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The Griffin

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REPORT

President's Report



Joe Ballard

I know many Nova Scotians outside of HRM 'tune out' when the subject of Halifax comes up, but I urge everyone, regardless of what part of the province they call home, to take notice of something called the Centre Plan, a plan (nearing the end of its draft stage) that will govern urban planning in our capital.

The document goes to great lengths to identify the importance of early indigenous sites (now that they've been obliterated), African Nova Scotian sites (now that they've been bulldozed), and Acadian sites (since expulsion guilt still lingers). The document makes no acknowledgement of the dwindling German, Irish, Scottish, and English built inventory that is *now* under threat and is *now* disappearing. I guess that once all the physical evidence of these last cultural groups has also been erased from the landscape, we can look forward to the remorse that will spawn cultural inclusion investments in schnitzel, Irish dancing, curling, and afternoon tea. The Centre Plan already foreshadows this conclusion, as it relegates built heritage resources to a section that includes arts and culture. The Plan therefore places heritage resources in the same category as public art; and public art is

now something we will get in exchange for granting a density bonus to new development sites. I risk sounding cynical but I'm not making this stuff up. It's real. There is so much that separates built heritage from arts and culture that the two are more dissimilar than they are alike. Sure, there is a cultural component, even an artistic component to it; but built heritage is not a chattel, it is a capital asset and as such it is employed, or capable of being employed, in the production of wealth. It is not equivalent to a thing like a painting or an activity like knitting.

The dismissive attitude of the Centre Plan with respect to heritage continues throughout the document. The section on Jobs and Economic Development is silent on the roles that older buildings play in small business incubation, main street retail authenticity, buy local support, place-making, and tourism. Surely heritage gets at least a nod under the Mobility section, what with historic neighbourhoods being valued for their walkability and fine-grained streets? Nope. Perhaps the long life of historic buildings and striking examples of successful adaptive reuse projects make such buildings obvious choices for the Sustainability section? Sorry, not here either. Brownfield redevelopment? Nope. Astonishingly, the plan cannot even accurately define what a heritage property is.

If the Centre Plan authors cannot get the language right, then its planners cannot get the planning right. Once the literacy issue is solved, then it becomes possible to have meaningful discussions around important aspects of the plan like why it is crucial to preserve height limits along the Robie Street corridor and why proposed heritage conservation districts need immediate protection. I've only scratched the surface (see also p.5, this issue). The draft Centre Plan can be found on-line at centreplan.ca.

Cover image: Arthur Lismer, Olympic with Returned Soldiers, CWM 19710261-0343, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum

Arthur Lismer (1885-1969)



Arthur Lismer, Halifax Harbour - Time of War, c. 1917, oil on canvas, 102.5 x 130.0 cm, Dalhousie Art Gallery permanent collection, gift of the artist, 1955 (reproduced with permission of the Artist's Estate)

Alan Ruffman

For this issue, we are featuring an artist who is no longer with us but deserves to be remembered in connection with the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Harbour Explosion. Arthur Lismer, later a member of the famed Group of Seven, played an important role in the development of the arts in Nova Scotia and documented the aftermath of the Explosion and other impacts of the First World War in Halifax.

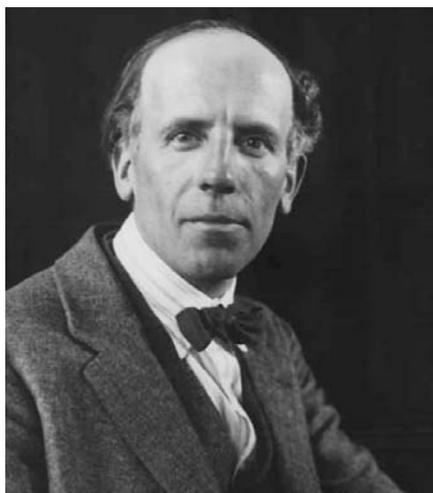
Arthur Lismer was born and raised in Sheffield and received his art training there (1899-1906 at the Sheffield School of Art) and in Antwerp (1906-1907 at the Académie royale des beaux-arts). He was apprenticed at the *Sheffield Independent* as an on-the-spot illustrator of speakers, court rooms, and crime scenes, and remained an inveterate sketcher for all his life. He immigrated to Canada in the middle of winter 1911 and landed a job in a commercial design firm in Toronto. At the Grip Co., he met four other graphic designers who were eventually all to be founders of the Group of Seven,

landscape artists, in 1920.

Lismer returned to Sheffield in mid-1912 to marry his fiancée, Esther Mawson. Marjorie, their only child, was born in Toronto in May 1913. A key introduction to Canada's northlands came in the summer of 1914, when with Tom Thomson, Fred Varley, and A.Y. Jackson, they were introduced to campfires, canoes, and the forested north country in Algonquin Park. Separately, Dr James MacCallum of Toronto opened his island cottage to the Lismer family to reveal the windswept Precambrian shorelines and islands of Georgian Bay.

BOOKS

Holiday Reading



Arthur Lismer, 1930 (courtesy of Archives of Ontario, F 1075-12-0-0-53)

Two years later, Arthur Lismer was appointed Principal of the Victoria School of Art and Design in Halifax. He arrived at the start of term in early September 1916 and found but 12 students. The Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts was essentially dormant, and he inherited Boards of Directors of the School and Museum who were nearly all inactive and disinterested.

Lismer spent three years in a rented home in Bedford¹ and commuted by rail to the downtown school on the southwest corner of George and Argyle streets. He remained exactly three years before returning to Ontario to become Vice President of the Ontario College of Art (now Ontario College of Art and Design University). Lismer dedicated most of his career to the teaching of art, especially to children. He also helped to develop a new form of art that was to show Canada (and especially the landscapes of the Canadian Shield) to Canadians in a fresh way, freed of traditional European influence.

Lismer was in Halifax for the 1917 Explosion¹ His pen and ink drawings were seen from coast to coast in the *Canadian Courier* magazine, with a further series of twelve drawings in two local books that have proved very rare. This body of Lismer's work is virtually unknown to scholars. Lismer left Halifax in August 1919 after a 14-month appointment as a Canadian War Artist on the

John Boileau. *6-12-17 - The Halifax Explosion*. MacIntyre Purcell, hard cover, ISBN 9781772760668, published August 2017, \$22.95

Ken Cuthbertson. *The Halifax Explosion: Canada's Worst Disaster December 6, 1917*. Harper Collins Canada, hard cover, ISBN 9781443450256, published November 2017, \$34.99

Michael Dupuis. *Bearing Witness: Journalists, Record Keepers and the 1917 Halifax Explosion*. Fernwood, paperback, ISBN 9781552668757, published April 2017, \$30.00

Emma FitzGerald. *Sketch by Sketch Along Nova Scotia's South Shore*. Formac, hard cover, ISBN 9781459504769, published September 2017, \$24.95

Katie Ingram. *Breaking Disaster: Newspaper Stories of the Halifax Explosion*. Pottersfield Press, paperback, ISBN 9781552668757, published November 2017, \$19.95

David Rollinson. *Nova Scotia's Industrial Heritage: a Guidebook*. Nimbus, paperback, ISBN 9781771085175, published September 2017, \$15.95



Dan Soucoup. *Explosion in Halifax Harbour 1917*. Nimbus, paperback, ISBN 9781771085540, published November 2017, \$15.95

Brian Douglas Tennyson. *Nova Scotia at War, 1914-1919*. Nimbus, paperback, ISBN 9781771085236, published October 2017, \$26.95

Joel Zemel. *Betrayal of Trust: Commander Wyatt and the Halifax Explosion*. New World Publishing, paperback, ISBN unavailable, published September 2017, \$19.95

home front and this collection is held by the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

Lismer left his College in the good hands of Elizabeth S. Nutt, whom he nominated to his Board as his replacement, having known her from his years in Sheffield. The school survives today as the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design [University]. The Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts also survived and in 1975 became the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Lismer went on to work as an educator and a venerated landscape artist of the Group of Seven. In addition to his time at the Victoria School of Art and Design and the Ontario College of Art, Lismer also taught at the Art Gallery

of Toronto (now Art Gallery of Ontario), and for many years (1941-1967) ran the Montreal Children's Art Centre at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Arthur and Esther are interred on the grounds of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario.

Alan Ruffman is a Halifax-based geophysicist, historian of the Halifax Harbour Explosion, Lismer specialist, and a former member of the Board of HTNS.

¹See Tony Edwards, Where did they live? Arthur Lismer's residence in Bedford (1916-1919). *The Griffin*, 41 (3), September 2016, pp. 14-15

How Centre Plan Rezoning Threatens Halifax Heritage Assets



Part of the 10-block wooden streetscape along the west side of Robie Street, an iconic Halifax corridor at risk under the proposed Centre Plan (Griffin photo)

Andrew Murphy

The New Year will bring in a new draft Centre Plan with by-laws which will reshape our city. It is important for people to understand the direction of this development.

The Centre Plan

The Centre Plan is a comprehensive rezoning of Peninsular Halifax and Dartmouth within the circumferential highway. It excludes downtown Halifax, which has already been rezoned in the Downtown Plan, a result of the HRM-by-Design project.

The new plan seeks to bring certainty and sense to replace what have often been discordant proposals introduced by developers. The hope is that a comprehensive, well thought-out plan will stop the one-off, conflict-causing, and disorganized approach to the planning process. As Halifax contemplates its new Centre Plan, it is necessary to consider the potential perils of an incautious rezoning.

The need for realistic growth goals

Density within the city core can be a good thing; denser development is more efficient to service than suburban sprawl. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that likely Halifax is not going to be as densely settled as Manhattan any time soon. The Peninsula hit a maximum population of 102,000 people in the early 1960s. Rapid suburbanization and a reduction in average family size has shifted actual population and all of the growth to outside the urban core. The Peninsula population hit a low of 60,000 but has rebounded to 75,000.

The plan needs to consider development capacity and its effect on the present housing supply. Even if as little as 5% of the Centre Plan area were zoned to 20 storeys, it could house 400,000 more people, almost quadruple the current population. Imposing unrealistic growth targets on existing low-rise neighbourhoods invites the dismantling of distinctive areas. Any proposed rezoning needs to 'up-zone' neighbourhoods in a gentle and selective fashion that accounts for heritage and other important

city values, rather than in a radical and destructive way.

Certainly the Centre Plan area has lots of space to handle even the most optimistic of population growth projections, without having to sacrifice any of our fabulous stock of heritage buildings or established mature neighbourhoods.

How rezoning creates an incentive to demolish

Zoning for increased height makes heritage structures economically obsolete. Each additional floor of development capacity, added to land on which an existing heritage building sits, will increase the likelihood of its demolition. Increased allowable height means more apartment suites may be built on a given lot and it means higher value for the land. The rezoning of four single-family houses on Wellington Street provides an example: The houses were purchased for approximately \$3.5 million. After rezoning, the land was sold to another developer for approximately \$8.5 million, a gross profit of \$5 million. The development rights associated with each



Heritage structures housing professional offices at the north end of the Old South Suburb, corner of Barrington and Bishop streets, Halifax (Griffin photo)

approved suite became worth more than \$50,000. Even modest increases in development rights can lead to demolitions, as is evident on the north side of Cornwallis Park and on Spring Garden Road opposite the Library.

The Centre Plan proposes a height of six storeys on Robie Street, a proposed 'corridor'. The west side of Robie Street, in particular, is an extraordinary contiguous expression of architectural style that was built over approximately a century. Few of the buildings are registered, few exceed three storeys, and there is no heritage district proposed to protect them. With the addition of development rights to six storeys, the demolition of these buildings is ensured. They are only waiting for a developer to finish the land assembly, arrange financing, proceed with demolition, and begin construction. Indeed, the process is in the works on Robie between Cunard and Compton Streets. As well, the lovely neighbourhood behind is being compromised.

Rezoning and the collision of building technologies

Much of our local building stock is made of wood; this is a distinguishing characteristic of Maritime architecture. Zoning that increases height will attack the viability of existing wooden structures simply because they cannot be adapted to changes in construction demands above four storeys. Prior to WW I, height was limited because of materials (wood, stone, brick). Now that we use reinforced concrete, very tall buildings are routinely built. As buildings grow taller, the rules that govern their construction change. At four storeys, a building must be sprinklered. At five storeys, the building must be made of non-combustible materials and needs an elevator. The taller the building, the less likely it is to be an adapted (re-used) wooden building.

The way forward?

The Centre Plan does not have to rush re-development into our heritage

neighbourhoods. Instead, let's create special zoning laws which encourage the retention of these buildings and streetscapes. For example, allow professional offices with appropriate signage on ground floors. Allow additions to the backs of structures. Allow development of backyard carriage houses and lane-way houses to increase density. Permit basement (or other) apartments to provide affordable housing and extend the life of larger houses with fewer occupants. Let's consider rezoning former industrial and auto lot properties for residential use.

We can build a great city without the wholesale destruction of much of our unique building stock. What is our vision for this city? Instead of creating a new Mississauga-by-the-ocean, let's use a great seaside city like San Francisco – with its hills, harbour, and heritage – as a model for our Centre Plan.

Andrew J. Murphy, CPA, CA, is the developer of Glube's Lofts on Gottingen Street, Halifax, and Vice-President Finance of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

Reflections on the Halifax Harbour Explosion at the Dalhousie Art Gallery

The Dalhousie Art Gallery is hosting a multi-media exhibit in the Dalhousie Arts Centre until December 17. This includes several components. One part (*Arthur Lismer and the Halifax Explosion*, curated by Paige Connell and Peter Dykhuis) features Lismer's large painting *Halifax Harbour – Time of War* in the permanent collection of the Dalhousie Art Gallery (see p. 3 of this issue) and a number of pencil, charcoal, and oil sketches and preparatory drawings (including one for the painting on our cover), many on loan from the Canadian War Museum. A complementary display (*Arthur Lismer and the Drama of a City*, curated by Alan Ruffman) includes rare printed book and magazine illustrations from Arthur Lismer's on-the-spot drawings in the aftermath of the Explosion.

A large installation created by the Narratives in Space+Time Society (NiS+TS), is titled *Walking the Debris Field: Public Geographies of the Halifax Explosion*. There is also an exhibit of Hydrostone photographs (*Claire Hodge:*



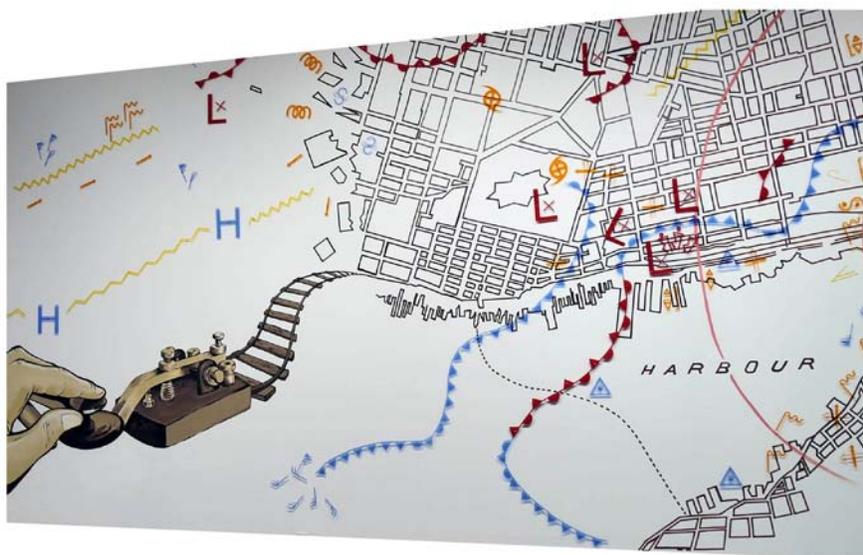
The Psychogeographer's Table, 2017, 17 collaborators and partner Dr Derek Reilly, Dalhousie University; CNC milled birch model surface with glass insert and base, data projector, and augmented-reality headset; NiS+TS Artifact and Image Collection (photo courtesy Dalhousie Art Gallery)

Negotiations, curated by Peter Dykhuis) and a digital project (*From 2D to 3D: Mapping Halifax over Time*, organized by

James Boxall). This multi-faceted and fascinating exhibit includes a wall-size map of the harbour narrows area created by the Blackbook Collective.

Particularly arresting is a 3D physical relief model of the peninsula, harbour, and Dartmouth shore, with maps and imagery through time projected from above. There is also a 3D motion display of the destruction from the explosion. It is projected on a wall of the gallery and, using the contours of the streets and land, it is as if you are flying in a drone back and forth over a Fire Insurance Map of the north end of the Peninsula. The Public Archives holds the Fire Insurance Plans, but this map is as large as an above-average living room wall. During your flight, you see buildings coloured according to how they made it through the Explosion. Those in blue were totally lost, those in red were badly damaged, and the orange ones somehow survived. Hope you get to see it.

-- Tony Edwards



Detail of Debris Field Mural, 2017, wall painting and Plexiglas weather overlay, collaboration with Blackbook Collective, showing the blast front (concentric circles centred on ground zero, just out of picture at right), various wandering weather fronts (perhaps symbolizing the chaotic aftermath and blizzard that followed the explosion), and an image recalling the last warning telegraph message from dispatcher Vincent Coleman (photo courtesy Dalhousie Art Gallery)

Schmidville: an Historic 'Great Neighbourhood'

The historic neighbourhood of Schmidville in downtown Halifax, soon to attain status as a Heritage Conservation District under the Heritage Property Act, has been named 'Great Neighbourhood in Canada 2017' by the Canadian Institute of Planners. Information is available at the Great Places website: http://greatplacesinCanada.ca/gpic_places/spring-garden-roadschmidville/.

The neighbourhood, one of the largest and oldest contiguous heritage areas in the province, dates back to the early 19th century, when Elizabeth Pedley and her husband, Christian Schmidt, a German captain in the British Army (Royal Artillery) raised six children on land Elizabeth inherited from her father, James Pedley, in 1807. Two adult daughters later lived in the c. 1814 cottages at 1314-1320 Birmingham Street (named for Elizabeth's father's birthplace). By 1830, Elizabeth was widowed and, in that year, subdivided the land to create one of Halifax's first 'suburbs' outside of the city's early fortified precinct.

The nomination to 'Great Places' was

submitted by William Breckenridge, who is the fourth generation of his family living in Schmidville and whose house on Clyde Street is a living museum of the district's architectural features.

The Canadian Institute of Planners, founded in 1919, represents 6700 planning professionals across the country. Schmidville won not only the 'People's Choice' vote, but also the award from the panel of planners. In its rationale, the Great Places jury wrote:

"The jury was won over by the multiple strengths of the neighbourhood – its walkability, unique reflection of local history, cohesive mix of residential and commercial uses, and the significant role it already plays as a Great Place in Halifax."

Past winning neighbourhoods include Inglewood in Calgary, Osborne Village in Winnipeg, Woodfield in London, and Downtown Amherstburg, Ontario.

– *Larry Haiven*

Explosion Narratives

For the past three years, the Narratives in Space+Time Society has been designing walks based on the Halifax Harbour Explosion. They have a free downloadable app to guide walkers. Similar material is available on their website (www.narrativesinspaceandtime.ca) and social media (www.facebook.com/narrativesinspaceandtimesociety).

On December 6, in addition to public ceremonies to remember the Explosion at Fort Needham in Halifax and Albro Lake Road in Dartmouth, NiS+TS collaborated in a ceremony on the Dartmouth shore at 09:04:35 to mark the 100th Anniversary of the moment the Explosion occurred. With members of Millbrook First Nation, other Mi'kmaq communities, students and staff from Shannon Park School, and members of Narratives in Space+Time Society, this honoured Turtle Grove and the Mi'kmaq villages along the Dartmouth shore, which were devastated in the Explosion of 1917. The ceremony took place on the shore near Nootka Avenue, Dartmouth, a part of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. This event was followed by a performance of Catherine Martin's short play "Turtle Grove" at the Shannon Park School. Thanks to Barbara Louder of the Narratives in Space+Time Society for alerting us to this event.



Cottages at 1314-1320 Birmingham Street in Schmidville (Griffin photo)

Building Number 4: the French Cable Wharf Building on the Dartmouth Waterfront

Vincent Myers

At the foot of Grove Street off Windmill Road in the north end of Dartmouth is a large concrete building with the words “Compagnie Française des Câbles Télégraphiques” embossed on the cornice¹. Labelled simply ‘Building Number 4’, it is currently occupied by Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC), a federal government organization providing science and technology expertise in support of Canada’s defence capabilities. The building was erected in 1916 by the French Cable Company for use as its Canadian headquarters. It served as a base of operations for its cable ships, notably the *CS Édouard Jéramec*, maintaining its telecommunication cables in the North Atlantic. The cable from Brest, France, to Cape Cod, Massachusetts, was laid in 1896 and extended to New York the following year. At the time, it was the longest cable span in the world.

“... a large concrete building with the words “Compagnie Française des Câbles Télégraphiques” embossed on the cornice”

In front of the building was the French Cable Wharf, where the ship would dock and thus the building came to be known as the ‘French Cable Wharf Building’. It was located, along with other industries, in an area called Turtle Grove (hence Grove Street), which in 1917 was directly in the blast radius of the Halifax Harbour Explosion. The area contained Oland’s Brewery, a rowing club, and a Mi’kmaw encampment. All were destroyed except for the French Cable Wharf Building, which survived because of its thick concrete walls and exceptional craftsmanship.

During World War II, the Royal Canadian Navy took over the lands of the French Cable Company, which had



Building No. 4 today, part of the Defence Research and Development Canada facilities at the foot of Grove Street; the façade faces the harbour and the embossed cornice inscription and year of construction are preserved and clearly visible with appropriate light and shadow (Griffin photo 2017)

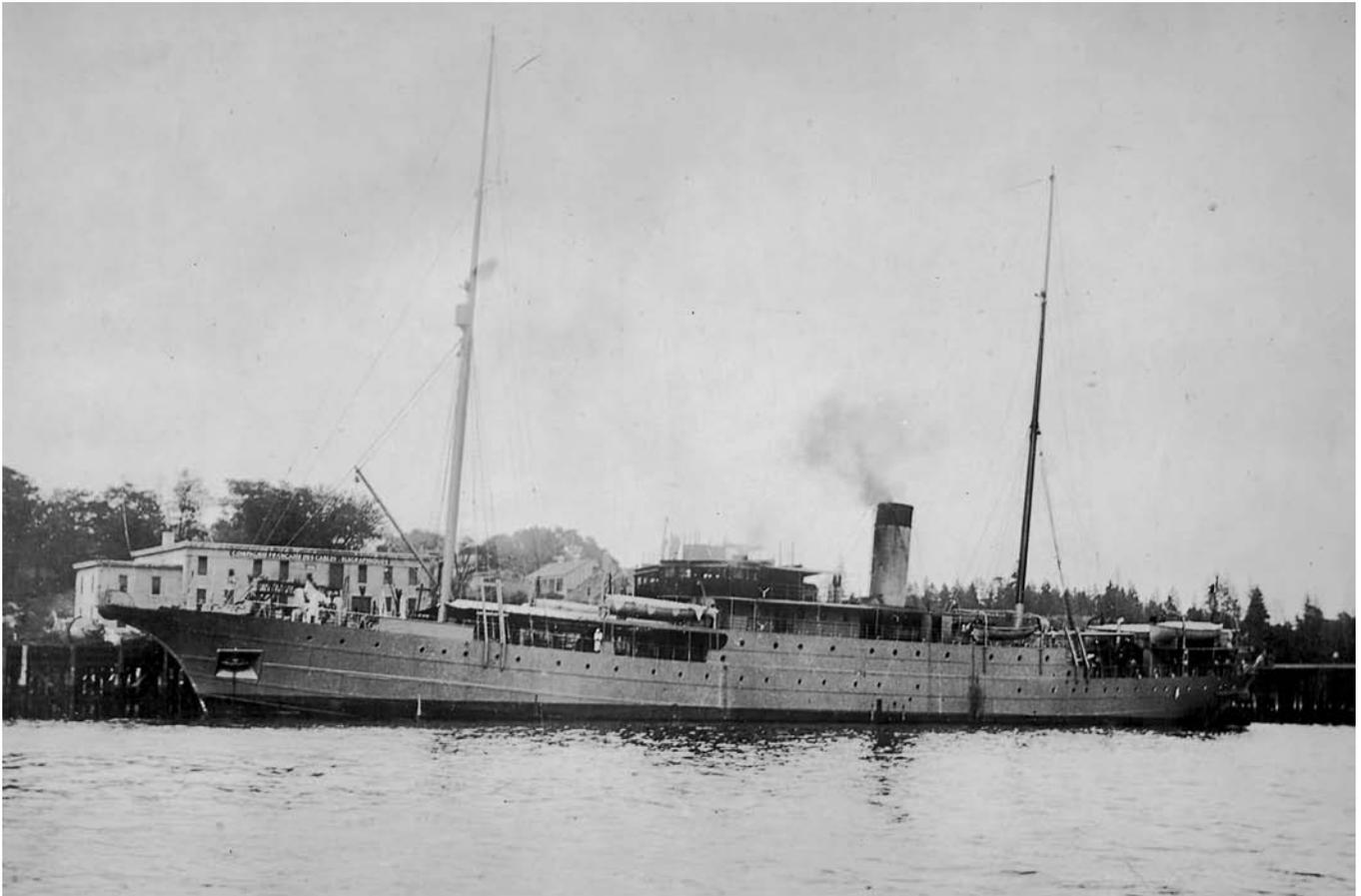
since sold off its interest after its cables were damaged in the 1929 Grand Banks Earthquake. The building was used by the Navy to maintain the Fairmile-B motor launches, which patrolled for German submarines, and after the war to support the Fleet Diving Unit. In 1975, it was taken over by the Defence Research Establishment Atlantic, the precursor to DRDC².

DREA used the building for storage and as a workshop to build advanced sensor arrays designed to find submarines during the Cold War. Building Number 4 was extensively renovated internally in 2002 and now holds offices and laboratories. Interestingly, two of the original concrete tanks built to store the submarine telegraph cables are now filled with water, one salt and one fresh, to test scientific equipment developed by DRDC. By the mid-2000s, the French Cable Wharf had fallen into disrepair and was demolished after concerns were raised about debris in the harbour following Hurricane Juan in 2003.

The building is a recognized federal heritage property, designated in 2000

for its historical significance as a survivor of the Halifax Harbour Explosion and because of its connection to the history of telecommunication development in Canada. Its façade, intact from the era of construction, includes several character-defining architectural details, including its functional design, “simple square massing with a projecting foundation base, cornice, and flat roof line, reinforced concrete construction and surviving exterior surface material, classical details such as the framing panelled corner pilasters, raised window trim, and moulding on the cornice”³ as well as the aforementioned embossed cornice inscription. Unfortunately, the demolition of the wharf compromised another of the character-defining elements contributing to its designation, “the manner in which Building No. 4 reinforces the character of its wharf setting”⁴.

Vincent Myers is a Defence Scientist at Defence Research and Development Canada and a long-time admirer of the French Cable Wharf Building, where he has worked since 2007.



CS Édouard Jéramec alongside at the French Cable Wharf, with the building in the background, date unknown (courtesy of the Marine History Collection, Nova Scotia Museum)

¹Sources include:

Cable Ships Exhibit, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic (Nova Scotia Museum), Halifax.

Ian K. Forsyth and Edith M. Rowlings, *A Goodly Heritage: Memories of North End Dartmouth, Early 1900s*. Dartmouth: Dartmouth Historical Association, 2002.

A.W. Griswold, *30 Views of the Dartmouth Disaster Showing Effects of Explosion December 6th 1917*. Commercial pamphlet (Nova Scotia Archives).

Janet Kitz and Joan Payzant, *December 1917: Revisiting the Halifax Explosion*. Halifax: Nimbus, 2006

²Thanks to Bob Sibley for some of the background research on the French Cable Wharf Building.

³Building No. 4, *Canada's Historic Places, a Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration*, <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=7843>

⁴Thanks to Roger Marsters, Curator of Marine History at the Nova Scotia Museum, for locating the historic photos accompanying this article.

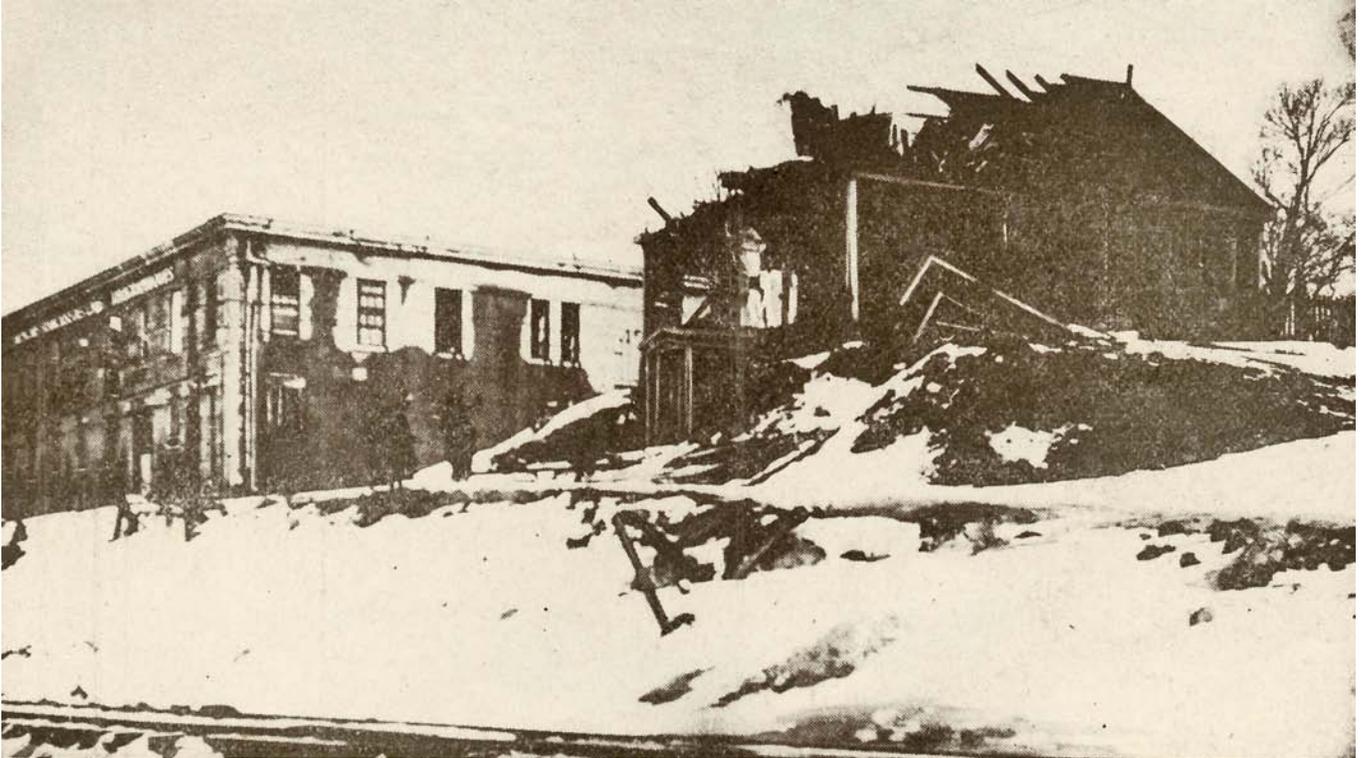
Text of this article is © Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada.



Interior of the French Cable Wharf Building, date unknown, showing cable tanks, two of which are still in use today for scientific testing (courtesy of the Marine History Collection, Nova Scotia Museum)



The French Cable Wharf Building shortly after construction, prior to the Explosion; date unknown, but would be either late fall 1916 or 1917 or before leaf-on in the spring of 1917; note paint on cornice inscription (courtesy of the Marine History Collection, Nova Scotia Museum)



Shortly after the Explosion, from Griswold's 30 Views of the Dartmouth Disaster Showing Effects of Explosion December 6th 1917 (courtesy Nova Scotia Archives)

Pre-1867 Nova Scotia Houses Associated with Fathers of Confederation



Grove Cottage 1838

Amherst, Cumberland Co.

Home of Robert Barry Dickey,
Father of Confederation

Grove Cottage, a Gothic Revival house on the hillside above the town of Amherst, was home for three generations of a family closely associated first with Nova Scotian, and then, Canadian politics.

Robert MacGowan Dickey was a Member of the Legislative Assembly, Justice of the Peace, and Lt. Col. of the militia. When his son, Robert Barry Dickey, was born in 1811, he was a fourth generation Nova Scotian, the descendant of New England Planters, Yorkshire and Scots immigrants.

R.B. Dickey studied law and practised in Amherst, served as a judge, and in 1858 was appointed to the Legislative Council of Nova Scotia. He represented the province at the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences on Confederation, and in 1867, was appointed to the Senate of the new nation. He served until his death in 1903.

After their wedding in 1844, Robert and his wife Mary Stewart Blair moved into Grove Cottage, with Robert's parents. They raised their own five children, and Robert added a side room for his law office. Their son James, an engineer, railway promoter, and later mayor of Amherst, inherited Grove Cottage. The house saw several owners after 1906, until the Cumberland County Historical Society purchased it in 1981 as the County Museum and Archives. Some of the original 14-acre estate became a well-treed public park allowing museum visitors to stroll through pleasant grounds among flowering shrubs and shady trees.

The romantic charm of Grove Cottage is as strong as ever. Two bay windows are placed to one side of the front door, and one window on the other side. A large dormer reaches out over the main door, and three smaller dormers from the upper storey. The hand-hewn beams fastened with mortise and tenon remain, as do the original brass doorknobs and fittings, and the fireplaces.

Municipal registration
Photo courtesy of John A. Hudson © 2017. Used with Permission



Henry House 1834

Halifax

Home of William Alexander Henry, Father
of Confederation

This sturdy ironstone house in the South Suburb was home to William Alexander Henry, one of the Fathers of Confederation, from 1860-1878.

John Metzler was a stone contractor working on the walls of the fourth (current) Citadel when he began buying land around 1821 in the area of Pleasant Street, the new southerly extension of Barrington Street. As a builder, he played a significant role in the area's development as a desirable residential district, not far from Government House, the hub of Halifax social life.

Henry, the son of an Antigonish timber merchant, was a member of the Legislature most of the years between 1840-1867, serving with both the Liberal and Conservative parties at various times. After the USA repealed the 1854 Reciprocity Treaty on international trade, Henry espoused Confederation, believing it would strengthen British intercolonial trade and defense, and enable a transcontinental railway. He attended all Confederation conferences, and was co-author of the British North America Act. Like most of his party, he was defeated in the next provincial election, but he became the first Nova Scotia Justice of the Supreme Court of the new nation.

The property passed through several hands before being sold to the Navy League of Canada in 1921. The League later built a large building next door as a permanent "Sailors' Home" for seamen ashore, and sold the old stone house. By the 1940s, it had fallen into disrepair, and, like many others nearby, was used as a rooming house.

In 1968 the property was sold to Dick Raymond and Jacques Ducau, who restored it, accessing the basement, uncovering fireplaces and blocked windows, and finally opening The Henry House as a restaurant and pub, which remains in operation to the present day.

Provincial designation and National Historic Site
Photos courtesy of Hal Gare

There are several surviving homes and other buildings in Nova Scotia, dating from before 1867, with links to Fathers of Confederation. Here are just a few panels from the Witnesses exhibit with photos and brief text about a selection of these important landmarks. See the last issue of *The Griffin*, v. 42, no.3 (September 2017) for more on this Canada 150 exhibit project.



Jonathan McCully House 1857
Home of Father of Confederation
Halifax

Jonathan McCully, born in Cumberland County in 1809, is known as one of the Fathers of Confederation. He was a prominent Halifax journalist who strongly advocated confederation in the various publications he edited: the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Scotian*, and later, the *Morning Journal*.

He served as a delegate to the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences and to the final conference at Westminster, when the British North America Act was signed. After Confederation he was called to the Senate of Canada, and, in 1870, was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.

The two and a half storey brick house in the fashionable North suburb was recently built when McCully bought it in 1863. He remained here with his family until his death in 1877.

The stuccoed façade includes a number of classically inspired elements, such as corner quoins, keystones over the windows, a carefully detailed, shallow entry portico with columns and a triangular pediment with brackets at the level of the eaves. The truncated gable roof has two of the traditional Nova Scotia five sided Scottish dormers. The rear elevation has a two level bowed extension, a feature often seen at the rear of large British townhouses and country mansions. A decorative wrought-iron fence sets the building off from the sidewalk.

The Jonathan McCully House is a fine example of a mid-19th century Italianate townhouse. It has been carefully restored and now houses a film postproduction studio.

National Historic Site
 Photo courtesy of Hal Oare



Adams-Ritchie House ca. 1713
Annapolis Royal, Annapolis Co.
Home of John William Ritchie,
Father of Confederation

The Adams-Ritchie House has played a central role in Nova Scotia's political history. Its wattle-and-daub ground storey was the meeting place for the Executive Council while Annapolis Royal was the capital of Nova Scotia. Later, the house was the birthplace of a Father of Confederation, John William Ritchie. John Adams, a native of Boston who participated in the 1710 capture of Annapolis from the French, went on to become a successful merchant and member of the Executive Council for the new English colony. When Scottish-born John Ritchie bought the building in 1781, he added a second storey and Georgian features. Ritchie's son Thomas later became a Member of the Legislative Assembly and provincial judge. Thomas' son William, born here in 1808, became clerk of the Executive Council in 1837; he was appointed to the Council in 1864, replaced R.B. Dickie as government leader in the upper house, and attended the 1866 London Conference in his stead.

Later a Victorian façade and third storey were added. In 1980, the Annapolis Royal Development Commission undertook a preservation initiative, during which the façade was returned to its late 18th century appearance.

The house is one of Canada's earliest wood frame buildings and one of very few remaining with wattle and daub infill in the walls, some of which is still visible. After painstaking restoration, the house vividly demonstrates the evolution of Annapolis Royal architecture since 1713.

Provincial designation
 Photo courtesy of Lois Jenkins, Annapolis Heritage Society

When the War Came Home: a Dartmouth Perspective on the 1917 Harbour Explosion

Liam Caswell

The following article is based on a talk given by the author in the Heritage Trust's illustrated public lecture series in September 2017.

At approximately 8:45 on the morning of December 6th, 1917, the French munitions ship *Mont Blanc* collided with the Norwegian steamer *Imo* in the narrows of Halifax Harbour. This collision touched off a tragic series of events which culminated in one of the largest and, in property damage and death toll, most devastating man-made explosions prior to the American atomic bombing of Hiroshima in August 1945. In the wake of this cataclysmic explosion, the stunned populations of Halifax and Dartmouth were faced with shattered communities with approximately 2000 citizens killed and thousands more injured and homeless. In most conventional historiography, the story of Halifax looms quite large in the narrative surrounding the 1917 explosion. Of

course, this is not without justification, as Halifax's North End did bear the brunt of the blast and the majority of those injured and killed were either residents of the peninsula or were on that side of the harbour when the blast occurred. That said, given the relative size of Dartmouth and its population, the explosion's effects on that community should not be ignored or relegated to a footnote in the history surrounding the explosion and its aftermath. This article gives a brief account of the way in which the explosion profoundly shook the foundations of Dartmouth and its citizens, as well as some examples of the perseverance shown by Dartmouth's residents in the disaster's aftermath.

Although not nearly as industrialized or populous as Halifax, by the outbreak of the First World War in the summer of 1914, Dartmouth had enjoyed two decades of gradual population expansion and economic development. Boasting a population of 6000, and home to such small but lucrative industrial enterprises as the Consumers Cordage Company,

Oland's Brewery, and Starr Manufacturing, Dartmouthians could generally claim that, despite the economic troubles which plagued the Maritime Provinces at the turn of the century, their community was on the rise. As in other British conflicts in the past, the First World War signalled the possibility of an even greater economic boost as soldiers, sailors, and war workers flooded into the area, offering new opportunities to merchants, hoteliers, and other, perhaps more illicit entrepreneurs on both sides of the harbour. In fact, it was during the First World War that Dartmouth gained another highly valuable industry, as the Imperial Oil Company began construction on a new refinery in Woodside.

"... home to such small but lucrative industrial enterprises as the Consumers Cordage Company, Oland's Brewery, and Starr Manufacturing, Dartmouthians could generally claim that ... their community was on the rise"



Woman and dog at the intersection of King and Queen streets, Dartmouth, c.1910, looking northwest with the spire of Grace Methodist Church in the background and the hill above the junction of North and King streets in the distance (courtesy of Dartmouth Heritage Museum)

Given the ways in which the citizens of Dartmouth and Halifax had benefited from the war, it was ironic that this increased activity would precipitate the tragic events of December 6, 1917.

When the *Mont Blanc* exploded at approximately 9:05 am, the area in Dartmouth most directly affected was its predominantly industrial North End. Dartmouth's population was primarily centred in the downtown core, but the destruction in the North End had a number of tragic consequences. Important among these was the short- and long-term damage to the Mi'kmaw community at Tufts Cove. With their homes destroyed and several dead, this community was coerced by the Dominion Government to resettle at a location distant from the places where they had been living and harvesting lo-



Ruins of Oland's Brewery in Turtle Grove, after the explosion (courtesy of Dartmouth Heritage Museum)



A collapsed home in Dartmouth's North End (courtesy of Dartmouth Heritage Museum)

cal resources for a very long time.

As well as wiping out one of the last remaining indigenous communities located around Chebucto, the devastation heaped upon North End Dartmouth severely damaged some of its industrial base. Although many of Dartmouth's notable manufacturers, such as Starr Manufacturing ("Sole Makers of Genuine Acme Skates") and Mott's Confectionery, were located downtown and thus escaped with relatively little damage, Oland's Brewery and the Consumers Cordage Company in the North End bore the brunt of the blast. The brewery, located on the Dartmouth shoreline in an area known as Turtle Grove, suffered nearly complete collapse, resulting in the deaths of several employees. Remarkably, the adjacent and almost new French Cable Wharf Building survived the explosion (see accompanying article). Another Oland employee, William Dumaesq, was killed in his Tuft's Cove home, along with two of his sons. The cordage factory, being located farther from the shore, fared a bit better but still had its entire roof ripped off and glass was blown in from every window. Flying glass accounted for a number of workers injured, including a 68 year old machinist named Arthur Millard, who would later succumb to his wounds. Although the cordage factory would eventually be rebuilt and put back into operation, the destruction to the brewery was so thorough that the Oland family decided to move their entire operation to Halifax. The devastation done to these Dartmouth industries signaled the end of Dartmouth's gradual industrial ascent and marked a new, decades long, period of decline in the community's economic infrastructure.

"Oland's Brewery ... located on the Dartmouth shoreline in an area known as Turtle Grove, suffered nearly complete collapse, resulting in the deaths of several employees"

While the most severe effects were in Dartmouth's sparsely populated North End, the magnitude of the blast

meant that Dartmouth's downtown also suffered damage and casualties on a large scale. As in Halifax, most wounds suffered in downtown Dartmouth were due to shattered glass, as many citizens had gathered at their windows to get a better view of the *Mont Blanc* burning in the harbour. The injuries ranged from superficial to fatal, and quite a few victims found themselves permanently blinded by glass in their eyes. Compounding the crisis was the fact that Dartmouth did not possess a proper medical facility aside from the Nova Scotia Hospital which was, and still is, an institution specializing in the treatment of mental illness. For this reason, it fell upon Dartmouth's general practitioners to offer the medical assistance urgently needed across the community. The dedication and fortitude of these Dartmouth practitioners was exemplified by Dr Dickson who, when told that there was a risk that his Queen Street home would collapse, brought his kitchen table out into the street and invited the walking wounded to have a seat on the table in order to have their wounds cleaned and dressed. A line soon formed down the street and Dickson would find himself working six hours without rest before the crowds dispersed.

"Dartmouth's downtown also suffered damage and casualties on a large scale"

The employees of the Dartmouth Ferry Service, understanding that all other modes of communication between Halifax and Dartmouth were down, worked tirelessly to keep the ferry service operating throughout the entirety of the crisis. Although employees were allowed a small window of leave to check on their families and households, nearly all promptly returned to work. This meant that, despite having one of their vessels put out of commission by the tsunami resulting from the explosion, the ferry service never slackened. Through their work, those living in Dartmouth could check on the well-being of family and friends on the other side of

the harbour.

In all, 100 citizens of Dartmouth were killed in the 1917 harbour explosion, their bodies being transported to the temporary mortuaries located in the two Dartmouth landmarks of Greenvale School and Edgemere House. Though eclipsed by the number of people killed on the Halifax side, this death toll, coupled with the destruction of property, was a huge blow to the then small Town of Dartmouth. Recorded above are only a few of the ways in which Dartmouth and its citizens were profoundly affected by the *Mont Blanc's* explosion. In retrospect, given the sudden nature and immensity of the disaster, it is amazing how the citizens of Dartmouth were able to rally and throw their collective efforts into the stabilization and eventual repair of their shattered community. As the centenary of the harbour explosion is upon us, it is to be hoped that, while we remember the immense tragedy that befell those living on the Halifax side of the harbour, the loss and perseverance of Dartmouth's citizens in the disaster will also be acknowledged and commemorated.

Liam Caswell is a Graduate Student finishing his Master's Thesis in the Department of History at Dalhousie University. As well as maintaining an historical academic focus, Liam has lived his entire life in Dartmouth and has spent the last five summers working as a heritage interpreter at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

Sources: Special thanks for the information in Harry Chapman's book *The Halifax Harbour Explosion: Dartmouth's Day of Sorrow*, as well as the resources provided by the Dartmouth Heritage Museum, whose exhibit *Explosion! Dartmouth's Ordeal of the 1917 Disaster* provided much of the inspiration for both this article and its associated talk.

GRANTS

HTNS Buildings-at-Risk Grants

Peter Delejes

The Heritage Trust has recently awarded grants for restoration work on two buildings, the Uniacke Union Church in Mt Uniacke, and the Knaut-Rhuland House Museum in Lunenburg.

The Uniacke Union Church was erected in 1831 for use as a school. Later it took on the additional duty as a Meeting House and place of worship. Over time, a number of denominations made use of the building. Regular church services ended in 1974. In 1984, the Association of Trustees for the Union Church was formed to preserve the building from decay and refurbish it for use by the community. In 1990 it became a Municipal Heritage Property. It is now the oldest building in the area outside the Uniacke Estate. By 2015 the building had become unusable as it had shifted on its foundation which had deteriorated. A new foundation was needed. In 2015, when the late Phil Pacey was Chair of the Buildings-at-Risk Committee, the Heritage Trust agreed to provide a grant of \$3560 towards the building of a new foundation. Funding was also provided by the Trustees, the province, the municipality and a private donor. In September 2017, the building was raised and a new foundation was installed by a company owned by Sheldon Rushton. Total cost of the project was \$32,000. The Uniacke Union Church has now been stabilized and will continue to serve as a venue for community events.

The Knaut-Rhuland House, 125 Pelham St, Lunenburg, is a museum owned and operated by the Lunenburg Heritage Society. It is a National Historic Site and a provincially and municipally registered building. It is valued for its age, architectural style, and for its association with some of the early merchants of Lunenburg. It was built in 1794 and thus is one of the early structures in Lunenburg. It takes its name from its first two owners, Benjamin Knaut, a



Uniacke Union Church on new foundation (courtesy of the Uniacke Union Church Trustee Association)



Knaut-Rhuland House, Lunenburg (Griffin photo)

merchant and privateer, and Conrad Rhuland, a trader in Lunenburg.

In September, the Heritage Trust awarded a grant of \$2000 to the Lunenburg Heritage Society for work on the two chimneys on the Knaut-Rhuland House. The two brick chimneys, along with the flashings, had deteriorated causing water infiltration into the attic, damaging the interior plaster ceilings. On October 16, the firm of Able Masonry

and Design repointed the two brick chimneys above the roof and repaired the flashings at the roof intersection. The damaged bricks were replaced with new identical bricks and the deteriorated joints were cut out and new mortar of identical colour was installed. Total cost of the project was \$3400. The Lunenburg Heritage Society covered the balance of the cost.

Adaptive Re-Use Proposals

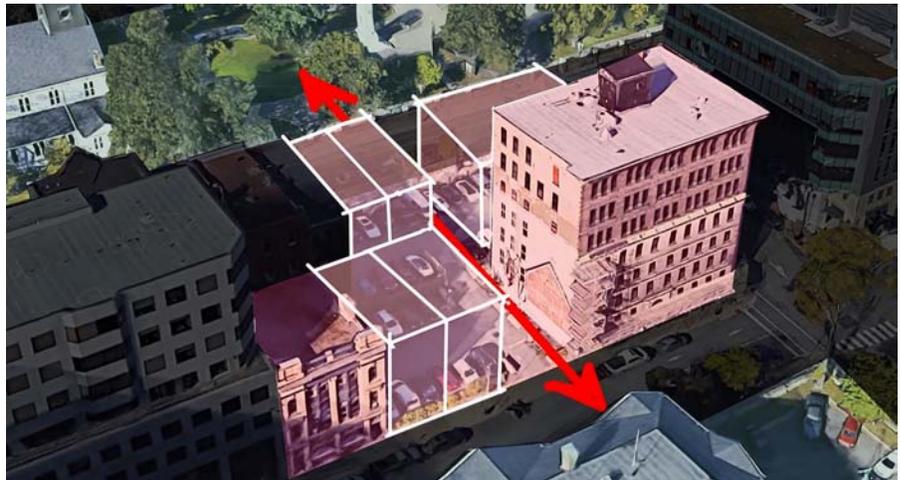
Over the past four months, we've been delighted to have two young, enthusiastic women join our team at the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and bring new ideas to the table. Laura LeGresley, a recent graduate of Willowbank School of Restoration Arts (<http://willowbank.ca/wpdir/>), and Sara LeBlanc, a current student at Dalhousie School of Architecture, worked together to study several at-risk heritage buildings in the province and complete adaptive re-use design proposals to provide beneficial alternatives to demolition.

Most of these adaptive re-use proposals consisted of a site study and background research to determine the unique values that were to be preserved while reconfiguring the building to accommodate new uses, new layouts, and modern requirements. A design layout was then established, highlighting the character and heritage value. Projects varied from the United Memorial Church, which was proposed to be demolished to make way for a seven-storey condominium in a residential area, to the Dennis Building, a site with a somewhat uncertain future but a prime location.

During their time with the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, Laura and Sara were able to attend the Art of City-Building Conference. This engaged people from all over the world to contribute to the development of a shared vision for Halifax, honouring the past and inspiring new ideas. Andrew Murphy, VP Finance for the Trust, presented "A Business Case for Heritage" at the Pecha Kucha session of this conference.

The team had the chance to present their work at the 2017 Nova Scotia Heritage Conference in Halifax and received very positive feedback.

Illustrations accompanying this note relate to concepts for adaptive re-use of the Dennis Building on Granville Street across from Province House. In future issues we hope to feature additional results from the adaptive re-use projects completed by this team of young professionals.



Concept for adaptive re-use of the Dennis Building, with pedestrian walkway from Grand Parade and Barrington Street to Granville Street and Province House (roof at bottom) (image courtesy Laura LeGresley and Sara LeBlanc)



Section through potential residential units in the Dennis Building (image courtesy Laura LeGresley and Sara LeBlanc)



L-R: Laura LeGresley, Brent Schmidt (recent Dalhousie Architecture graduate), and Sara LeBlanc chat at a break in the 2017 Nova Scotia Heritage Conference (<http://nsheritage.ca>), where Laura and Sara presented their work for the Trust on repurposing buildings considered to be at risk in Halifax (photo courtesy Laura LeGresley)

Newfoundland Lifetime Achievement Award for Ruth Canning

In October, Ruth Canning, a member of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, was awarded the Duff-O'Dea Lifetime Achievement Award from the Newfoundland Historic Trust at their Southcott Awards ceremony in St John's NL. This award recognizes an individual who has made an exceptional contribution over a period of 25 years or more to heritage conservation in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ruth was Vice President of the Newfoundland Historic Trust from 1983 to 1986, became President in 1986 to 1987, and Vice President again from 1987 to 1989. She was appointed by the provincial government in 1997 to the Board of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and served as Board Chair from 2000 to 2003.



Photo courtesy Ruth Canning

At the national level, Ruth was an elected member of the Board of Directors of Heritage Canada from 1984 to 1995, during which time she served a term as Vice Chair and a member of the Executive Committee.

A strong advocate for heritage district designation, Ruth was instrumental in the designation in 2003 of the Registered Heritage District of Tilting under the Provincial Historic Resources Act. She also played an important role in the designation of the St John's Ecclesiastical District by the city in 2005 and as a National Historic Site in 2008.

Among the city's real estate agents, Ruth was a pioneer in recognizing and promoting the intrinsic value of heritage homes and of downtown living. We are honoured to count this distinguished advocate for heritage conservation in Newfoundland and Labrador as a member of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and offer our sincere congratulations on her lifetime achievement award.

— Beverly Miller

NEWS

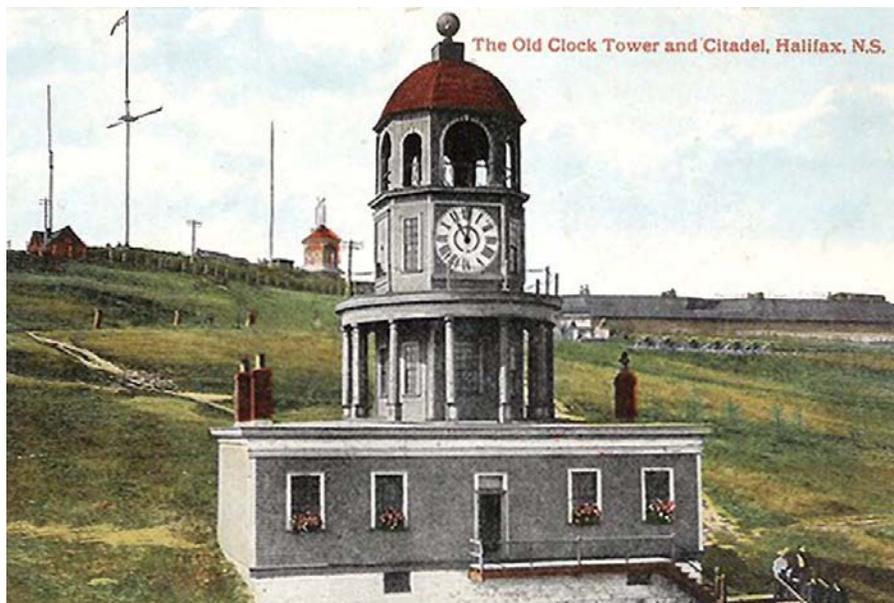
Maintaining an Iconic Structure: the Halifax Town Clock

The Halifax Town Clock, designed in 1801 by order of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, is perhaps the most iconic structure in Halifax. The clock mechanism has been operating since 20 October 1803.

A Classified Federal Heritage Structure, it was largely rebuilt by Parks Canada in the early 1960s as a "very faithful reconstruction" of the original, using "skilled traditional craftsmanship and quality

materials ... [reflecting] an overall attention to detail".¹

In the Spring of 2017, several members of Heritage Trust met with Parks Canada officials at Citadel Hill to discuss the Trust's concerns that inappropriate materials were being specified for use in a tender prepared for maintenance and repair of the clock building. Following that meeting, Parks Canada cancelled their tender and promised to re-evaluate the specifications for the work. We have recently received confirmation that a tradesman is repairing, rather than replacing, the wooden windows; and that the revised project will see the columns, windows, and trim repaired or replaced in wood to existing specifications. Our colleagues at Parks Canada have been gracious in accommodating our concerns and we look forward to receiving a further update when the project reaches the 66% complete stage.



A postcard image of the Halifax Town Clock at the foot of Citadel Hill, as it would have looked during the First World War.

¹Canada's Historic Places, <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=4260&pid=0>

Programs Sponsored by Other Societies

Colchester Historem

29 Young Street, Truro
Anna Swan and P.T. Barnum, lecture by Dale Swan: January 25, 7:30 pm.
Dawson Lecture, presented by the Little White Schoolhouse Museum: March 22, 7:30 pm.
colchesterhistorem.ca

Hammonds Plains Historical Society

Open House with display and presentation, January 28, Hammonds Plains Community Centre, 2041 Hammonds Plains Road.
hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

Nova Scotia Archaeology Society

Lectures held at Burke Theatre A, Saint Mary's University, Halifax.
The Earth is a Vast Cemetery: The Halifax Methodist Burying Ground, lecture by Courtney Glen: January 23, 7:30 pm.
The Road from Halifax to Windsor: Origins and Evolutions of a Place, lecture by Colin Hicks: February 27, 7:30 pm.
A Material History of the Early Eighteenth-Century Fishery in Canso, NS, lecture by Adrian Morrison: March 27, 7:30 pm.
nsarchaeology.com

Queens County Museum

109 Main Street, Liverpool
Festival of Trees and Dickensville, exhibit featuring modern and vintage-themed Christmas trees and décor, partnered with the village of Dickensville: until December 23.
queenscountymuseum.com

Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society

Public lectures held at Nova Scotia Archives, 6016 University Avenue, Halifax.
City's Saviours: the Military Response to the Halifax Explosion, lecture by Col. John Boileau (Ret'd): December 13, 7:30 pm.
Ordinary People; Extraordinary Times: Minnie and Stewart Ross Confront the Aftermath of the Halifax Explosion, lecture by David Sutherland: January 17, 7:30 pm.
The Third Jamaican Contingent and the 'Halifax Incident of 1916', lecture by Hyacinth Simpson: February 21, 7:30 pm.
The 'Plague Houses' in Cape Breton, lecture by Ken Murray: March 21, 7:30 pm.
www.rnshs.ca

Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

Illustrated Public Lecture Series

Thursday January 18

Andrew Murphy, Laura LeGresley, and Sara LeBlanc
The Business Case for Heritage

Thursday February 15

Sharon Murray
**Picturing Progress: How Photography
Changed the Face of Halifax, 1950s-1960s**

All talks take place at 7:30 pm

Museum of Natural History Auditorium
1747 Summer Street, Halifax
Access from visitor's parking lot
Information: 423-4807

Locations of subject matter in this issue

