



The Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada/

News & Views

Actualité et points de vue

La Société pour l'étude de l'architecture au Canada

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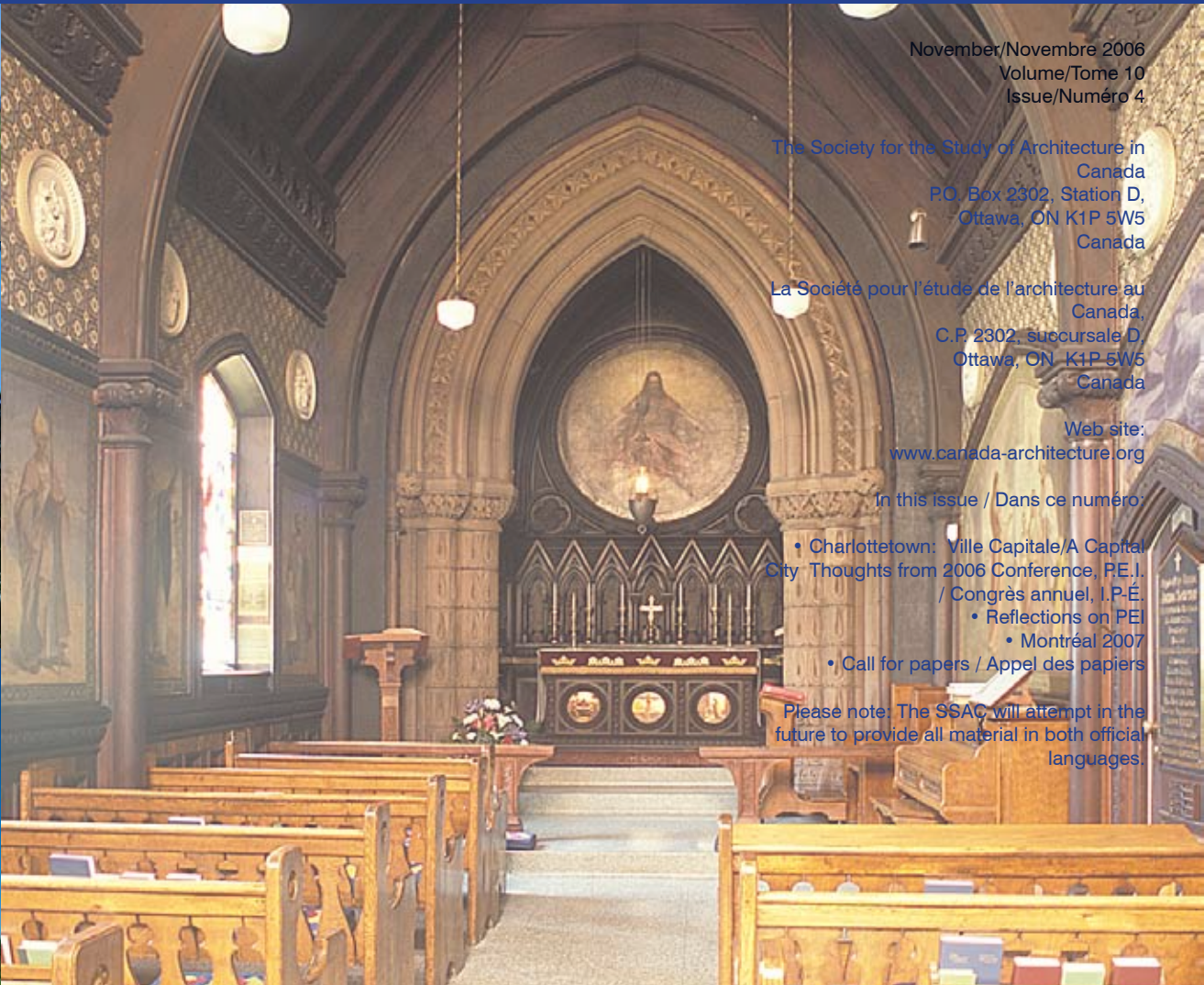
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Please note: The SSAC will attempt in the future to provide all material in both official languages.



Charlottetown: Ville Capitale/A Capital City An Appreciation of the SSAC/SÉAC 2006 Annual Conference

By Pierre du Prey President SSAC/SÉAC

Years ago I became the owner of a manuscript letter written by the Anglo-Canadian architect John Plaw (1746 -1820). My Plaw acquisition sparked an interest in one day visiting Prince Edward Island where Plaw established himself in 1807. This June my wish came true when I, along with another 35 or so enthusiastic members of the SSAC/SÉAC, attended the excellent 2006 Annual Conference held in that capital city.

Good advance publicity attracted a large crowd of islanders in addition to SSAC/SÉAC members to the conference's opening reception. It was hosted by his worship Mayor Clifford Lee and Gallery Director Jon Tupper, representing the event's co-sponsors, the City of Charlottetown and the Confederation Art Centre, where all our sessions took place. The formula of a reception cum keynote public lecture – I gave one on Plaw in Charlottetown, not surprisingly – offers the Society an excellent opportunity to make its activities and aims more widely known. I was personally gratified with Jim McNutt's kind introduction, the turn out, the mini loan exhibition of my Plaw material thanks to Ann Howat and Kevin Rice, and with the feedback I received from the knowledgeable audience.

Photo: Above, All Souls Interior by Peter Coffman. Left (top to bottom) - Province House, Farmer's Bank, Selkirk Settlement Church, Point Prim Lighthouse, Government House, Panel discussion on Heritage, all photos by Andrew Waldron



The sessions with their individual papers form the intellectual backbone of any SSAC/SÉAC Annual Conference. I want to thank all the session chairs, the no less than 22 individual speakers, and the panelists for generously sharing their knowledge and their precious time. Gratifying developments this year were the high percentage of papers given by students, the sizeable number of topics devoted to Atlantic Canada, and the fact that one of the eight sessions stretched our mandate to include the Roman experiences of Canadian winners of the Rome Prize. An excellent lunch, one of several catered by Mavors within the Confederation Centre, prepared us to brave the Nor Easter that had blown in. Catherine briskly conducted the afternoon bus tour with her humorous mixture of historical savvy and sassy barbs. Clearly Charlottetown has had its share of preservation battles with Catherine in the thick of them. But the future looks brighter than the weather did. A welcome break came at Government House, where Lieutenant Governor Léonce Bernard and Madame Bernard had arranged for the volunteer guides to welcome us in for a reception and show us around. By



Photo: Top - Confederation Centre by Andrew Waldron. Above - (left to right) Andrew Waldron, Pierre du Prey, Jonathan Cha 2006 Martin Eli Weil Prize Winner, Lucie K. Morisset. Photos by Marie-France Bisson

By this point the storm had reached gale strength, but our bus driver stood patiently by on his own time and deposited us at All Soul's Chapel (1888); a shrine to the artistically talented members of the Harris family. Who better to explain the religious symbolism than their grand nephew Canon Bob Tuck? What an exceptional High Victorian environment, and how well his tour tied in with the Harris paintings and architectural drawings that surrounded us each day in the Confederation Centre exhibition space.

Wonder of wonders, next day the storm had passed, and for the rest of our stay the sun shone warmly into the long evenings; ideal conditions for our two tours. The first, to the eastern part of the island, made an unscheduled stop at historical Belfast church, before finally reaching the Point Prim lighthouse (kindly opened for us by the Friends of). With my fear of heights I skipped the ascent – hence my absence from the de rigueur group portrait. But this permitted me to drive on ahead to Orwell Corners Historic Village. Due to the late hour the gracious ladies who had a delicious home-cooked supper ready for us were about to give up. "Pierre at the dyke." Catherine and the bus eventually arrived, the group wandered the dream-like rural village



in late sunshine, ate in the village hall draped with Union Jacks, and all was forgiven with good humor, as seems to be the island custom.

Highlights of our last day included the annual Martin Eli Weil lecture, presented by long-time conference participant Jonathan Cha. Félicitations, Jonathan, for a fast-paced, brilliantly put-together, and thought-provoking talk. It will appear in a future issue of our splendid Journal, along with other articles based on conference papers. The afternoon culminated in our western island tour. We walked around the charming village of Victoria on Northumberland Strait, passed by William Critchlow Harris's church at Cra-paud (quel nom!), and crossed to the Atlantic shore at Rustico, where blue waters meet the characteristic red earth and vibrant green fields of a countryside ablaze with multicolored lupines. We toured the bright-red mid-nineteenth-century Farmers' Bank. Edmond Blanchard, our Acadian guide and a living national treasure, gave a bilingual history of the premises posed in front of a huge blow-up of a bank note allegorically extolling the fertility of the soil. The sea air whetted our appetites for the Seafood Extravaganza at Carr's Oyster Bar overlooking the inlet at Stanley Bridge. Empty oyster, mussel, clam and lobster shells piled up, all fresh from the drink. Thanks go to George Lyle of Summerside and the PEI Architectural Association – among others – for helping to make this such a festive ending to an unforgettable conference. We drank the organizing committee's health, and in absentia that of Harry Holman and his helpful staff. If "Our life's a dream," according to John Plaw's epitaph in the Charlottetown cemetery, then the special PEI welcome the SSAC/SÉAC received will remain one of that dream's lasting memories

The Charlottetown Annual Conference would not have taken place had it not been for the extremely hard-working, well-connected, and dedicated local organizing committee. I would like to begin by acknowledging them all, thanking them, and congratulating them on their success.

- 1) David Bergmark, PEI Architectural Association representative
- 2) Catherine Hennessey, grande dame of PEI architectural preservation
- 3) Harry Holman, Director of Cultural Affairs, PEI Government
- 4) Dr. Ann Howat, conservator and independent scholar
- 5) Kevin Rice, Registrar/Curatorial Manager, Confederation Art Centre
- 6) Todd Saunders, City of Charlottetown heritage officer
- 7) Rev. Robert C. Tuck, Canon of St. Peter's Cathedral, Charlottetown

Their Chair, Catherine Hennessey, assured me that Charlottetown knows a thing or two about putting on conferences since 1867, and she proved right!

Reflections from PEI

by Dr. Ann Howatt, University of Prince Edward Island

Islanders involved in the SSAC Annual Meeting here, from the local organizing committee to dignitaries, from hosts to guests to local historians, has expressed their pleasure and privilege in having been chosen by the Society as the venue for this year's annual meeting. For many of us, it was our first opportunity to meet our new colleagues, and it was heartening to participate in such a rich environment of scholarship and community action. We especially recognize the commitment of SSAC President, Pierre DuPrey. Professor DuPrey led this initiative with his collegial generosity, even couriering materials from his private collection of John Plaw documents and books, that formed the core of the exhibit enjoyed throughout our stay at the Confederation Centre. Kudos, definitely, to Andrew Waldron, who, with his executive, persevered across the miles to realize this event.

In that spirit, I offer a few reflections that may serve future conferences. Even communities our size could benefit from having a conference committee member designated to co-ordinate communications and liaison, especially to engage potential delegates. In the early stages, bringing all of us together might have seemed like herding cats! Here, for example, we did miss some key people. Still, we will look to the SSAC Newsletter as a venue for sharing their work in the future. Suggestions have been made for circulating information regarding the estimated number of delegates as early as possible for local, practical organizational purposes. Somewhat related to this is the issue of sharing final total budget results, so that local organizers could gain a sense of other overhead costs or operating costs that the SSAC may be facing in relation to the Conference.

Clearly, where funds allow, translation services would be an asset. I realize that such services are often difficult to manage; still, there were many sophisticated, original presentations and questions, and they would have been even better appreciated had there been translation services.

Indeed, the very inclusiveness of the SSAC is one of its strengths. The diversity of cultures, of approaches in research, and in areas of experience was inspiring – and refreshing. We trust that this diversity will continue to be encouraged.

On final reflection, the enduring impression that we have of the SSAC is that of a welcoming, scholarly, down-to-earth organization, a compact assembly of individuals with a shared sense of dedication, a wide range of abilities, and an ability to enjoy wherever they are -- exactly the materials for the Conference theme, Building with a Mission. As local Committee Chair, Catherine Hennessey, an architectural historian and advocate, puts it, the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, while in Prince Edward Island leaves us with "a real sense of building -- building a love and respect for your country." Coming from the birthplace of Canada, this is sincere praise indeed. We thank you sincerely for joining us, and look forward to greeting you again .



Photos: Right Charlottetown Street, Left - Victoria Hotel. Photos by Andrew Waldron



**34th Annual Conference
Architectural History and Heritagization in Canada
Université du Québec à Montréal, May 17 to 20, 2007
Call for papers**

Architectural history's interpretation of the built object has gone hand-in-hand with the characterization of historic monuments, sites and protected complexes for over two centuries. In short, architectural history underpins the creation of heritage, or "heritagization." Few buildings or complexes, which have received the benefit of architectural analysis or historical research, have been deemed not to be heritage by law or otherwise. Architectural history has long proven itself to be a useful, even fundamental, science in the field of heritage.

As collective awareness has evolved, increasing interdisciplinary study has improved and enhanced scholarly research. Today's architectural historians must adapt to this reality: Their expertise is no longer the only source of heritage constructions—far from it. Within teams, seminars, or other forums, the work of a historian and the ability to characterize built objects and complexes remains critical, particularly to validate and establish the significance of fragments or sections of built environments. Indeed, the question "what is the style of this object?" now gives way to a far broader question "is it heritage?"

Convened in the spirit of inclusiveness and integration— sessions will be developed based on the thematic similarity of the papers selected. The Montréal meeting will explore the theoretical and practical past or present relationships between architectural history and heritagization. Our goal is to bring people together and spur reflection on the various methods and practices that shape heritage constructions in Canada today, considering all methods of studying built environments and their significance, from traditional art history approaches to trans-disciplinary heritage and sociocultural assessments. Furthermore, the conference is to demonstrate vigor and expertise within the field while examining the issues faced by researchers and practitioners, young and experienced alike.

The 34th annual SSAC conference will enable researchers, professionals, and others involved in creating knowledge about, protecting, and showcasing Canada's built landscape to express themselves through analyses of buildings, complexes, or sites; characterization studies, monographs, and biographies; heritage evaluations; discussions on project methods, analyses, and critiques; hermeneutical and theoretical explorations; and research reports.

Please send your paper proposals (title and a brief description of no more than 300 words) to the scientific committee by February 15, 2007, at the following address:

Lucie K. Morisset, Professor
President, SSAC Conference Science Committee
Vice President, SSAC
Institut du patrimoine
Université du Québec à Montréal
P.O. Box 8888, Downtown Station
Montreal, QC Canada
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Or by email to: info@canada-architecture.org

34^e Congrès annuel - Histoire de l'architecture et patrimonialisation au Canada
Université du Québec à Montréal, du 17 au 20 mai 2007

Appel à communications

Parce qu'elle est vouée à l'interprétation des objets construits, l'histoire de l'architecture accompagne, depuis plus de deux siècles, la caractérisation des monuments historiques, des sites et ensembles protégés ; bref, l'histoire de l'architecture sous-tend la fabrication du patrimoine, la « patrimonialisation ». Peu de bâtiments ou d'ensembles ayant fait l'objet de recherches en histoire de l'architecture n'ont pas été reconnus d'intérêt patrimonial, par le biais de l'attribution d'un statut juridique ou autrement. Ainsi l'histoire de l'architecture s'est-elle longtemps imposée comme science utile, voire fondatrice dans le champ du patrimoine.

Cependant, avec l'évolution des sensibilités collectives, l'interdisciplinarité a enrichi le faisceau interprétatif. L'historien d'architecture contemporain doit s'ajuster : son expertise n'est plus la seule – loin s'en faut – qui génère des constructions patrimoniales. Pourtant, au sein d'équipes, dans des séminaires ou sur d'autres tribunes, le travail historique et l'habileté à caractériser des objets et ensembles construits restent essentielles, notamment pour valider et asseoir la notoriété de fragments ou de plages de l'environnement construit. Mais la question « de quel style s'agit-il » fait maintenant place à l'interrogation, combien plus large : « est-ce du patrimoine ? »

Convoquée sous un thème inclusif à dessein, la rencontre de Montréal se veut intégratrice – les ateliers seront formés par l'affinité thématique des communications acceptées – pour mieux prospecter les relations théoriques et pratiques, passées ou actuelles, entre l'histoire de l'architecture et la patrimonialisation. Plus généralement, on vise ici à rassembler et à susciter la réflexion, au départ de toutes formes d'études de l'environnement bâti et de ses significations, depuis l'histoire de l'art la plus traditionnelle jusqu'à l'évaluation patrimoniale et socio-culturelle transdisciplinaire, sur les manières et sur les pratiques variées qui forgent les constructions patrimoniales dans le Canada d'aujourd'hui. Il s'agit, notamment, de faire la démonstration de la vigueur et de la compétence mais aussi de mettre en partage les questionnements des chercheurs et praticiens, jeunes ou plus aguerris.

Des analyses de bâtiments, d'ensembles ou de sites, des études de caractérisation, des monographies et des biographies, des évaluations patrimoniales, des discussions sur la méthode, des analyses et des critiques de projets, des explorations de l'herméneutique et de la théorie, des compte-rendus de recherches permettront aux chercheurs et aux professionnels, acteurs dans la production de savoirs et dans la sauvegarde et mise en valeur du paysage construit canadien, de s'exprimer, lors de ce 34^e congrès annuel de la SÉAC.

Le comité scientifique recevra les propositions de communications – un titre et une brève description d'au plus 300 mots – jusqu'au 15 février 2007, à l'adresse suivante :

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The SSAC has a dedicated page where members can view photos of past conferences and meetings. The web address is:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/86555907@N00/>