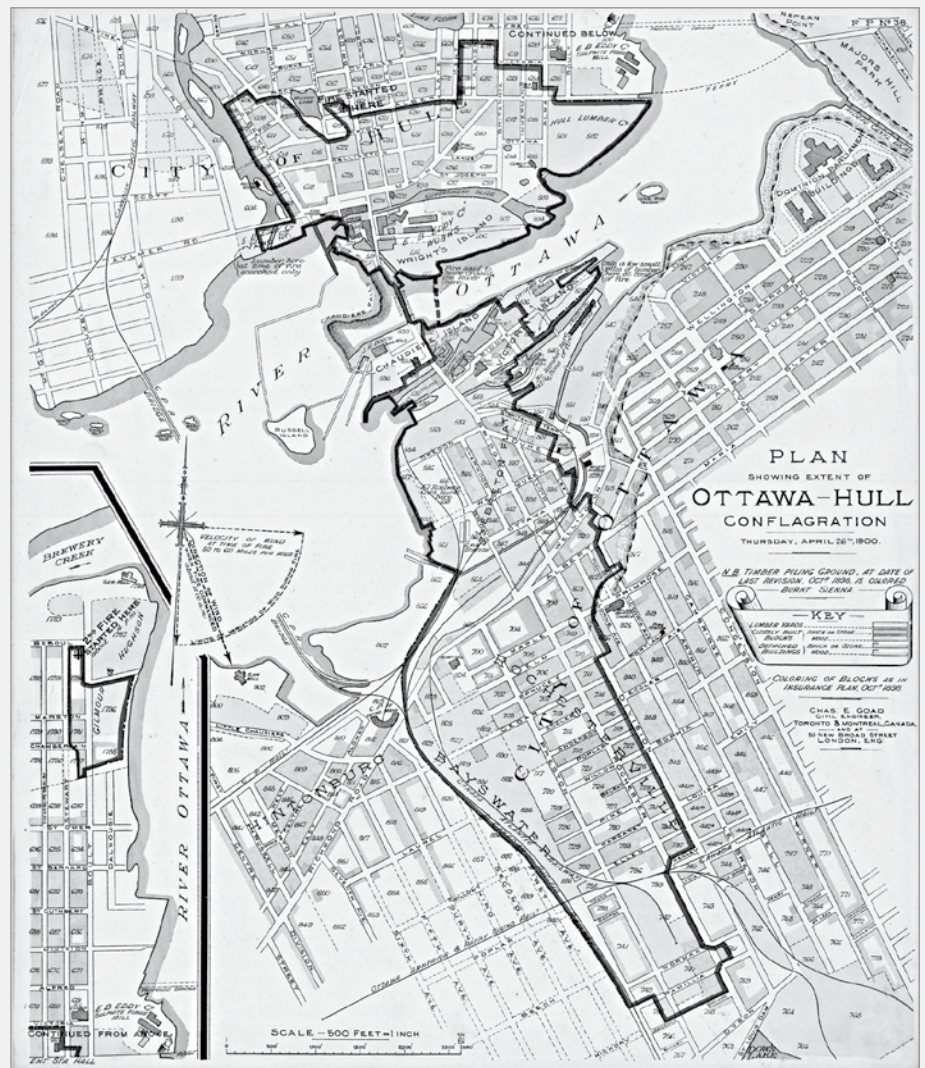


FIG. 4. PLAN SHOWING EXTENT OF OTTAWA-HULL CONFLAGRATION, THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 1900. PUBLISHED BY CHAS. E. GOAD, 1900. | LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, MIKAN NO. 3827571.



FIG. 5. RUINS AFTER OTTAWA-HULL FIRE, TOPLEY STUDIO, JUNE 1900. | LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, MIKAN NO. 3363983.

BUILDING THE BATHS

The baths would allow for a level of hygiene to be maintained in the working class in a time when indoor plumbing was not commonly available in their homes.³⁰ They would promote exercise, which would again contribute to the physical health of the user. Until the construction of public baths in the city, the Rideau River provided a place for this type of physical and recreational activity (fig. 6). The necessity of public baths, from the perspective of the upper class, can be expressed best by J.M. McWharf in his article "Public Baths and Their Hygienic or Sanitary Value," written between 1919 and 1921. While he was writing within an American context, his sentiments certainly resonated in the contemporary Canadian situation:

Personal cleanliness, so vital as a hygienic measure, must be carried to the forefront in our battle for a more perfect sanitation. Perfect compliance of all classes of people with sanitary laws will aid materially in the prolongation of human life and lessen sorrow and suffering in the world.

No argument is required to prove the necessity nor the present demand for public baths and no efforts should be instituted to thwart so great a public beneficence. Prompt action is demanded along this line of humanitarian work. Cleanliness means health; it means preservation of life; it means moral improvement; it means an uplift to all that is good and pure in the world.³¹

It is clear that public baths, meant to serve the working class, were not only viewed as a solution but also an obligation. Furthermore, the baths could act as a recreational centre, viewed by social reformists as the responsibility of the government to provide to lower- and working-class citizens.³² Additionally, public

as those areas closest to rail lines, both of which were more common of working-class living situations in Ottawa.²⁶ As a result, the virus had the greatest impact in the working-class wards in the city, most notably By and Victoria Wards, which are known today as Lowertown and LeBreton Flats. It was, therefore, not a coincidence that Plant and Champagne Baths would come to be located in Victoria and By Wards, respectively. An observation recorded in the local Board of Health's *Annual Report* stated that the "conditions under which our poorer brethren live must create a greater public interest looking to a betterment of living conditions for everyone. This means sanitary dwellings but more important still, sanitary dwellers."²⁷ Social reformers, under the guise of research for social science, would often enter the neighbourhoods and homes of the poor and working class in order to study the conditions and living situations.²⁸ Parts of these "home" studies were preoccupied with the cleanliness of the home, and the affect of "dirt" on the

health of an individual. One of the main tenets of the social reform movement was the equation of physical cleanliness and health with moral health.²⁹ So it would appear that one of the greatest ways that the city could help working-class citizens would be through the improvement of their health through physical cleanliness.

The Spanish flu epidemic in 1918 seemed to be the catalyst that propelled the city, and its moral reformers, to seek a way to improve the lives of the working class. The need to rebuild portions of the city as a result of the Ottawa-Hull fire, and the lingering influence of the City Beautiful Movement, further indicated that it was an appropriate time to build. The question that remained for the city was what to construct. What would serve the working-class neighbourhoods that would promote a morally uplifting and "healthy lifestyle" and that would not come at too great a cost to the city? Public baths appeared as the most obvious answer.

baths constructed in urban centres during the nineteenth century were often built below a library, or one was included within the design of the bath.³³ The inclusion of a library in Plant Bath further suggests that these baths were not only meant to serve as a space for working-class citizens to improve themselves physically, but intellectually as well.³⁴ The building of public baths in Ottawa was, therefore, clearly meant to provide a space for the cultivation of healthy, moral citizens.

In 1919, the decision to provide two public baths was initiated by the municipal government.³⁵ Each was named after mayors who were in office during the time of their construction, Frank Plant and Napoléon Champagne.³⁶ Plant Bath was designed by architectural firm Millson & Burgess to mark the corner of Somerset and Preston Streets³⁷ (figs. 7-8). Champagne Bath was designed by Ottawa architect Werner Ernest Noffke; located at 321 King Edward Avenue, it was a prominent part of the landscape in the neighbourhood of Lowertown (fig. 9).

Millson & Burgess arranged Plant Bath around the participation of both swimmers and spectators (fig. 10). Spectators' access to the bath was indicated in the masonry above one of the two main entranceways (fig. 11). The 1922 plans show there was a public bathroom in the basement level, which was most likely intended for use by spectators.³⁸ Millson & Burgess also designed a corridor leading from the "Spectators" entrance to the "Spectators Gallery" located on the second floor.³⁹ For the swimmers themselves, access was granted through a separate entranceway, where tickets could be purchased from the office on the ground floor. Separate changing rooms, complete with lockers, showers, and toilets, were provided for men and women. The women's locker room was located on the second floor and



FIG. 6. SWIMMING PLACE ON THE RIDEAU RIVER, OTTAWA, 1920S. | LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, MIKAN NO. 3387263.

also contained bathtubs.⁴⁰ A caretaker's apartment was also included in the design of the second floor, featuring a kitchen, living room, and bedroom. The pool occupied the majority of interior space at seventy-five feet in length by thirty feet in width.⁴¹ It would appear that these baths, while designed by separate architectural firms, bore some commonalities. Plans of Champagne Bath, drawn just prior to its renovation in 1990, show a layout similar to Plant Bath, complete with a caretaker's apartment, although spectator participation is not as heavily emphasized.⁴²

The exteriors of these baths, however, do differ substantially. The Neo-Gothic exterior of Plant Bath would have resonated with other municipal buildings in Canada during that time, given the popularity of this mode⁴³ (fig. 12). The red brick façade of the rather modest building is enlivened with ornamentation through its brickwork and masonry, including small mandorla-shaped medallions that were incorporated above the main entrances and on the

southeast end of the structure (fig. 13). These medallions display a boy holding a large fish, standing within waves of water. This motif communicates that the bath was not only a space where water played a central role, but could also be a reference to the Rideau River, the former location for public swimming.⁴⁴ Champagne Bath, on the other hand, was executed in a hybrid mode that blended Spanish Colonial Revival style, which was gaining currency in the 1920s in Canada, with the Prairie style.⁴⁵ The red-tiled roofs of the side doors and broken pedimented main entrance reference the Spanish Colonial style, while the horizontal composition of the façade, articulated by a string course that compresses the second storey, and low-slung hipped roof, also exposes Noffke's interest in the Prairie style during that period⁴⁶ (figs. 14-15). Additionally, the use of the Spanish Colonial style may have connoted a sense of leisure for those in the community, for it was a style commonly used for theatres at the time.⁴⁷ This connection would have promoted the idea



FIG. 7. PLANT BATH ON ITS CORNER LOT. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.

that Champagne Bath was a place for social and public gathering.

Neither building is particularly radical in its form or approach; however, each building within its respective working-class community employed strategies that announced their presence. Plant Bath, angled on its corner lot, is set back from the street, providing relief to an otherwise congested and busy intersection.⁴⁸ Champagne Bath is also located in an area of high traffic, and its overhanging roof and central staircase work to visually draw in the public from street level. Both announce themselves as community centres that are available to the public and make space for gathering, and they physically mark the community. Their visibility and accessibility contributed to their reception after their doors opened in May 1924.

THE EARLY YEARS

Champagne and Plant Baths both proved to be immensely popular in the years

following their construction. The *Ottawa Citizen* reported: “during the second week since the opening of the two civic baths the attendance has increased appreciably.”⁴⁹ Over the next several decades, the baths would host countless swimming competitions, provide space for several clubs, and be utilized by nearby schools.⁵⁰ The embrace of this civic space indicates the growing presence and importance of the baths in their respective communities within their early years of operation.

Although firsthand accounts and documentation surrounding the baths in the early years following their opening are sparse, several articles from the *Ottawa Citizen* give a sense of the operation and use of these buildings by the public. A letter to the editor describes the services provided to the patrons of Champagne Bath:

The operation of these baths call for the purchase of thousands of towels, bathing suits, cakes of soap and so on. Even hair brushes are provided, and recently expensive hair

driers were installed. The wonder is that this costly parentalism does not go to the extent of providing automobiles for the carrying of bathers back and forth.⁵¹

The list of services in this letter provides two important items of note. The first are the cakes of soap, indicating that these baths were not only sites for exercise but also cleansing, reinforcing the social reform backing that initiated their construction. The second, while not actually a service available, is the writer’s comment on the provision of automobiles for the transport of bathers. Since automobile ownership was not widespread among the working class at the time, this comment confirms that it was in fact the working class that were making use of the facilities, and that they were arriving there on foot, as the bath was located within walking distance.

Another article in the *Ottawa Citizen* that sheds light on the use of the baths indicates that children were scalping the swim tickets for the Champagne Bath in 1941. The punch tickets, sold for twenty-five cents at the beginning of each month, were good for ten swims at the bath. Some children were purchasing these punch tickets and then selling individual swims to their friends at a higher price, generally five to ten cents, for a rather good profit.⁵² The article indicates that “playground officials expressed concern, not for the effect on the revenue at the baths, for the racket makes not the slightest difference since ten punches equal ten youngsters, but they are seriously concerned about the moral effect on the young ticket scalpers.”⁵³ This article not only provides valuable information on the system used for admittance into the bath, but also indicates that nearly twenty years after opening, the baths were perhaps not achieving the moral rejuvenation and cleansing originally intended.

A third example that offers some insight into the use and culture surrounding the baths is in the report of a near drowning in 1939 at Champagne Bath. This article from the *Ottawa Citizen* explains how a thirteen-year-old resident of Lowertown, “although unable to swim,” had “obtained permission from her mother to go with some playmates to the bath where, telling attendants she could swim, she obtained a pass-key. She jumped into the water and sank, swallowing several mouthfuls of water.”⁵⁴ This account provides not only further information on the processes surrounding entrance to the bath, but also indicates that children, or at least young adolescents, were able to go to the baths unaccompanied by an adult (the child’s mother, in this instance). It also supports the notion that these public baths were community centres and extensions of the neighbourhood.

The *Ottawa Citizen* also provides visual evidence of the baths’ appearance over their years of operation. For instance, a photo from the May 15, 1956, issue supplies an image of the interior of Champagne Bath, taken on the unfortunate event of a tragic drowning. The image depicts the investigation of the death, but also provides visual evidence of the tile decoration of the pool’s edge.⁵⁵ Although not as common as written articles on the baths, these types of images in the *Ottawa Citizen* provide useful documentation of the baths, as their interiors in particular would be altered and renovated over the years. The fact that they were periodically pictured in the local news also adds credence to the idea that these sites were significant places of community identity and formation.

The baths likewise reveal changing social and gender norms, which can be observed again through their use. Due to the overwhelming popularity of “mixed” bathing



FIG. 8. PLANT BATH, EXTERIOR FAÇADE, NORTHERN ENTRANCE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.

times, provided as a trial for one month at Plant Bath in 1928, both baths established a schedule that would allow men and women to swim together at designated times during the week.⁵⁶ That is not to say that all prescribed social and gender roles had been abandoned, however. The establishment of mixed bathing times at the baths also came with new regulations. The *Ottawa Citizen* article announcing the allowance of mixed bathing at the baths stated that:

For the four Wednesdays of this month, there were 206 persons in the pool for mixed bathing, of these 78 being women and 128 men. While there was absolutely no complaint of any rudeness on the part of the men, some women were a little sensitive because there were so many men without women companions.⁵⁷

As a result of this “sensitivity,” it was decided that men could attend mixed bathing hours only if accompanied by “one or more female companions.”⁵⁸

It is also clear that the “permanent” establishment of mixed bathing was not all that permanent. Even though the superintendent of Champagne Bath was initially hesitant to adopt mixed bathing hours in 1928,⁵⁹ it would appear that by 1936 mixed bathing was only permitted at Champagne Bath.⁶⁰ The revoking of mixed bathing at Plant Bath suggests that while likely novel at the time of its introduction, the patrons of the bath preferred to swim separately.⁶¹

The baths, despite their popularity, faced possible closure in 1933. Due to an economic crisis, funding the two municipal baths was viewed by some governing boards to be too great a strain on their city’s limited budget.⁶² The mayor was reported to be in favour of closing the baths: “The city can save a lot of money by closing both.”⁶³ Despite these opinions, there was opposition to the closing of the baths within the community. The Local Council of Women led a protest against the proposed closure and in a



FIG. 9. CHAMPAGNE BATH, EXTERIOR FAÇADE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.



FIG. 10. PLANT BATH, EXTERIOR FAÇADE SHOWING THE TWO ENTRANCES. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.

meeting with city officials reasoned that “the women of Ottawa were responsible for the inauguration of the playgrounds and they urged it would be false economy to close the baths.”⁶⁴ In the wake of such public protest, it was decided that the baths would remain open, with the establishment of a tax that would cover the cost of operation.⁶⁵

Even though the baths were spared in 1933, they always proved to be a financial burden to the city, and the question of whether or not to keep them open was periodically debated in the 1940s and 1950s. It was predicted that the baths would be profitable to the community when they were constructed, as indicated in an article from the *Ottawa Citizen* that reported on the first six months of operation. “It is clear that the swimming baths are fulfilling a good purpose, and that in an essential sense they are profitable institutions. In a financial sense they are not, but better results may be expected as time goes on.”⁶⁶ The baths’ profitability was not measured financially, but rather for its benefit to the community. And when considering the level of care and maintenance necessary in maintaining

a safe, hygienic, and healthy environment, it becomes evident that these baths were never intended to be financially sustainable.⁶⁷ Despite the popularity of the baths, and regular attendance by its patrons, the cost of operation and maintenance was clearly extensive and surpassed the profits in ticket stamp sales. As a result, the baths were continually considered for closure by the city.⁶⁸ Plant and Champagne Baths were always spared, however, because of the public support for the baths and the roles they played in their community. The primary reason presented by the public for their continued operation was their lifesaving role. This argument was rationalized by the number of citizens taught to swim in the baths, thus preventing a greater potential of drowning in the future. One citizen commented that “the number of young people who had learned to swim there would justify their existence even if the city never raised a cent on them.”⁶⁹ It is clear that while the public acknowledged that the baths might not be financially viable, their value was not one that could be measured monetarily.

THE “LEISURE CENTRE” AGE

In the mid-1980s, many of the public pools, which had by then increased to ten including Plant and Champagne Baths,⁷⁰ were being converted into “leisure centres” that would incorporate slides, “Tarzan ropes,” and other recreational features into the pre-existing pools. While pools by their nature are related to notions of leisure and recreation, these “leisure centre” renovations aimed to provide alternate activities beyond strictly swimming. The ability for the baths to remain relevant and useful to the communities they served would be tested with the introduction of these “leisure centres.” It was during that time that Plant and Champagne Baths, the first municipal baths to be built in Ottawa, embarked on rather divergent paths.

Plant Bath was actually one of the first “leisure centre” conversions to be completed in the city, boasting a water slide, lounge, Tarzan rope, and solar-heated water at its reopening in August of 1983.⁷¹ The aim of these conversions was to provide a “leisure atmosphere” and they were “designed to appeal to people who aren’t attracted by

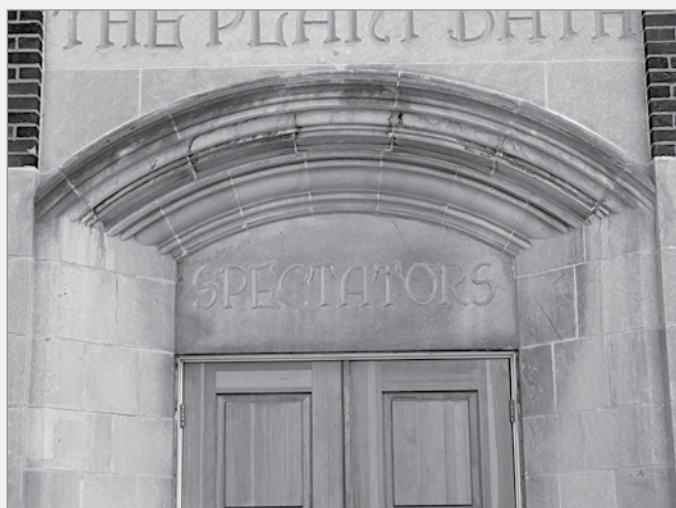


FIG. 11. PLANT BATH, "SPECTATORS" (NORTH) ENTRANCE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.



FIG. 12. PLANT BATH, EXTERIOR FAÇADE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.

the stark surroundings of other municipal pools."⁷² Plant underwent a second renovation the following year and reopened in May 1984, coinciding with the sixtieth anniversary of the bath's official opening in 1924. This renovation was much more extensive than in the previous year, although the city claimed that "the charm and character of the older building has been maintained."⁷³ The renovations also sought to further the leisure atmosphere through the addition of patio tables, chairs, parasols, plants, cedar deck, and a sauna.⁷⁴ Both renovations altered not only the physical space of the bath, but also the way that it was used and viewed within the community. Plant Bath was now a recreational place, where the focus had shifted from exercise and health to leisure and fun.

Champagne Bath, on the other hand, was estimated to be too costly to convert into a "leisure centre" and running the outdated, nearly sixty-year-old facility was also viewed to be too great an expense. So it was decided that the bath should be closed.⁷⁵ Response to this decision from the community was expressed through numerous letters to the editor, published

in the *Ottawa Citizen*.⁷⁶ The majority of the responses indicated that Champagne Bath, as the sole "adults only" pool remaining in the city, was a place where those who were serious about the sport of swimming could go to exercise.⁷⁷ One patron, Nan Sussman, claimed that "the people who swim here are extremely dedicated to the pool. It's deep at both ends so it's perfect for swimming laps. And since no children are allowed, it's really attractive for adults who want to swim seriously."⁷⁸ The dedication of those who swam at Champagne can also be seen in the formation of a group called "The Friends of Champagne Bath," led by Sussman. This collection of patrons of the bath recognized its unique position in the city and sought to see it remain open.⁷⁹ The main part of the rationale to close Champagne Bath was the presence of another city pool, just a few blocks away. But Sussman argued that the two pools "cannot be compared."⁸⁰ Although Champagne Bath was faced with competition, the facility had been able to distinguish itself from the others, providing an experience that could not be found elsewhere. It is in this niche that Champagne Bath was spared, once again, from closure.

HERITAGE RECONSIDERED

Community involvement in the development and support of these two buildings during that time, in addition to the celebration of their sixtieth anniversary, ultimately led to the heritage designation of both baths. Champagne Bath was designated in 1986 and Plant Bath in 1994. Currently, the designation of these baths acknowledges the architecture of the buildings and the influential social reform movement that was the impetus for their construction. While these factors contribute to our understanding of each building, they do not consider aspects of the longer lives of the baths and the impact time has had in the shaping of the buildings and their communities. Additionally, it does not address the working-class patrons of the baths, or the communities and citizens who made sure that they stayed open to this day. The Local Council of Women who protested against the closure of the baths in 1933, the Friends of Champagne Bath formed in the 1980s, and the countless citizens who raised their voices against proposed closures are responsible for the survival of both of these baths, and yet they are



FIG. 13. PLANT BATH, SOUTHEAST FAÇADE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.

a monument can reflect its longer life, rather than a major historical moment (fixing the monument to a particular context and time). The preservation of these buildings and their continued use in the community allow for these baths to serve as a reminder not only of their past, but of the active role their patrons play in the collective memory of the space.

CONCLUSION

Plant and Champagne Baths belong to history, but also to the citizens and communities they served over the past ninety years in Ottawa. The tumultuous lives of both Plant and Champagne Baths serve as a document of the changing fabric of the city and the efforts of those who fought to keep them open. The social changes that inform the physical state of the baths are made visible through age and wear, or effaced through renovation and restoration. The differing directions these two baths took are also particularly poignant when considering the similarities between the two at the time they were first commissioned. Both baths were informed by the social reform movement, a product of the same commission, and they offered the same services when they opened. However, the Plant Recreational Centre and Champagne Fitness Centre were clearly shaped by their communities and patrons more than the factors that contributed to their construction. That they are able to continue to serve their communities allows these buildings to represent the past while actively participating in the collective experience and memory of their patrons today.

all but forgotten. The many changes that each of the baths have undergone over the past ninety years, physically or otherwise, are significant to the social and cultural value of the buildings, and explain how they have managed to remain a vital part of the communities they serve.

The case of the baths exposes insufficiencies in the heritage designation of each bath and the alternative approaches that could begin to provide a fuller picture of the value of these buildings. Supported by Lucie K. Morisset's writing on the patrimonial site, the study of the lives of these baths allows them to emerge not simply as heritage objects, but rather as objects of patrimony.⁸¹ The patrimonial object, as Morisset suggests, is one that is a "bearer of meaning,"⁸² and that meaning is carried on from generation to generation through the object.⁸³ As Morisset states,

"Sites become traces of what has been collectively recognized by a certain collective intelligence at a particular time. Over the long term, patrimony retains successive traces of this recognition as it is renewed or forgotten."⁸⁴ If we consider Plant and Champagne Baths as sites and objects of patrimony, the lives of these buildings, and the memories attached to the spaces, can be carried forward. These buildings are the spaces where the history of the community has been recorded, and the structures that remain represent these histories through both their physical changes and "collective memories."

What still remains unanswered, however, is how to represent and protect the patrimonial building. While the definition of a "heritage place" in Canada has certainly expanded in the past fifty years, it is still not clear how the designation of



FIG. 14. CHAMPAGNE BATH, CENTRE ENTRANCE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.



FIG. 15. CHAMPAGNE BATH, STREET-LEVEL SOUTH ENTRANCE. | MEREDITH STEWART, 2014.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Michael Windover for his supervision of this project and acknowledge his constant enthusiasm and support, which allowed this paper to come to fruition. As well, I would like to thank Peter Coffman for not only introducing me to the Society, but also to the study of Canadian architecture. Finally, I am so pleased to have been awarded the Martin Eli Weil Prize, and am grateful to the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada for the opportunity to share my research.
2. Most notably: Cook, John, 2009, "New Life for Plant Bath," *Heritage Ottawa Newsletter*, vol. 33, no. 2, p. 9; Ricketts, Shannon, 2005, "Werner Ernst Noffke: Ottawa's Architect," *Heritage Ottawa Newsletter*, vol. 32, no. 3, p. 1-3; and Deegan, Judy (ed.), 1984, "Lowertown – Group Formed to Save Champagne Bath," *Heritage Ottawa Newsletter*, vol. 12, no. 5, p. 3-4.
3. Cohen-Rose, Sandra, 1996, *Northern Deco: Art Deco Architecture In Montreal*, Montreal, Corona Publishers, features some of the public

- baths that were built in Montreal (primarily in the 1930s), but does not discuss them at great length. There are quite a few publications that address the building and use of public baths in the United States, which relate most closely to the Canadian situation. These include: Hoagland, Alison K., 2011, "Introducing the Bathroom: Space and Change in Working-Class Houses," *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architectural Forum*, vol. 18, no. 2, p. 15-42; Renner, Andrea, 2008, "A Nation That Bathes Together: New York City's Progressive Era Public Baths," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 67, no. 4, p. 504-531; Stewart, J.A., 1900, "The Model Public Bath at Brookline," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 5, no. 4, p. 470-474; and Thornton Williams, Marilyn, 1991, *Washing "The Great Unwashed": Public Baths in Urban America, 1840-1920*, Columbus, Ohio State University Press.
4. Walsh, John C., 2001, "Modern Citizens for a Modern City?: Ottawa's Great Fire of 1900," in Jeff Keshan and Nicole J.M. St-Onge (eds.), *Ottawa: Construire une Capitale / Making a*

Capital, Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, p. 165.

5. *Ibid.* Walsh writes that despite the prominent presence of Parliament Hill in the landscape, there were "also unmistakable signs of a massive forestry industry" that infiltrated the city.
6. *Id.* : 167.
7. *Ibid.* The social aspect of a modern city was centred on democratic politics that would act to "preserve and promote social and economic betterment," as well as a broader establishment of "a series of accepted cultural norms and values."
8. Valverde, Marina, 1991, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart Inc., p. 15; and Walsh : 165.
9. Valverde : 15. It should be noted that this urban bourgeoisie class in Ottawa consisted primarily of English Protestant citizens, and the working-class was primarily French or Irish Catholic, or drawn from other ethnic minorities.
10. *Id.* : 15-16 and 21.

11. *Id.* : 25-26.
12. *Id.* : 18-19. Those who were the target of social reform philanthropy were not always willing participants, and it should be noted that usually these efforts were made through religious organizations.
13. *Id.* : 23. Cleanliness extended not just to personal hygiene. It was viewed that cleanliness could be achieved through the consumption of milk and water, which were seen as "pure."
14. Walsh : 165-184; and St. John, Edward S., 1983, "The Great Fire of Ottawa – 1900," *The Historical Society of Ottawa Pamphlet Series*, no. 9.
15. "Coming of Age Police and Fire Services," Library and Archives Canada, City Scapes, Ottawa, November 10, 2008, [<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/canadiandirectories/001075-2101-e.html>], accessed February 17, 2014. These waterworks were installed as a result of several fires that occurred in 1870, and were also influenced by the great Chicago fire of 1871. This was also the first introduction of tap water into Ottawa homes, although most certainly this would include a limited number of residences.
16. Walsh : 165.
17. *Id.* : 165-166. In Ottawa, approximately 12,000 citizens were left homeless.
18. St. John : 5-7, outlines the various relief programs that were instituted by the upper and middle classes in the wake of the fire, and which groups were largely responsible for their operation. See also Valverde : 22-23, another tenet of the social reform movement was providing aid to those less fortunate (those who had fallen prey to social ills), however, this aid was generally more philanthropic than charitable.
19. Simmins, Geoffrey, 2013, "Competing Visions for Redesigning the Canadian City: Architecture, Urban Planning, and Landscape Architecture, 1893-1918," in Charles C. Hill (ed.), *Artists, Architects and Artisans: Canadian Art 1890-1918*, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, p. 240-241. The City Beautiful Movement was a design philosophy that was concerned with architecture and urban planning, but also extended to notions of social reform in North America.
20. *Id.* : 240.
21. Gordon, David L.A., 1998, "A City Beautiful Plan for Canada's Capital: Edward Bennett and the 1915 Plan for Ottawa and Hull," *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 13, no. 3, p. 275-300 and 281-282; also see Leary, Robert M., 1970, "Capital on the Ottawa," *The Town Planning Review*, vol. 41, no. 1, p. 3-14, for information on the role of the federal government in urban planning and development.
22. Valverde : 18.
23. Hillis, Ken, 1992, "A History of Commissions: Threads of an Ottawa Planning History," *Urban History Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, p. 50 and 52. The schemes for Ottawa may not have been realized, but lingering ideologies remained and informed future construction in the city, although on a smaller scale, or in an individual building. Furthermore, despite its diminished success in Ottawa, the City Beautiful Movement had gained traction in other cities in Canada following the First World War. See also Simmins, p. 248-249. He includes in his essay a plan for Montreal by Rickson A. Outhet of a *Proposed Plan for Boulevard de la Confédération* (1908), in which there is a large public park, and attached by a tree-lined street is a public bath. It is also important to note that several major streets meet at this public bath, which becomes a sort of "centre" within the plan. The drawing demonstrates that public baths arguably held a venerated position at the time, for it was an architectural form that held the promise of health and well-being, which would surely resonate with City Beautiful designers.
24. Bacic, Jandranka, 1999, "The Plague of the Spanish Flu: The Influenza Epidemic of 1918 in Ottawa," *The Historical Society of Ottawa; Bytown Pamphlet Series*, no. 63, p. 1 and 11. Medical officials were slow to react, as the particular strain of the virus was not recognized, resulting in its rapid spread throughout the city. Due to the magnitude of those becoming ill, and the structural and systematic errors on both the federal and provincial health care levels, relief was eventually led by a civic campaign that sought to contain the spread of the virus and prevent any further infection or fatalities.
25. *Id.* : 1.
26. *Id.* : 7. It should also be noted that these areas were predominantly Roman Catholic communities, and had a wider range of ethnic groups represented within them. As a result, English Protestant citizens viewed the greater number of those ill in these areas to be symptomatic not only of their location within the city, but also of their social and cultural standing. By Ward had the greatest number of fatalities, with 16% of the total mortalities, followed closely by Victoria Ward with 11% (which is particularly significant when considering the geographic boundaries and its population).
27. *Id.* : 16.
28. Valverde : 21.
29. *Id.* : 41-42. This preoccupation with cleanliness and hygiene also included "pure foods" like milk, and was symbolically expressed in objects like soap (p. 23).
30. The reason for this was mostly a lack of infrastructure to bring plumbing into the working-class home, in addition to the lack of space within the domestic space. These factors, although in a slightly different context, are explored at length in Hoagland, "Introducing the Bathroom: Space and Change in Working-Class Houses," *op. cit.* : 15-42.
31. McWharf, J.M., 1919-1921, "Public Baths and Their Hygienic or Sanitary Value," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science*, vol. 30, p. 370.
32. Valverde : 22; and "Lowertown / Pool Given Heritage Status," *Ottawa Citizen*, January 8, 1987.
33. Hoagland : 20.
34. Cook : 9, indicates that there was a small public library in Plant Bath. The original floor plans drawn up by Millson & Burgess in 1922 do not feature any library, however, it is possible that the caretaker's apartment on the second floor could have been altered to accommodate a library. Additionally, Evenson, Brad, "Aging Lowertown Pool to Close for Renovations," *Ottawa Citizen*, March 26, 1989, notes that Champagne Bath was originally designed to house a library as well, but it was removed at a later stage as a result of budget constraints.
35. Cook : 9.
36. "Pool Celebrations," *Ottawa Citizen*, April 9, 1984, p. 13.

37. Cook : 9. Cook also attributes A.J. Hazelgrove with the design for Plant Bath (as do several other sources) and while Hazelgrove was a partner in the Millson & Burgess firm during the years the Bath was constructed (1923-1924), he joined after the commission was issued, and was, therefore, likely not involved in the initial design. For information on the activities of the architects involved, consult [<http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/>].
38. These plans can be found in the collection at Library and Archives Canada within the McLean & MacPhadyen Fond, acc. no. 86703/9, NMC 134270-134276.
39. Cook : 9; and *Ottawa Journal*, 1924, as cited in the *Official Re-Opening of Plant Bath* brochure produced by the City of Ottawa, (1984); supported by the basement plan, ground floor plan, and second floor plan.
40. Hoagland : 22-23. Hoagland indicates that the general standards for the public baths featured in her case study provided both showers and bathtubs for men, but, generally, only bathtubs for women. She does not offer any rationale for this decision, and it is possible that there was no concrete reasoning for this choice. Regardless, it would appear that based on the plans for Plant Bath, there was a similar gendered differentiation operating in Ottawa.
41. Brault, Lucien, 1946, *Ottawa Old & New*, Ottawa, Ottawa Historical Institute, p. 109. Brault writes about the construction of both baths, elaborating on the interior and pools: "Constructed in ferro-concrete, lined on the inside with white glazed tiles, and inset with black diving lines, their dimensions are 75 feet in length by 30 in width, the water depth varies from 3½ feet to 9 feet."
42. The search for Noffke's plans are ongoing. Even though a majority of his plans are located within his fond at Library and Archives Canada, Champagne Bath is not among them. The last confirmed location of the plans was in 1976, when they were included in an exhibition coordinated by Harold Kalman and Joan Mackie for Heritage Ottawa titled "The Architecture of W.E. Noffke." Despite this obstacle, there is evidence of a caretaker's apartment on the second floor of Champagne Bath in a City of Ottawa report regarding its renovations in 1987, in which there is a recommendation to "convert the old second floor apartment area into public use." City of Ottawa, 1987, "Champagne Bath Renovations," *Community Services and Operations and City Council*, ref. no. 0713-043/87, p. 129.
43. Blumenson, John, 1990, *Ontario Architecture; A Guide to Styles and Building Terms 1784 to the Present*, Canada, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, p. 134.
44. A similar motif, although in the form of sculpture, is featured on the *Marché Maisonneuve Fountain* in Montreal. The sculpture is designed by Alfred Laliberté who was also responsible for the sculpture on the public bath within the same block. Images of both the fountain sculpture and the public bath can be found in Simmins, Geoffrey, 2013, "Art's 'Renewed Nearness to Life': Reflections on the Unity of the Arts in Canada," p. 188; and "Competing Visions for Redesigning the Canadian City," p. 252; both articles in Hill, *Artists, Architects and Artisan...*, *op. cit.*
45. Ricketts : 1; also, "Heritage," *Ottawa Citizen*, December 19, 1986, p. F7. Noffke experimented with Colonial revival styles for a period of time in his career, and the Champagne Bath stands as a testament to his exploration of the style. He also was responsible for the no. 10 Graham Fire Station (1921) in Old Ottawa South, which was similarly built in the Spanish Colonial Revival. Many of the residences he designed in the Glebe neighbourhood are also in this latter style.
46. "Heritage" : F7.
47. Kalman, Harold, 1994, *A History of Canadian Architecture: Volume 2*, Don Mills, ON, Oxford University Press, p. 772. The style was popular for use in "atmospheric" theatres.
48. The placement of Plant Bath on the corner lot reinforces the lingering City Beautiful sentiments in the city.
49. "Swimming Trials At Ottawa Civic Baths," *Ottawa Citizen*, May 26, 1924, p. 2. Exact figures were provided: "A record of attendance at the baths for the week ending May 24 showed that during that week there were 410 men, 148 women, 1,097 boys, 444 girls, total 2,099, in addition to 368 spectators who had attended Champagne Bath, while at Plant Bath the attendance was 140 men, 100 women, 749 boys, 366 girls totally 1,355, in addition to the 229 spectators. This makes a total of 550 men, 248 women, 1,846 boys, 810 girls, a grand total of 3,454 persons. There were also 587 spectators at the baths during the week. This record shows that in the second week Champagne Bath is still the leader in attendance."
50. Gladish, W.M., "City's Swimming Baths Ready for New Season," *Ottawa Citizen*, January 5, 1950, p. 47.
51. "Letters to the Editor: Mr. Payne and 'Champagne Spirit,'" *Ottawa Citizen*, January 13, 1925, p. 18. This letter was written by J.L. Payne, unsuccessful mayoral candidate and opponent to Napoleon Champagne, with the aim of exposing the irresponsible and excessive spending habits of Champagne and the city officials more broadly. It should also be noted that the plans for Plant Bath also contains a room for hair drying, attached to the women's changing room. This further supports the similarity between the interior features and amenities in both baths.
52. "Young Ticket Scalpers Busy Near Civic Baths," *Ottawa Citizen*, June 24, 1941, p. 20.
53. *Ibid.*
54. "Girl Gets Scare By Jump Into Deep Water," *Ottawa Citizen*, July 7, 1939, p. 2.
55. This image, titled "Champagne Bath Drowning, May 14, 1956," can be found at the City of Ottawa's Central Archives under reference code CA024657/ Newton.
56. "Allow Mixed Bathing Both Public Pools," *Ottawa Citizen*, February 28, 1928, p. 13.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. "For Hockey Rink In Ottawa East," *Ottawa Citizen*, February 24, 1936, p. 4. This article also reports that free swims were offered to children, but that only boys took advantage of them. There is a lot of statistical data available on the attendance of both baths, with details on age and gender. As a result, an interesting research project could likely develop from the analysis of this data and the examination of factors that would affect attendance for each demographic.
61. Additionally, drawings by Canadian artist Tom Wood in one of his sketchbooks (located at Library and Archives) from 1937 of patrons in Plant Bath suggest a lingering gender divide, not only among swimmers, but spectators as well. For example: *Spectators and Swimmer at the Plaunt [sic] Bath, Ottawa* (MIKAN no. 2955019) and *Swimmer and Female Spectator in a Coat and Hat, Plaunt Bath, Ottawa* (MIKAN no. 2955023).

62. "Again Proposes That Baths Be Closed by City," *Ottawa Citizen*, April 21, 1933, p. 13. There is even a suggestion put forward in the meeting that this article discusses, to allow families to use the bath as living quarters in exchange for custodial work: however, this situation was likely never enacted.
63. "Mayor in Favour of Closing Both of Civic Baths," *Ottawa Citizen*, March 17, 1933, p. 12.
64. "Women Protest Against Scheme To Close Baths," *Ottawa Citizen*, April 26, 1933, p. 5.
65. "Ottawa's Tax Rate Up; Civic Baths Stay Open," *Ottawa Citizen*, May 20, 1933, p. 4. The tax specifically targeted the supporters of two nearby schools that utilized the baths.
66. "Civic Baths' Good Showing," *Ottawa Citizen*, November 22, 1924, p. 32.
67. Gerhard, William Paul, 1908, *Modern Baths and Bath Houses*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, p. 27-28, outlines the necessary steps required in maintaining a healthy and hygienic pool. And Gladish, *op. cit.*, indicates the various procedures used, including water testing, that were undertaken by the city to maintain the sanitary state of the baths.
68. "Civic Baths Again," *Ottawa Citizen*, January 28, 1942, p. 24. Selling the baths to a private entrepreneur was also considered at this time, along with other tax related solutions.
69. "Declares Civic Baths Vital in City's Life," *Ottawa Citizen*, December 30, 1941, p. 9.
70. "Summer Aquatics '78," the City of Ottawa brochure, 1978, lists eight public pools in the City. In the City of Ottawa brochure of 1987, "Public Swimming: Schedule from September 13, 1987 to July 1, 1988," in *Aquatics/Aquatique*, the number of public pools had increased to ten less than ten years later.
71. "Plant Bath Pool Reopens," *Ottawa Citizen*, August 17, 1983, p. 2.
72. *Ibid.*
73. "Official Re-opening of Plant Bath," City of Ottawa brochure, 1984.
74. *Ibid.*
75. "Champagne Pool Likely To Stay Open," *Ottawa Citizen*, November 5, 1986, p. 25.
76. "Letters: The Proposed Closing of Champagne Pool," *Ottawa Citizen*, November 26, 1984, p. A9; and "Letters: Champagne Pool," *Ottawa Citizen*, September 9, 1986, p. A9.
77. "Letters: The Proposed Closing of Champagne Pool," p. A9; and Deegan : 3-4.
78. Deegan : 4.
79. *Id.* : 3.; and "Champagne Bath Renovations," *City of Ottawa*, p. 131. It is made clear that this group was formed with the sole purpose of preventing the closure or conversion of the bath. They disbanded once this was achieved.
80. Deegan : 4.
81. Morisset, Lucie K., 2010, "Patrimony, the Concept, the Object, the Memory, and the Palimpsest: A View from the History of Architecture," *Journal for the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada*, vol. 35, no. 1, p. 53-62.
82. *Id.* : 56.
83. *Id.* : 57.
84. *Ibid.*