OCA
OTTAWA CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

125 Years of Building Our City

Ottawa's construction history in photos

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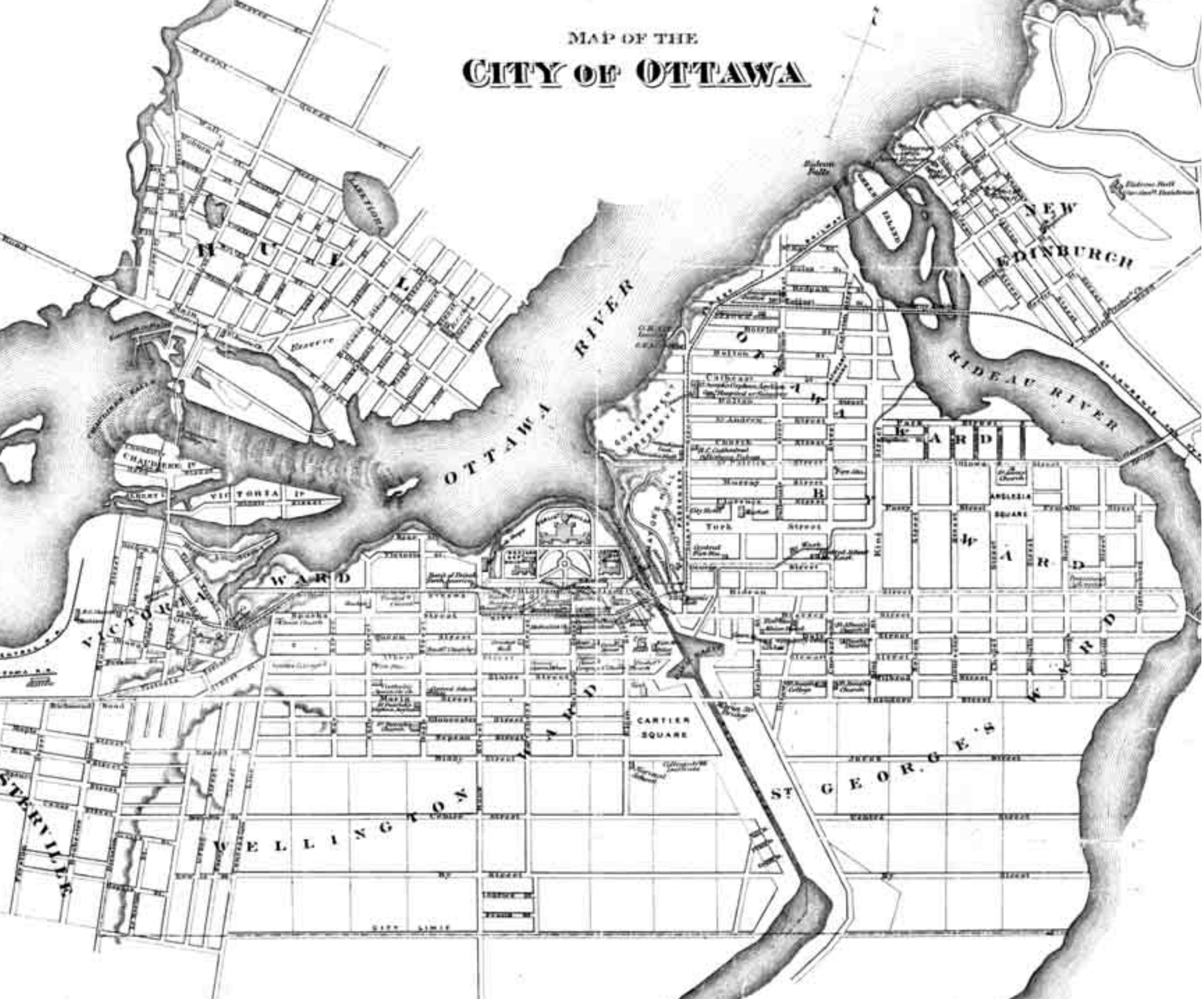
MAP OF THE
CITY OF OTTAWA
HULL
OTTAWA RIVER
RIDEAU RIVER
NEW EDINBURGH
WARD
WARD
WARD
WARD
VICTORIA
CHAUDIERE
CARTIER SQUARE
WELLINGTON
ST GEORGE'S
STERVILLE

125 Years of Building Our City

**This book is dedicated to the men and women of Ottawa's construction industry.
You are the ones who cut the stones, pour the concrete, frame the walls, snip the tin,
pull the cables, drive the nails, turn the screws, lay the carpets and test the systems.
Without you, Ottawa could never have become the world-class city it is today.
The Ottawa Construction Association is proud to celebrate your achievements.**

Map of the City of Ottawa, 1874. Photo courtesy Library and Archives Canada n0004239

125 Years of Building Our City

Ottawa's construction history in photographs

James Raiswell

Piers used in the building of the Alexandra Bridge, Ottawa region, Ontario.
Photo by W. Harmer, 1891, Canadian Museum of History, PR2004-010.27.1-59

Produced in 2014 by the Ottawa Construction Association
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125 YEARS OF BUILDING OUR CITY

THEN AND NOW

FOREWORD

The backdrops to the history of our city

Jim Watson
Mayor / Maire

When we think of Ottawa and its history, we instinctively think of the country's founding in 1867. That was the year our country was born and as the capital city it makes sense to think of our city, as well as our country, as we near its 150th birthday.

Look a little a deeper and you will see that it is not that simple and we are not so young. We are in fact closer to celebrating our 200th birthday than our 150th. Bytown, as Ottawa was initially called, was established in 1826 as a settlement for those first workers who set out to build a secure route between Kingston and Montreal. Designed by the city's namesake, Colonel John By, what would come to be known as the Rideau Canal was an incredible feat of engineering and construction whose continued longevity makes it all the more awe-inspiring.

Our city was founded around one remarkable construction project and our history is filled with many others. You hear about them as hosts to both famous and infamous people (the Chateau Laurier), the setting for pivotal moments in our history (the Parliament Buildings), or the gathering point for our troops before leaving for the First World War (the Aberdeen Pavilion). In these stories, they are the backdrops. They are the stage on which the story is told but their existence is taken as a given. Yet when you peel back a layer or two, the history of how these buildings came to be is often as interesting as the stories they went on to tell.

Did you ever wonder why the Chateau Laurier bears that name? It might have something to do with the fact that Major's Hill Park, on which the hotel stands, would not have allowed a hotel had the late Sir Wilfred Laurier not personally intervened.

Ever wonder why there are so many people of Irish descent in Ottawa? Colonel John By may have had a brilliant vision for a canal but he could not build it alone. Thousands of Irish immigrants made up the majority of the workforce that built Ottawa's Rideau Canal and their influence on our city's history has been significant ever since.

These are a few of the many examples of the history of construction in Ottawa. It is a long history full of colourful characters, grand visions, and many highs and lows along the way. I am proud to be Mayor of this great city and thrilled to see that the history of how it was built is being told in this book.

Jim Watson
Mayor
City of Ottawa

Acknowledgements

A book is like a building. The assembly of both must proceed with the benefit of a bold vision, clear specifications and a team of dedicated and passionate craftspeople. This project, happily, is the product of those great elements.

Those who deserve credit for such a bold vision: the management and directors of the Ottawa Construction Association.

The clear specifications for the design, content and tone of the finished product were articulated by the members of a committee of eight.

Materials (in the form of archival photographs that dates as far back as the 1830s) were supplied by local and national archivists, as well as a number of public- and private-sector enterprises.

Finally, three craftsmen helped bring this project together: a writer, a photographer and a graphic designer. All played important roles in drafting the blueprints, constructing the shell and adding the finishes to this beautiful publication. All deserve our thanks.

Members of the 2014 Ottawa Construction Association Board of Directors

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The Board of Directors also wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the late Jeffrey R. Clarke who passed away in March 2014 before he could assume the chairmanship of our association.

INTRODUCTION

We remember the builders of our city

Ottawa is a remarkable city. Throughout its history, it has demonstrated a capacity for transformation. Our first industry was agriculture. Then it was logging. Then government. Today, we are so much more. True, elements of all these industries remain: farms, timber mills, monuments to national heroes, but our industry base is more diversified now than it ever has been. World-class facilities for academics, high-technology manufacturing, and sports and entertainment rub shoulders with the buildings that founded our city.

Underlying such change is a constant: construction. Masons, architects, carpenters, engineers and contractors of all backgrounds, nationalities and disciplines have resolutely, proudly and capably assembled the buildings, roads, bridges and parks that we acknowledge today as Ottawa's landmarks. Sadly, history often overlooks the contributions of these men and women. Look at the records of construction associated with some of the city's most noteworthy landmarks: the Parliament Buildings, the Nicholas Street Gaol, Confederation Square. All in some way pay tribute to the brilliance of their respective designers; none celebrate the enduring achievements of their builders.

This book celebrates construction. It celebrates the history of building in our great town. It celebrates the raw beauty of half-assembled structures. More than these, it celebrates the contributions of the men and women who picked up tools and shovels and hammers, who toiled day and night through snow and swamp and summer heat, and who risked—and occasionally lost—their lives to get the job done.

On behalf of the Ottawa Construction Association and the Contractors & Builders Association of Ottawa that came before it, thank you for your contributions. They were, still are and always will be invaluable.

Paul McCarney
Chairman
2014 OCA Board of Directors

John DeVries
President & General Manager
Ottawa Construction Association

125 Years of Building Our City

A look at the history of construction of Ottawa's most famous structures

Aberdeen Pavilion

Lansdowne Park

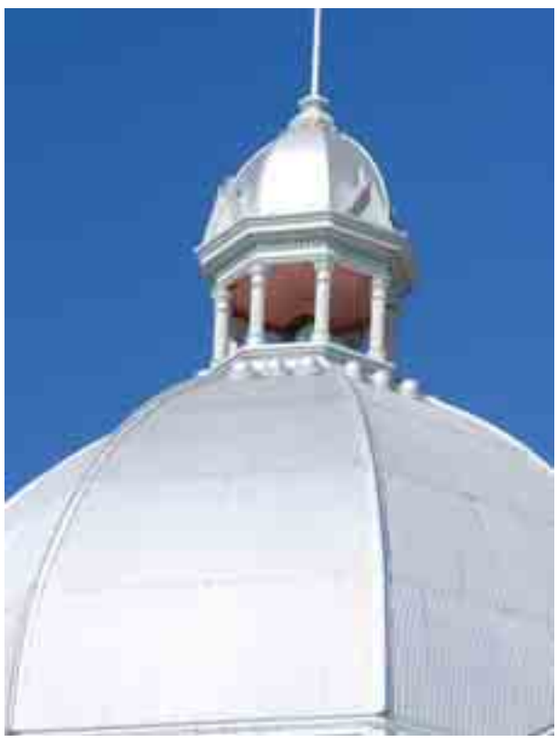
Built as a grand exhibition hall and opened on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Central Canada Exhibition in 1898, the Aberdeen Pavilion was hailed for its beauty and function. Local architect Moses C. Edey designed the building at the request of the exhibition association. His approach: balance a simple structural interior that offered wide-open exhibition spaces with an ornate exterior façade. His design, therefore, incorporated a prefabricated structural-steel truss frame structure that allowed for massive interior spaces, as well as an exterior cladding of pressed metal panels, corner cupolas and a stately dome.

The design is particularly significant for its ease of execution. The Dominion Bridge Company manufactured the materials for the structure and erected the pavilion in just two months for a fee of $75,000.

Since its founding, the pavilion has gone on to perform many roles: a showcase building for the annual exhibition, a community skating rink, and a base of operations for various military regiments in wartime. Although designated a heritage structure in the 1980s, the pavilion fell into serious disrepair. It was narrowly saved from the wrecking ball in 1991 and thoroughly renovated in 1994. The pavilion today is one of the many focal points of the newly revitalized Lansdowne Park.

Did you know?

The pavilion is the only surviving 19th-century large-scale exhibition building in Canada. It is also one of the oldest indoor ice hockey venues in the world.



Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology

1385 Woodroffe Avenue

Algonquin College was founded in 1966 when the Eastern Ontario Institute of Technology merged with the Ontario Vocational Centre. It became an official college a year later.

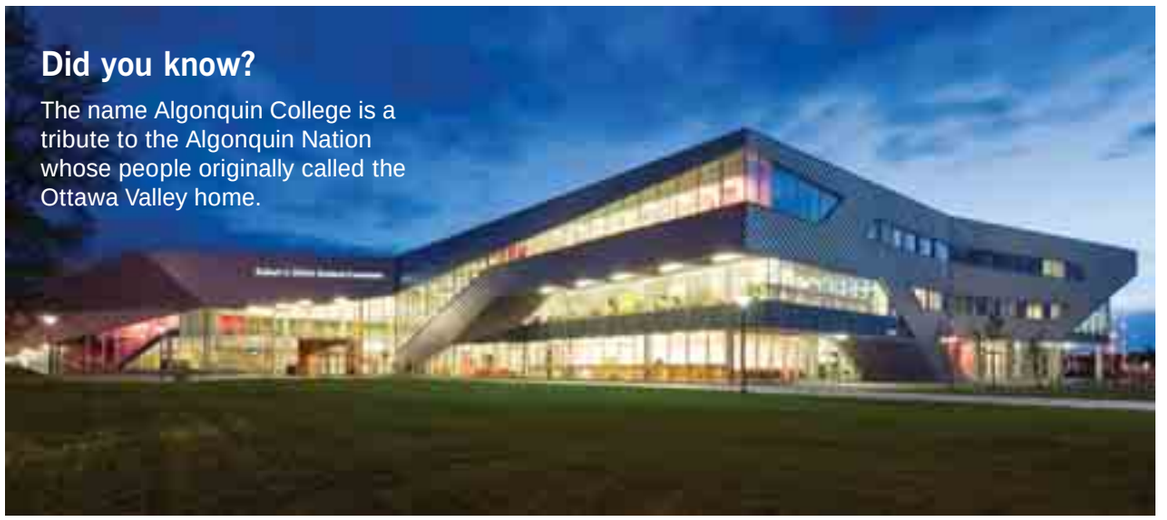
Almost immediately, Algonquin gained a reputation for training in many construction-related trades: welding and carpentry chief among them. In each decade since its founding, the college expanded its facilities and service offerings to accommodate demand.

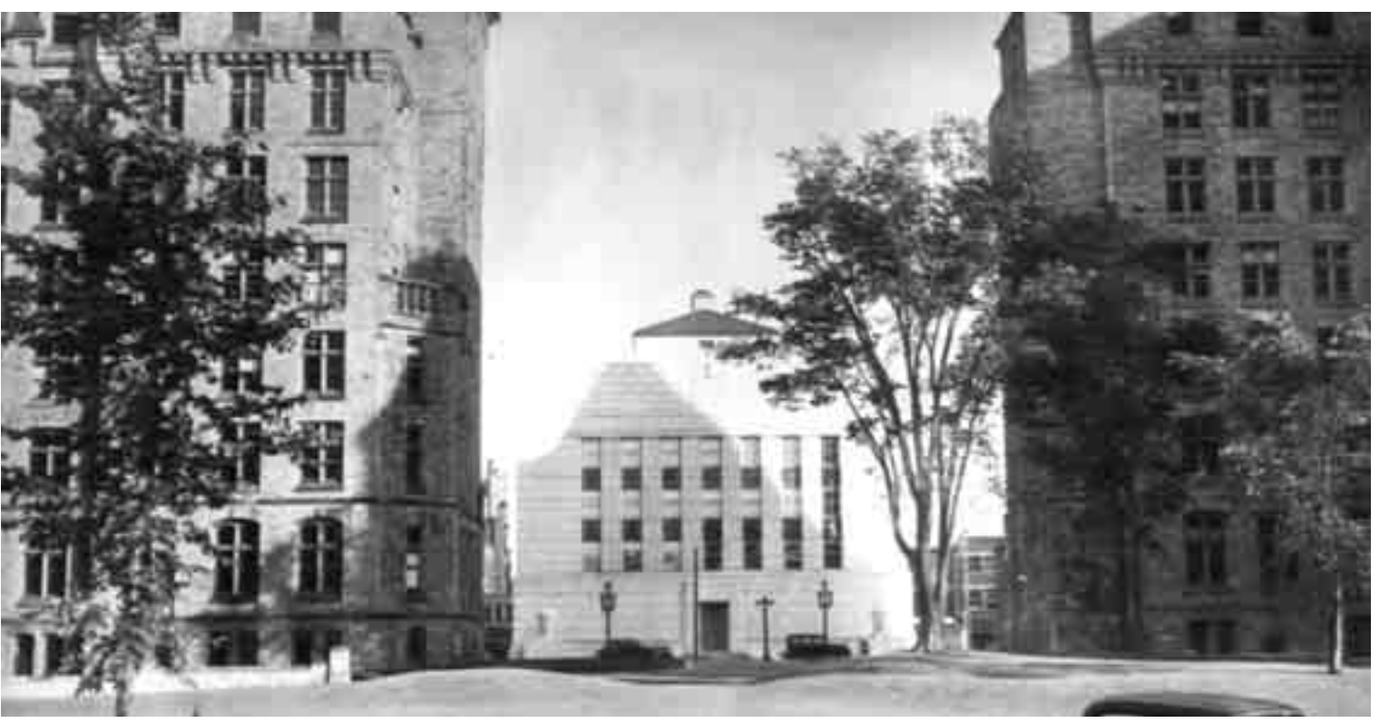
Today, the college serves more than 50,000 full- and part-time students and offers more than 180 programs. The jewel of the college's Woodroffe Avenue campus is undoubtedly the Algonquin Centre for Construction Excellence (ACCE), a facility that opened in 2011 and united the college's 2,500 full-time construction and design students under one roof.

The ACCE building, as it is known, was funded in part by more than $7 million in contributions from the Ottawa Construction Association and many of its members and companion associations. EllisDon Corporation built the ACCE building. It is one of a very few in Ottawa to carry the LEED Platinum designation for sustainable design and efficient energy use.

Did you know?

The name Algonquin College is a tribute to the Algonquin Nation whose people originally called the Ottawa Valley home.





Bank of Canada Building

234 Wellington Street

The Bank of Canada first opened its doors in 1935 at the Victoria Building on the corner of Wellington and O'Connor streets. Less than a year later, it became clear to staff and management that the facility was too small.

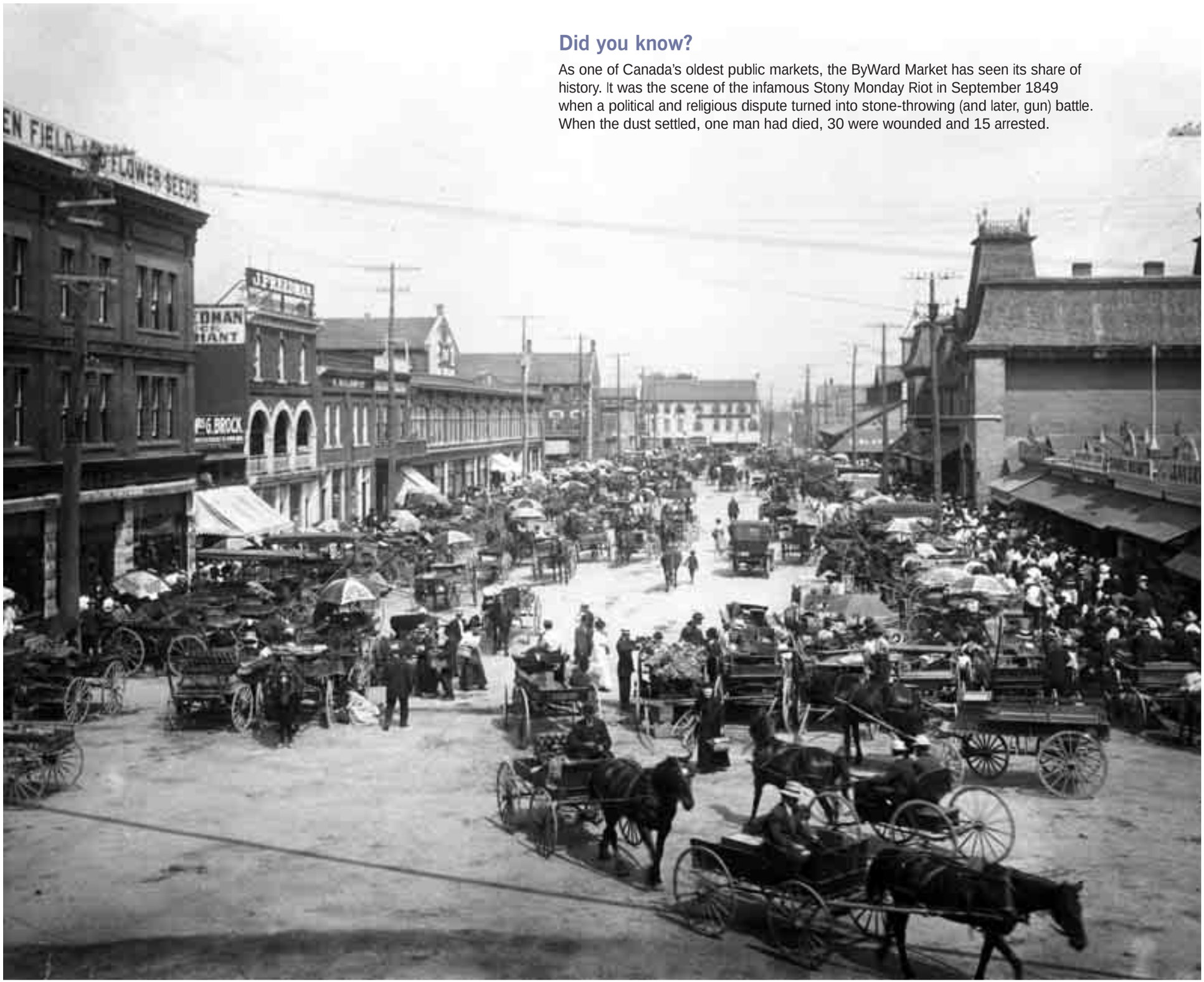
Construction of a second home for the bank began in 1937 and lasted a year. Hamilton's Piggott Construction Company acted as general contractor with support from numerous trades companies from Ottawa, southern Ontario and Quebec.

Although the bank outgrew this new space in fewer than ten years, construction of an expanded bank building did not begin until well into the 1970s. When work was completed in 1979, contractors had erected twin glass towers on either side of a glass courtyard that partially encased the original granite building.

The bank's headquarters is once again the site of a major renovation. At a cost of $460 million, the three-year project will overhaul all interior systems, completely redesign the exterior façade of the building and create new outdoor public gathering spaces. PCL Constructors will lead this ambitious project.

Did you know?

Embedded in the cornerstone of the bank building is a copper box that contains the signatures of senior bank officers and other souvenirs from the building's original construction.



Did you know?

As one of Canada's oldest public markets, the ByWard Market has seen its share of history. It was the scene of the infamous Stony Monday Riot in September 1849 when a political and religious dispute turned into stone-throwing (and later, gun) battle. When the dust settled, one man had died, 30 were wounded and 15 arrested.

ByWard Market

The ByWard Market traces its roots back as far as 1827 when Colonel John By commissioned construction of a market building and courthouse on George Street. The building served as a commercial hub and a public hall. More importantly, it helped drive a commerce boom in Lower Town. By 1840, that area of the city had become a thriving commercial and residential neighbourhood.

The existing market building, located on ByWard Market Square between York and George streets, is the fifth incarnation of Colonel By's market. Variously, its predecessors either burned down, were dismantled or simply relocated. The building was erected on its current site in 1927 and continues to serve as the focal point for neighbourhood commercial activities.

Today, the ByWard Market retains many of the characteristics that made it such an important part of the fabric of the city for nearly 200 years. It is a centre for commerce, entertainment and leisure activities, an active residential community, and a part of town that is known—and loved—for its occasionally gruff charm.

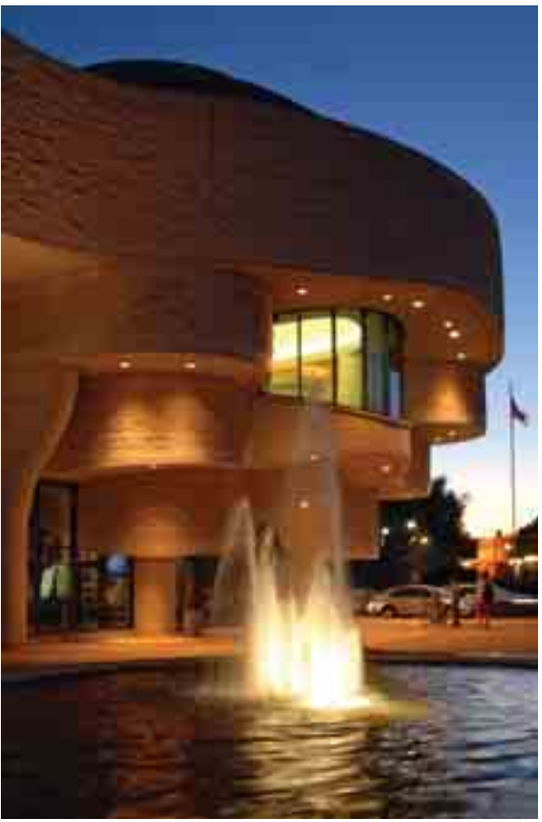
Canadian Museum of History

100 rue Laurier, Gatineau

The Canadian Museum of History building is perhaps one of the most expressive structures in the capital region. Designed by Douglas Cardinal Architect, the structure is based on the representation of the land as it was when people first arrived, more than 15,000 years ago. The curatorial wing of the building features long, sweeping curves that symbolize rocky outcroppings; the public wing, which features the massive glazed Great Hall, is indicative of a melting glacier; and the parkland between illustrates the plains over which people first migrated.

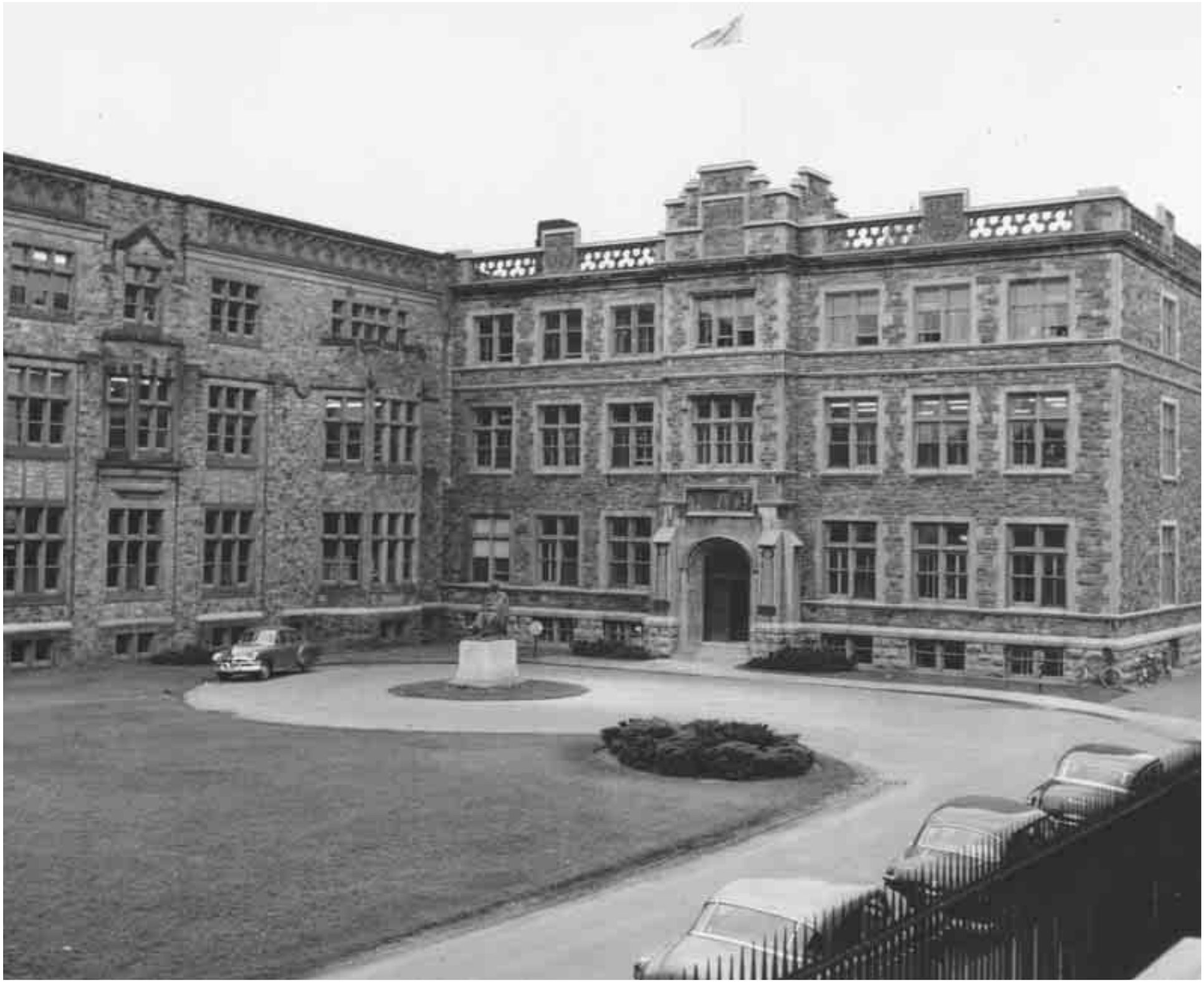
Construction of the museum was managed by Concordia Management Company Ltd. between 1984 and 1989 at great public cost. Cabinet was slow to approve Cardinal's design for the building, and construction began in early 1984 with nearly three years planned for the schedule. By the end of year one, it was apparent that the deadline could not be met. A later injection of cash helped speed up delivery of the building.

When the building finally opened, it was greeted by instant acclaim and hailed as a national symbol for pluralism and multiculturalism.



Did you know?

The Canadian Museum of History building contains about 800,000 kilometres of wires—enough to travel to the Moon and back. Its fibre optic network is the largest in any non-military facility in the world.



Did you know?

The building includes a number of remarkable features, including windows that spell “Lest we forget” and its French equivalent in Morse code. The most striking of these, however, may be Memorial Hall, in which a single window has been positioned to allow sunlight to shine on the headstone of Canada’s Unknown Soldier at precisely 11 a.m. each November 11.

Canadian War Museum

1 Vimy Place Private

Although most people now associate the Canadian War Museum with its magnificent home on Lebreton Flats, the institution has had several homes over the years. When it was founded in 1880, the museum was confined to a series of rooms in the Cartier Square Drill Hall.

The institution gained its own home in 1967 when it moved to the former Public Archives Building on Sussex Drive. But even that location was ill-suited to the museum’s purpose. Indeed, many artifacts in its growing collection had to be stored offsite at a west-end warehouse.

Design of the current war museum building was shared by Toronto’s Moriyama & Teshima Architects and Ottawa’s Griffiths Rankin Cook Architects. Construction of the 440,000-square foot building was led by the Ottawa branch of PCL Constructors and lasted between 2002 and 2005. Since it opened, the building has received numerous awards for excellence in design, construction and sustainability.

Meanwhile, the former archives building that served as home to the war museum until 2005 will soon be renovated and turned into the Global Centre for Pluralism.

Carleton County Gaol

75 Nicholas Street

Nowadays, a stay at the Ottawa Jail Hostel offers little more than beds for travellers to rest weary heads. One hundred fifty years ago, it offered an altogether different proposition.

The Carleton County Gaol, as it was then known, was designed by architect Henry Horsey and built in 1862 as a maximum-security holding facility. For years, it was known as the most imposing prison in the country. Although three prisoners—including Patrick J. Whelan, the man accused of murdering Thomas D'Arcy McGee—were officially executed at the site's gallows, countless more died in squalid and cramped conditions.

The building closed as a jail in 1972, and has since been operated by Hostelling International, which renovated much of the facility but restored the top floor of the building—death row—to its original condition.

Did you know?

Although the gaol hosted only three official executions, guards are said to have conducted countless more “unofficial” hangings.

Carleton University

1125 Colonel By Drive

The story of Carleton University is intimately linked with the history of Second World War veterans. Those who returned home to Ottawa and who wanted to pursue careers outside the military trained at Carleton College. In those days, the institution offered instruction in public administration, journalism and first-year engineering.

Carleton grew in significance in 1952 when the Ontario Legislature passed the *Carleton College Act*. The following year, the college bought a 62-hectare plot of land that would become the existing campus. Construction of three buildings—the Maxwell MacOdrum Library, Norman Paterson Hall and the Henry Marshall Tory Building—began in earnest the following year. All three opened in 1959 when the university moved to its new home.

Much has changed from those humble first days. Carleton University now serves a population of nearly 27,000 students and offers more than 65 academic programs. The campus, too, has expanded significantly. Among its landmark buildings are the athletics facilities, the Human Computer Interaction (HCI) Institute Facility and Centre for Advanced Studies in Visualization and Simulation (V-SIM), and its recently upgraded University Centre building.

Did you know?

Carleton University's ties with the Canadian Forces carries on to this day. The Ceremonial Guard unit of the Canadian Forces resides on the university campus between June and August each summer. The Guard marches and drills on the university grounds during this time.

Cartier Square Drill Hall

2 Queen Elizabeth Drive

The drill hall at Cartier Square harkens back to an era when military defence was foremost in the nation's mind. The building was designed in the late 1870s by Thomas Seaton Scott—the man who preceded Thomas Fuller as Chief Dominion Architect—to house the 43rd Ottawa and Carleton Battalion of Rifles and the Governor General's Foot Guards. It was built between 1879 and 1881 and remains today one of the best examples of the type of drill halls constructed throughout the country in the immediate post-Confederation era.

Over its 125-plus year history, the Cartier Square Drill Hall has acted as a centre for military mobilization and training for local soldiers. Many who served our country in the first and second world wars, the Korean War and on various peacekeeping missions throughout Europe, Africa and Asia were at one time or another based out of the hall.

Did you know?

The area to the west of the drill hall was originally a large open field used to drill recruits. City Hall now occupies the site.

Central Chambers

40–46 Elgin Street

One hundred years ago, the Central Chambers building on the corner of Elgin and Queen streets was a prominent address for business professionals. The building was designed by architect John James Browne to serve the needs of those business owners who required only one or two chambers from which to conduct their affairs. Set against the backdrop of Confederation Square and the Canadian War Memorial, it has been for generations one of the more recognizable properties in the downtown core.

The building now is entirely owned by the National Capital Commission and was the subject of a major renovation in 1994 led by Thomas Fuller Construction Company. A new addition at 51 Queen Street also saw the creation of a nearby 18-storey office tower and underground parking garage.

Chateau Laurier

1 Rideau Street

The Chateau Laurier is one of Canada's truly grand railway hotels. Located across from Union Station, the two buildings were built between 1909 and 1912 at a cost of $2.5 million. Construction of the hotel was not without controversy, however. The build site was originally part of Major's Hill Park, and it was only thanks to the influence of then-Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier that the building could be erected on its now famous site. This fact was not lost on the hotel owners, who eventually named the building after the late Prime Minister.

Over the years, the hotel has served countless guests—famous and otherwise. It has even served as a long-term home for the local operations of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the studio and residence of renowned photographer Yousuf Karsh.

Did you know?

The original opening of the Chateau Laurier was delayed from April 26 to June 12, 1912 on account of the death of Charles Melville Hays, the president of Grand Trunk Railway and the man who commissioned construction of the building. He died aboard RMS *Titanic*.

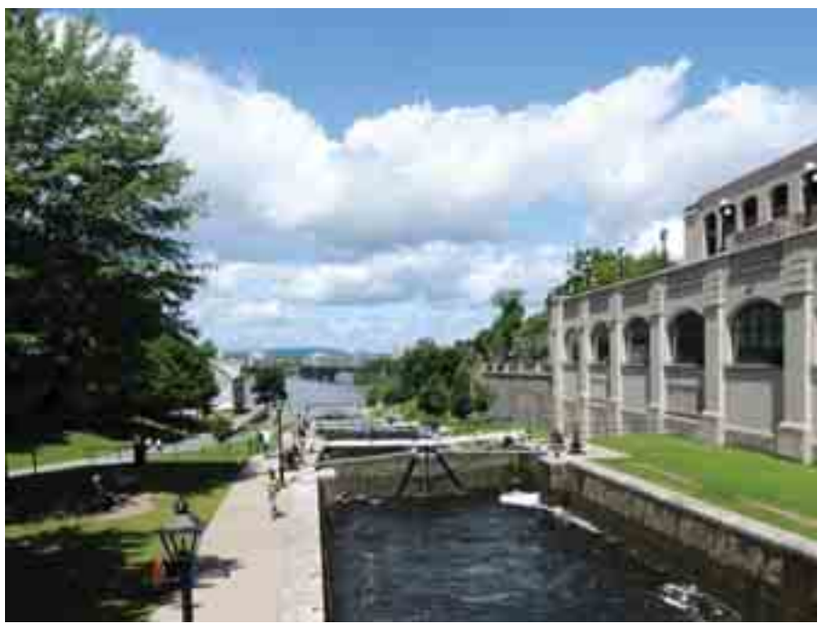
Commissariat Building

1 Canal Lane

If Ottawa's growth as a town is inextricably linked to the construction of the Rideau Canal, then there is a strong case to be made for the significance of the Commissariat Building as Ottawa's cornerstone building. It was commissioned by the British military in 1827 as a military depot and a storehouse for the tools, supplies and hardware needed by Colonel John By and his crews to build the canal.

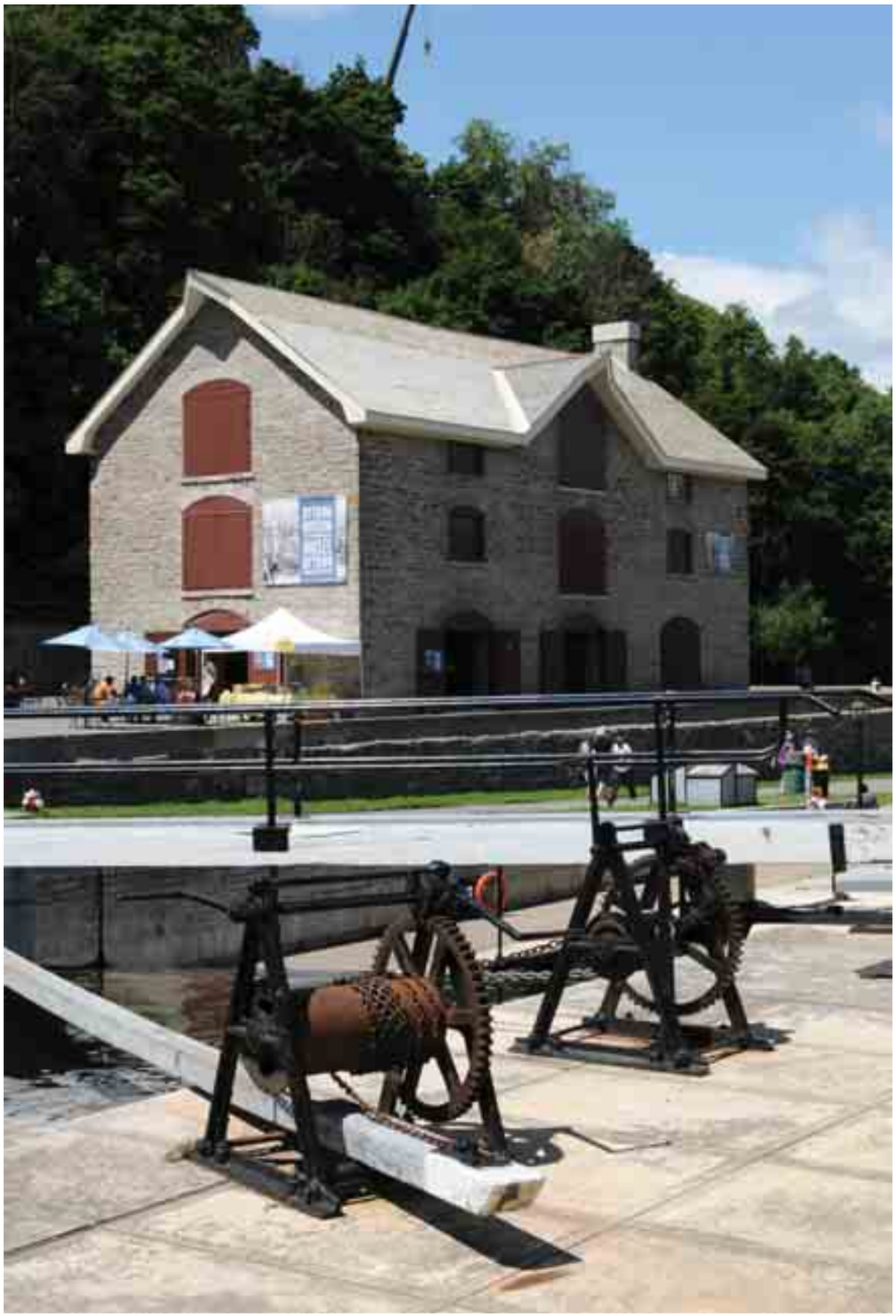
The Commissariat Building is particularly noteworthy not just for its supporting role in construction of the canal, but also as one of the earliest examples of local construction performed by Thomas McKay. At the time, the building was one of the largest in town; it remains the oldest stone building in Ottawa.

From its construction until 1951, the building served the operations of various departments of government involved with the maintenance of the Rideau Canal. That year, the 125th anniversary of construction of the canal, it became home to the Bytown Museum. Owned by Parks Canada, the building today has been restored as closely as possible to its original 1840s appearance.



Did you know?

Builder Thomas McKay was a master stonemason who also built Rideau Hall as his own residence and Earnscliffe as a home for his daughter and son-in-law.



Confederation Building

244 Wellington Street

Construction of the Confederation Building between 1927 and 1931 signalled the expansion of a new precinct for the federal government on lands west of Parliament Hill. The building was designed by the Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works, with official attribution, in part, to Thomas William Fuller.

Little has changed about the Confederation Building in its 80-plus year history. Its purpose remains the same: to house employees of the federal government (although today the building mostly serves parliamentarians and their staff). Its exterior façade, a prime example of the civil gothic style that informed the design of many of its successors, is almost entirely unmodified. As such, the Confederation Building remains an important influence on the architecture of the Parliamentary Precinct.

Did you know?

Thomas William Fuller was the son of Thomas Fuller, who designed the Parliament Buildings and the Library of Parliament. Father and son each served as Chief Dominion Architect of Canada, although 30 years separated their tenures. The men are grandfather and great-grandfather, respectively, to the current generation of the Fuller family that runs Thomas Fuller Construction Company.

Did you know?

After Parliament Hill, Confederation Square is considered Ottawa's second-most-important ceremonial centre.

Confederation Square

Elgin and Wellington streets

Although the buildings that frame it have changed considerably, the site of Confederation Square has always been an open downtown plaza. Major renovations were completed on the square between 1910 and 1912 to allow for better flow of rail traffic through downtown and past the then-newly built Union Station and Chateau Laurier. When the site was re-opened, it was named Connaught Square after the then Governor General.

Connaught Square did not stand long before Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King called for plans to revamp the site altogether, in keeping with the popular City Beautiful movement of the day. Land was expropriated, buildings demolished and Elgin Street widened to make way for a new and grander plaza that would be home to the National War Memorial.

Confederation Square, as it was renamed, opened in 1939.

Connaught Building

550 Sussex Drive

The pre-First World War era in Ottawa was a period of significant government expansion. As the federal government began to run out of space to house its employees at Parliament Hill, it commissioned construction of a number of impressive buildings. The Connaught Building is one such structure.

Designed by Chief Dominion Architect David Ewart and built between 1913 and 1916, the building was created to serve as the Customs Examining Warehouse for Canada Customs. It was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1990 due in part to the role it played in extending the presence of the federal government beyond Parliament Hill, and in part to the fact that it is considered one of Ewart's most significant works.


George

Dominion Observatory

Central Experimental Farm

For nearly 70 years, the Dominion Observatory was Canada's most important astronomical observatory. Inside were the fine instruments that the Department of the Interior required to determine the exact time of day and the precise geographic coordinates needed for mapping purposes.

The building was designed in 1902 by Chief Dominion Architect David Ewart and opened in 1905. Its main instrument in those days was a majestic 15-inch refracting telescope, the largest of its kind in Canada. In the early days of the building, observatory staff determined and distributed the exact time of day to the rest of the county. As the years passed, their mandate grew to include calculating and issuing spatial coordinates and collecting seismic data.

The observatory continued to perform various functions until 1970. Today, it houses a satellite office of Natural Resources Canada.

Did you know?

Between 1939 and 1970, the Dominion Observatory was the source of the time signal broadcast on CBC Radio every day at 1 pm.

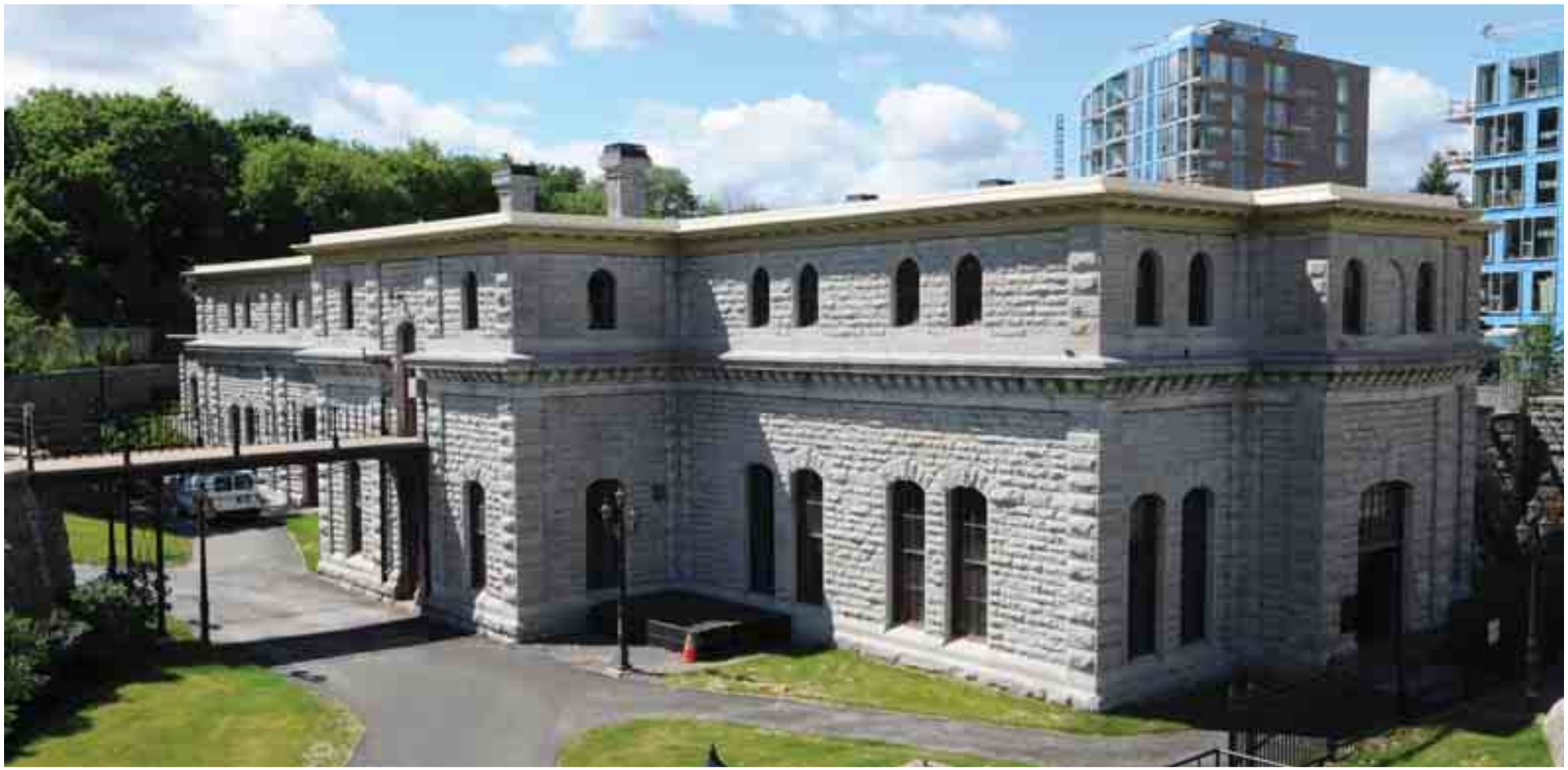
Fleet Street Pumping Station

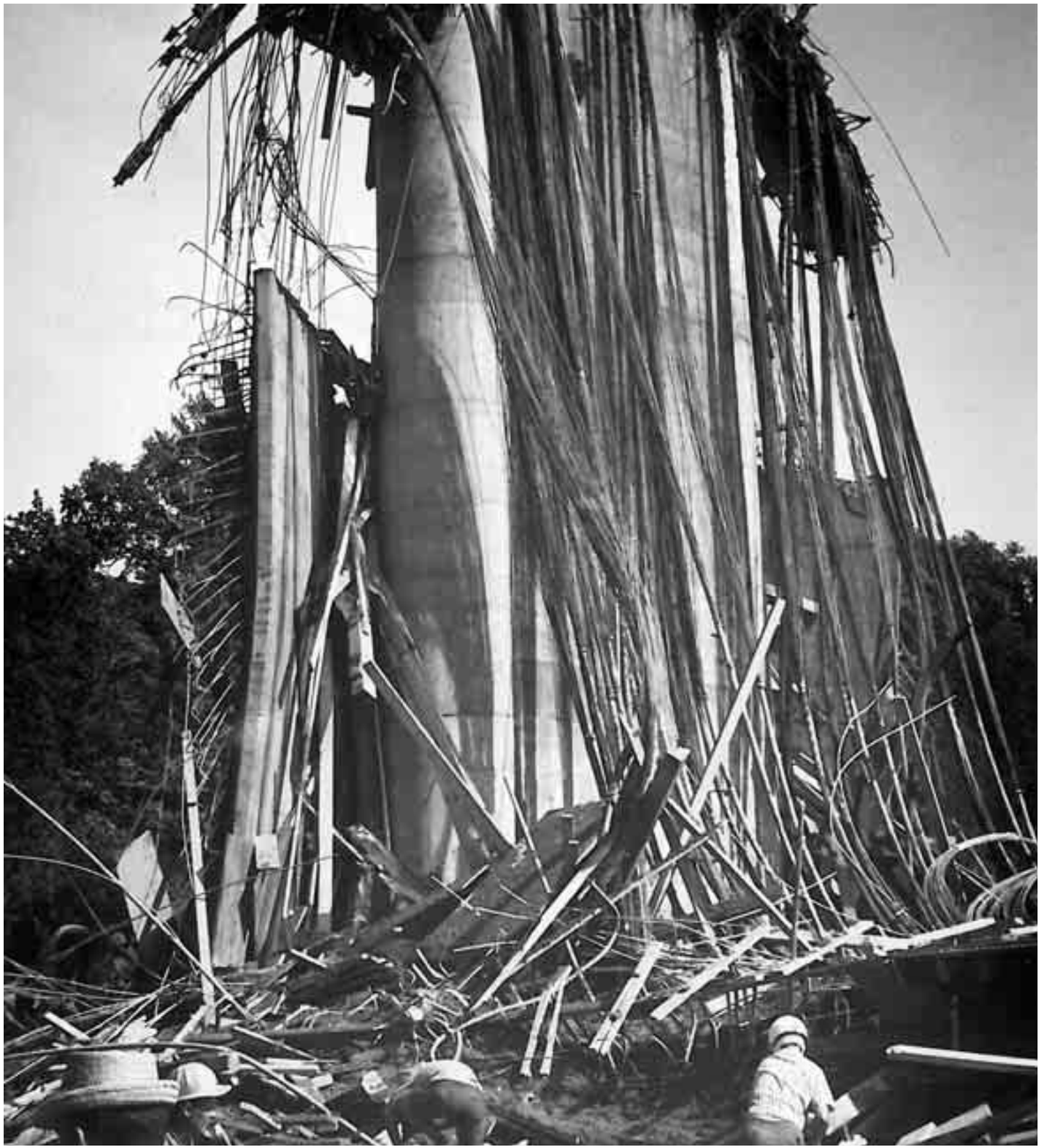
LeBreton Flats

In the 19th century, the threat of fire was a constant worry for towns and cities across Ontario. Those located close to rivers and lakes, such as Ottawa, were driven to build municipal water supply systems. The Fleet Street Pumping Station, built in 1874, originated under exactly these conditions.

Prominent Canadian engineer Thomas Keefer designed the pumping station, the first of its kind in the city. The cost of the entire project, together with headworks and bridges, was a princely $265,900. Part of what made the project so expensive was the station's novel design. Water drawn from the Chaudière Falls powered the station's pumps, which in turn distributed unfiltered water from the Ottawa River into the city's water supply.

The Fleet Street Pumping Station still operates today, although under very different conditions. Despite its antiquity, it remains the only station in the country that uses hydraulic power to pump water.





Heron Road Bridge

Baseline and Heron roads

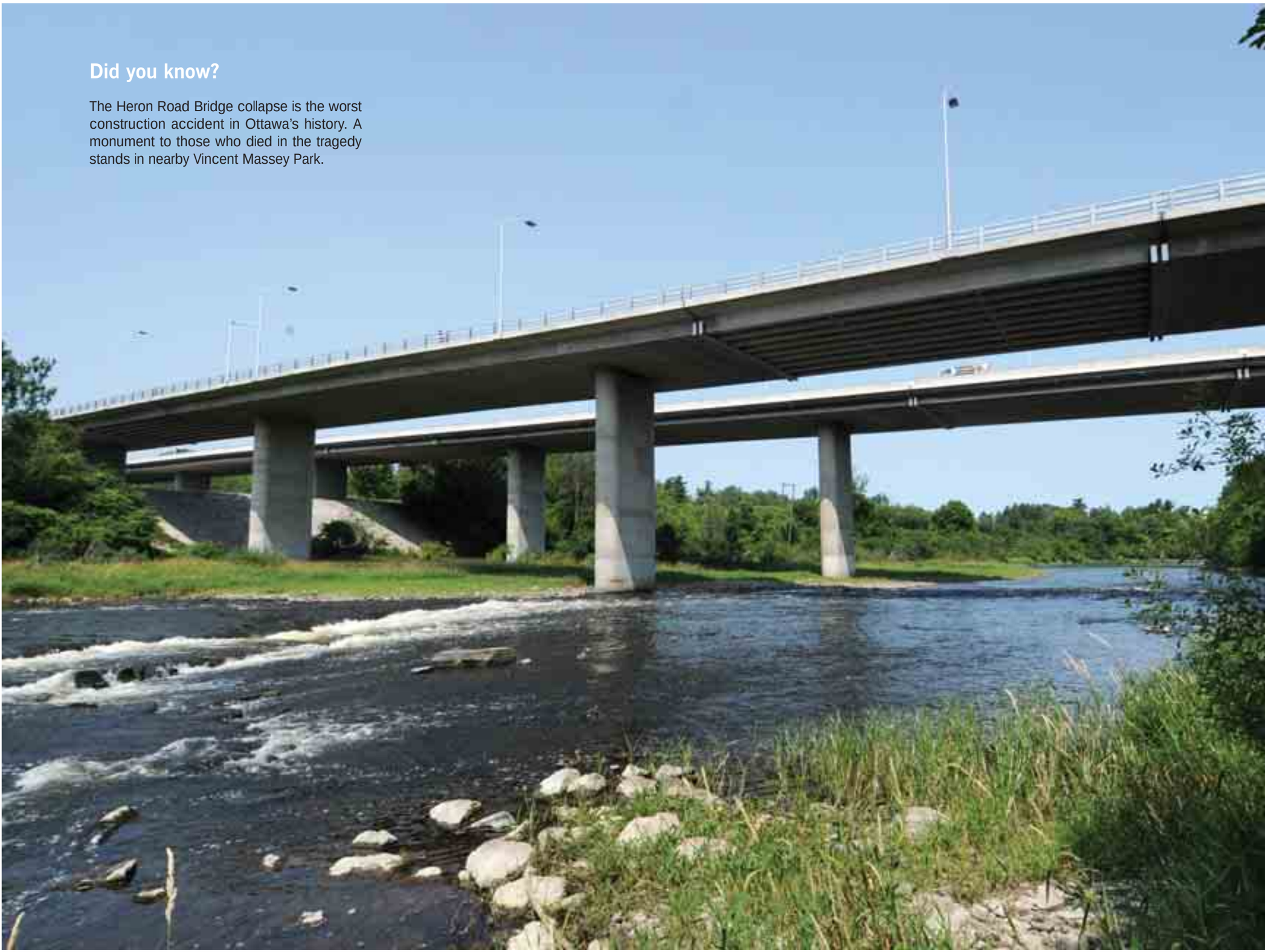
By itself, the Heron Road Bridge is unremarkable. Certainly Ottawa is home to larger, more architecturally appealing structures that carry greater volumes of traffic. Yet no one who works in construction in Ottawa will forget the day it fell down.

On August 10, 1966, part of the south span of the bridge collapsed, killing nine workers and injuring 55 more. The cause of the failure was later judged to be inadequate building materials and improper bracing on the bridge's support structures.

In the aftermath of the accident, comparatively little—even by the day's standards—was done to punish those responsible. The Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario suspended two of its members and reprimanded a third for their roles in the tragedy; the general contractor was fined a paltry $5,000: the maximum allowable under the law. It was not long after the bridge collapse that Ontario's construction safety standards were completely rewritten.

Did you know?

The Heron Road Bridge collapse is the worst construction accident in Ottawa's history. A monument to those who died in the tragedy stands in nearby Vincent Massey Park.



John G. Diefenbaker Building

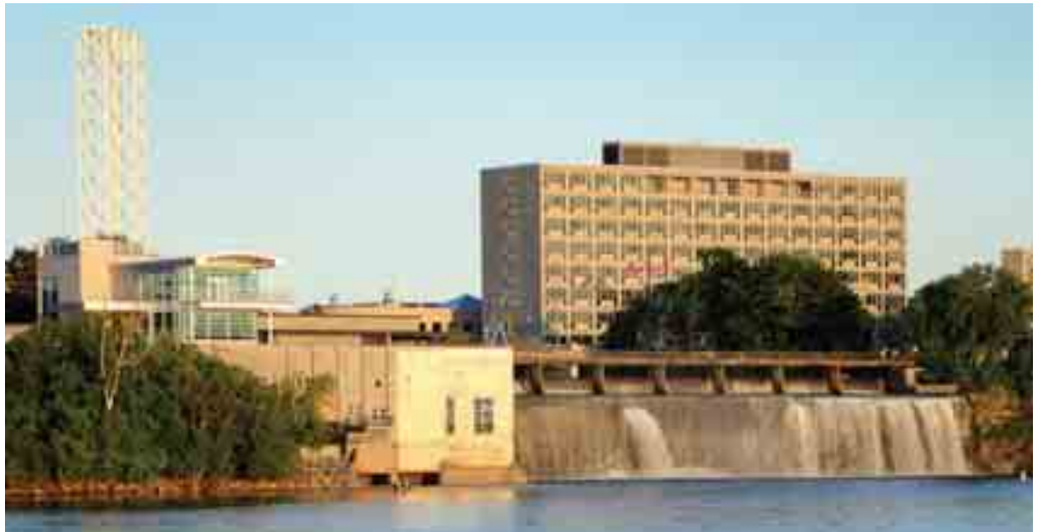
111 Sussex Drive

The administrative entity that is the City of Ottawa has been remarkably transient over the years. Before it was 100 years old, the municipal government had moved from a converted market building to a stone tower, then to a federal government building. Its first long-term home—the building now known as the John G. Diefenbaker Building on Green Island—eventually opened for operations in 1958.

Old Ottawa City Hall, as it is more commonly known, was the city's base of operations for some 40-plus years. It was opened by Princess Margaret and was the first building in town to feature air conditioning. By the late 1980s, the building was judged too small for its intended purposes, so the city commissioned architect Moshe Safdie to design a huge addition to the building.

The project soured when the architect and the city disagreed over fees and later over the scope of work. When the renovations were eventually completed in 1993, the building was far larger than the city ever needed and sections sat vacant before being leased to the federal government.

The City of Ottawa finally departed the building for its Elgin Street headquarters in 2001. Today, the Diefenbaker building is owned by the federal government and occupied by Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.



Did you know?

Before renovations, Old Ottawa City Hall was considered among the most important examples of International Style architecture in Canada. The building won a Massey medal for design in 1959.

Lansdowne Park

1015 Bank Street

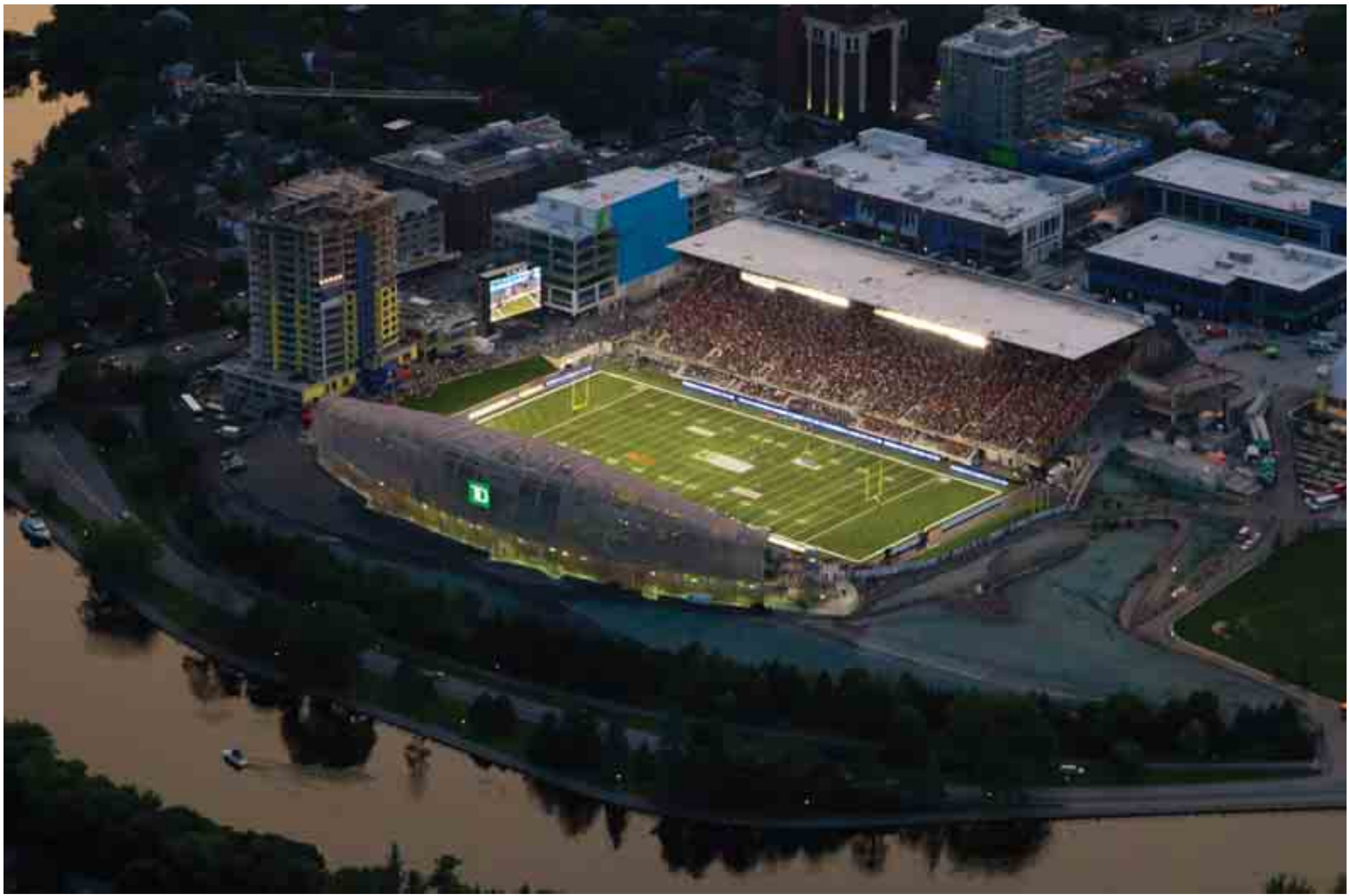
Lansdowne Park has been an important stage in Ottawa for nearly 170 years. The park traces its roots back to 1847 when the Dominion government gave Bytown 24.5 acres of land—which the town later supplemented with 15 more purchased from local landowners—to form its initial grounds.

In those days, agricultural and manufacturing fairs were the order of the day at Lansdowne. The park staged several before hosting the first-ever Central Canada Exhibition in 1888—an event Lansdowne would continue to host every year until 2010.

As the park's historic value grew, its appeal as a public site diminished. By the 1980s and 1990s, it was chiefly used as a venue for sports and other forms of indoor entertainment. Very little happened there otherwise. It would not be until 2007 that private investors, in partnership with the City of Ottawa, released plans for a complete refurbishment of the park that turned it into a year-round mixed-use development. Although Pomerleau Inc. led the $290-million reconstruction project, many Ottawa Construction Association member companies worked on the site.

Did you know?

Lansdowne Park hosted the first public demonstration of the telephone in Canada in 1877.



LeBreton Flats

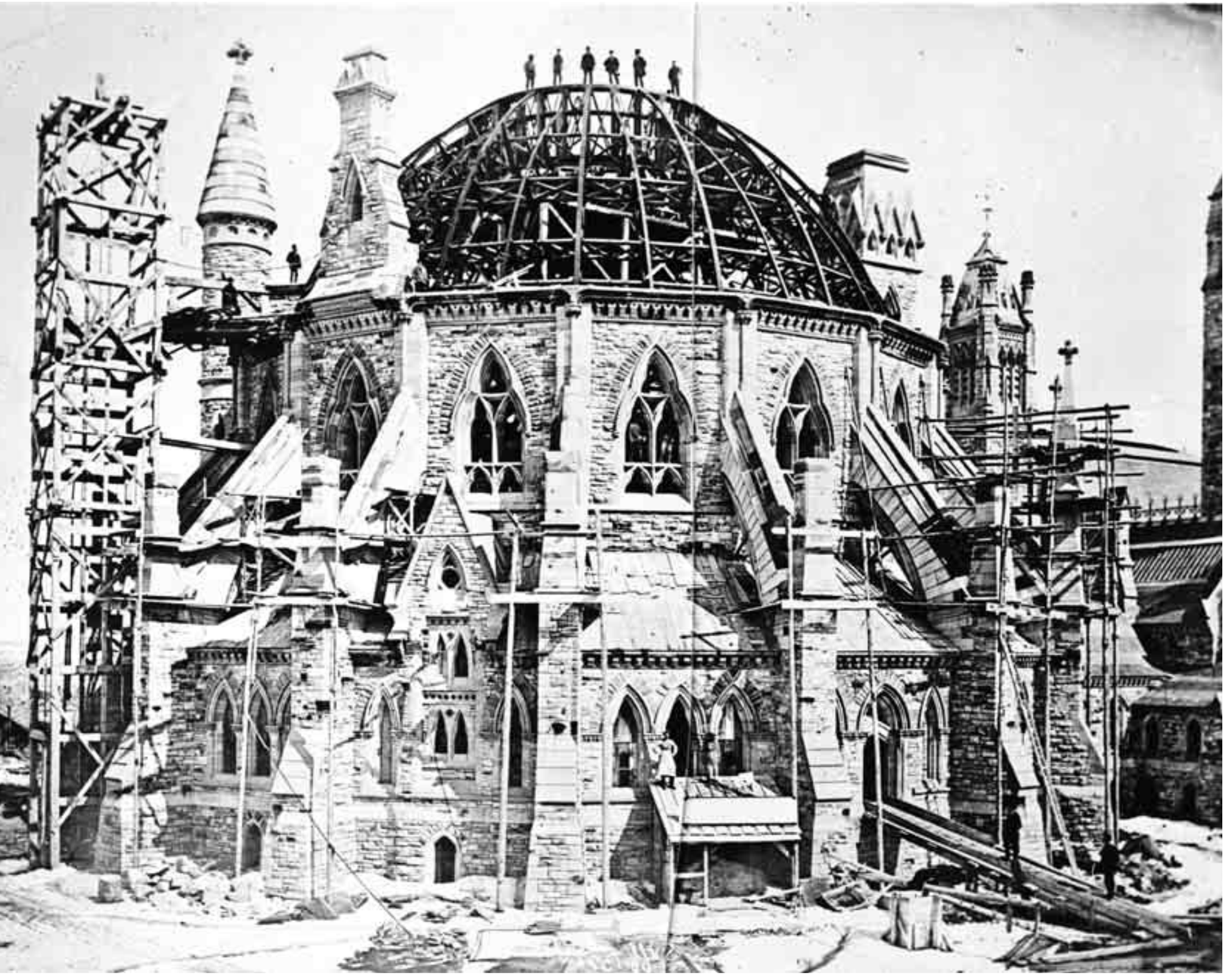
The history of LeBreton Flats is checkered with stories of development, decay and rebirth. So it seems fitting that the plot of land to the west of Centretown is once again the subject of ambitious reconstruction plans.

In its earliest days, LeBreton was a mixed-use area that served the lumber industry on nearby Chaudière and Victoria islands. As well as houses, hotels and taverns, the flats hosted a rail line, stations and various industries. In 1900, the neighbourhood was completely razed by the great fire that started in Hull and jumped the river by way of the stacks of lumber piled on the islands. The neighbourhood was rebuilt in time, but the prosperous lumber barons moved their homes into the city proper to protect themselves against future disasters. Eventually, the neighbourhood turned into a slum.

In the 1960s, the federal government expropriated the lands for redevelopment, forcing residents from their houses. Yet the land sat vacant for the following 40 years, in part due to the high levels of contamination in the soil and in part due to ownership squabbles. Eventually, the National Capital Commission took control of the land and commissioned an extensive redevelopment program that began with construction of the new Canadian War Museum in 2005. Today, more plans are in place to restore LeBreton Flats to its previous stature as a mixed-use hub adjacent to downtown.

Did you know?

The last leg of the Rideau Canal was originally plotted to run through LeBreton Flats. Captain John LeBreton—after whom the flats were named—learned of this plan in 1820 and bought the land for £499. He then offered to re-sell the land to Governor General Lord Dalhousie for £3,000. Dalhousie was so angered by this swindle that he moved the canal to its present route at great additional cost.



Did you know?

In 2007, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation asked Canadians to name the Seven Wonders of Canada. The Library of Parliament was one of the project's nominees, but it did not make the final list.

Library of Parliament

111 Wellington Street

Few buildings in Ottawa are as iconic as the Library of Parliament. Designed in part by Chief Dominion Architect Thomas Fuller, the building is surrounded by flying buttresses and capped by an unmistakable domed roof.

Construction of the library began in 1859 and finished in 1876. Construction halted for a period in the late 1860s when the builders realized they did not have the technical know-how to complete the domed roof.

No significant construction work was conducted on the building until 1952 when a fire broke out inside the building and smoke and water damaged a good deal of the library's collection. Repair crews conducted structural and restoration work on the floor and wood paneling, but while the centre, west and east blocks of Parliament all saw their mechanical and electrical systems upgraded, the library was untouched.

Plans for an extensive restoration of the library building were finally drawn up in 1996. Thomas Fuller Construction Company, the business run by Fuller's great-grandsons, won the $52-million renovation contract. Work began on site in 2002 and wrapped up in 2006.

Macdonald-Cartier International Airport

1000 Airport Parkway Private

Ottawa may not be known as an aviation hub, but our history in flight is nothing to be overlooked. The first plane landed in Ottawa in the late 1910s at a small Bowesville Road airfield that was operated by the Ottawa Flying Club. In 1927, some 60,000 people turned up to see Charles Lindbergh land his *Spirit of St. Louis* in town.

During the 1950s, Ottawa's principal airport—the Uplands airport—was a joint civil and military use facility and the busiest airport in the country. The advent of civilian jet travel caused the federal government to commission construction of a new airport with longer runways and greater passenger capacity. Crews broke ground on the project in 1957.

By 1980, the new terminal building was operating at double its passenger capacity. Yet it would not be until 1997, when control over the facility was turned over to the newly formed Ottawa Macdonald-Cartier International Airport Authority, that expansion plans were finally put into action.

Since 1997, the airport authority has invested more than $500 million in building and infrastructure projects at the airport site. The centrepiece of that program is undoubtedly the $310 million, 650,000-square foot passenger terminal building built by PCL Constructors and opened in 2003.

Did you know?

The combined number of takeoffs and landings at the Uplands airport in 1959 totaled 307,079. That figure is nearly double the total recorded at the current airport in 2012.

Did you know?

The bridge was originally intended to be named after Colonel John By. Its name was changed at the eleventh hour at the insistence of Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who died only days after the switch.

Mackenzie King Bridge

Elgin to Nicholas Streets

There is not a great deal to love about the Mackenzie King Bridge. Its form is relatively plain, its function is just as modest. Yet at the time of construction, the bridge was the centrepiece of The Gréber Plan—a monumental effort to redesign Ottawa's downtown core.

Jacques Gréber's plan was to ring Confederation Park with the city's most important buildings: City Hall and a new national gallery among them. The bridge was to bisect the park and span the Rideau Canal in an effort to relieve downtown road congestion.

The bridge was built in 1954 at a cost of $300,000. Although it does not play the role in the downtown core that Gréber intended, it remains an important east-west route in the city.

Maplelawn

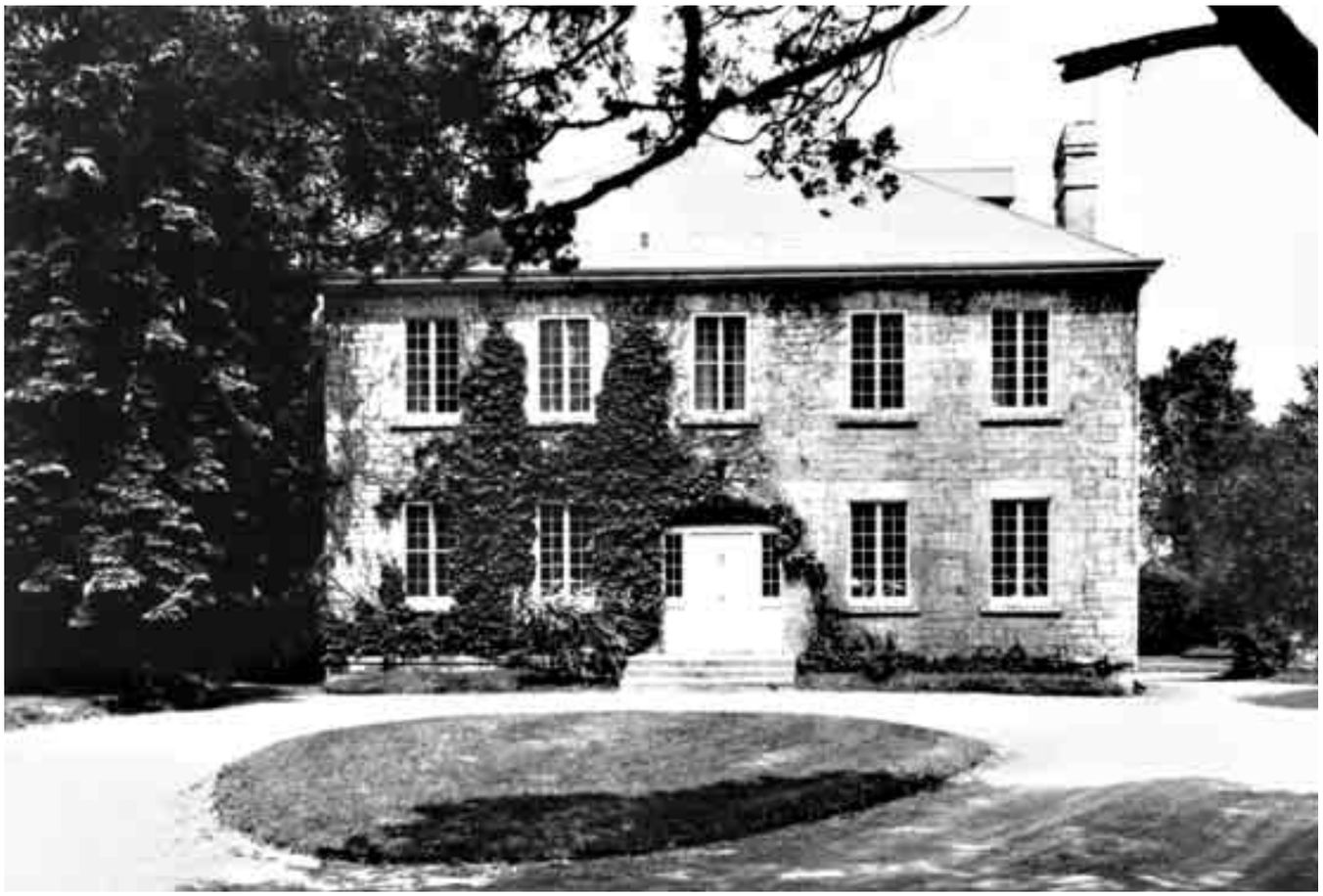
529 Richmond Road

Maplelawn is a rare treasure. The stately home was built between 1831 and 1834 for the Thomson family, Scottish immigrants who came to Ottawa to farm and work in the lumber trade.

What makes Maplelawn uncommon is its adjacent one-acre walled garden. Common across Europe, such gardens are far harder to find in Canada. The Thomson family originally used the site to grow food, but as the years passed and ownership of the estate changed hands to the Cole and later the Rochester families, it became increasingly ornamental and even neglected.

The Federal District Commission, the predecessor to the National Capital Commission, bought Maplelawn in the 1950s to ensure its preservation. It would not be until the 1990s that a volunteer group, the Friends of Maplelawn Garden, took up a campaign to restore the garden to its former glory. The NCC renovated the building shortly thereafter.

Maplelawn was named a National Historic Site of Canada for its walled garden and for the exceptional quality of the estate building.



Did you know?

The site on which the National Arts Centre stands today used to house Ottawa City Hall.

National Arts Centre

53 Elgin Street

The National Arts Centre building was commissioned by Prime Minister Lester Pearson in the early 1960s and was scheduled to open in 1967 to celebrate Canada's centenary. Unfortunately, that plan did not unfold exactly as drawn up. The building would not open until June 1969. Nonetheless, when it did, it was a great achievement. Here was a national cultural institution that illustrated the federal government's policy on promoting the performing arts.

The building's form marries triangles with hexagons to create an irregularly shaped structure outside and dramatic spaces inside. Built by V. K. Mason Construction, the building is considered a prime example of the Brutalist style of architecture that was popular between the 1950s and 1970s.

National Gallery of Canada

380 Sussex Drive

One of the most familiar elements of the National Gallery of Canada building on Sussex Drive is the glass dome that encases its Great Hall. Upon award of the contract to design the building in 1983, architect Moshe Safdie accompanied gallery staff on a tour of several of the best museums in the United States and Europe to gain a better understanding of the characteristics that made such buildings iconic. His conclusion: the best museums invited people in and brought their best features to the forefront. His approach to design for the gallery building was based on that conclusion. He moved public spaces to the perimeter and clad the structure with glass to make the interior welcoming, open and cheerful.

The building was constructed by EllisDon Corporation between 1983 and 1988—in parallel with the Canadian Museum of History—at a final cost of $122 million. Within a year, the gallery attracted more than one million visitors.

Did you know?

Safdie designed the Great Hall glass roof as a direct reference to another iconic Ottawa building: the Library of Parliament.

Notre Dame Basilica

385 Sussex Drive

A church of one form or another has stood on the site now occupied by Notre Dame Basilica since 1832. Plans for the existing structure were initially drawn up in 1839 and called for a comparatively modest stone building. Construction got underway in 1841, but proceeded slowly for the first three years. In those days, missionaries on temporary postings performed the assembly. Work started on a regular basis in 1844 when the Oblate Fathers assumed stewardship of the parish.

The main church building was completed in 1846, but as the church grew in prominence in Bytown, the building was expanded. The two gothic spires were added to the front in 1866; further improvements were commissioned in the late 1870s. It was not until 1885 that construction and ornamentation work outside and inside the building were finally completed. And what a finished product! Although the exterior of the building is fairly plain, the interior features numerous carved structures and stained glass windows, and hundreds of statues of religious figures. The signature element of the sanctuary is the impressively high ceiling spanned by Gothic arches and painted to resemble a starry sky.

The basilica is the oldest and largest standing church in Ottawa.

Did you know?

Louis-Philippe Hébert, the man who carved the 30 life-sized figures inside the Notre Dame Basilica, also carved monuments on Parliament Hill and throughout Quebec.

Ottawa Convention Centre

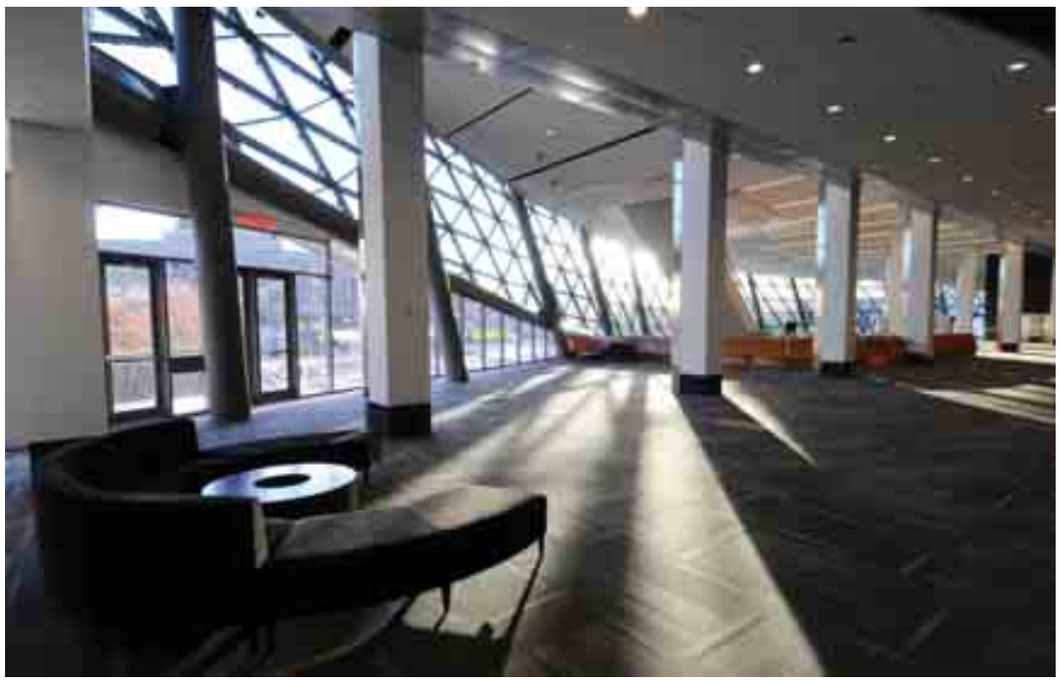
55 Colonel By Drive

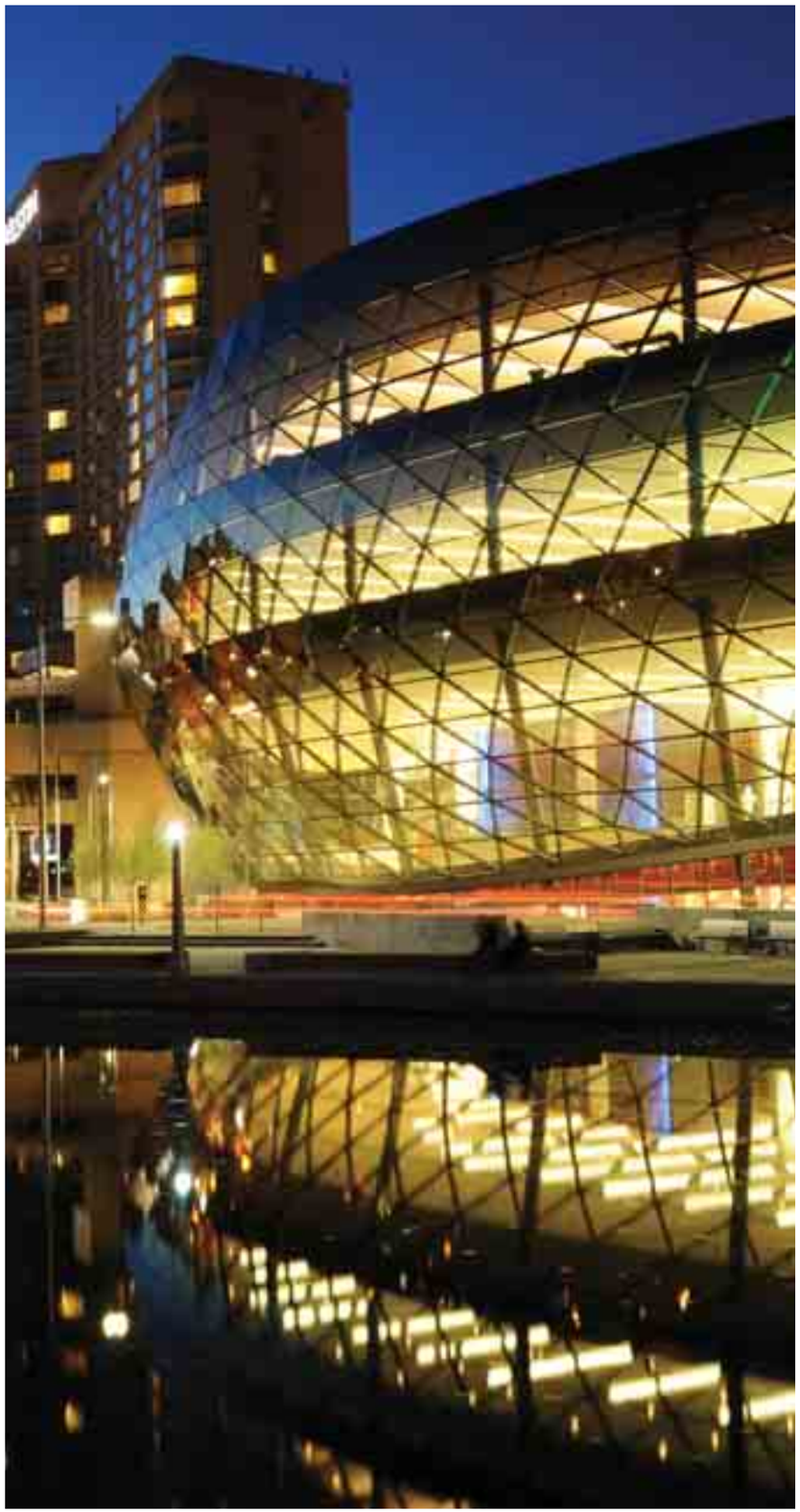
Ottawa's new convention centre, built by PCL Constructors between 2008 and 2011, is a remarkable facility for meetings and events. It stands seven storeys tall, and features four levels and more than 192,000 square feet of space. The entire western façade of the building is clad in curved curtainwall so as to offer striking views of the adjacent Rideau Canal and nearby downtown core.

The Convention Centre was granted LEED Gold certification from the Canada Green Building Council in 2013. Evidence of sustainable design is present throughout the building. The western curtainwall, for example, allows daylight to penetrate the building. The roof harvests rainwater, which is stored in an underground cistern and used to flush toilets in the building. Additionally, more than 90 percent of the materials from the demolished Congress Centre, which used to occupy the site, were diverted from landfills.

Did you know?

Timber that was felled during Ottawa's logging era and which sunk to the bottom of local rivers was reclaimed and used to build the Convention Centre's Wall of Three Rivers—a tribute to the city's rich history.





Ottawa Normal School

195 Elgin Street

Although the idea of a normal school—an institution that taught norms to teachers—traces its history back to the 16th century, the concept gained traction in Canada only in the 1840s. Ottawa's first normal school, which still stands on Elgin Street, was built in 1874 and opened the following year. It continued to train teachers under various government systems for 100 years before the college was formally absorbed into the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa.

The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton bought the Normal School building in 1986. Several extensions were added to the building, including the facility that is now the main city hall building. The building was turned over to the City of Ottawa post-amalgamation.

Did you know?

Among Ontario normal schools, only Toronto's, which opened in 1847, is older than Ottawa's.

Did you know?

Barracks Hill, as it was then known, was used as living quarters for the men of the Royal Engineers who built the Rideau Canal. After the canal was completed, the site was deemed an exceptional location for Canada's new Parliament Buildings.

Parliament Buildings

111 Wellington Street

After Queen Victoria famously chose Ottawa as the capital city of the new province of Canada in 1857, a competition was opened to identify architects who could design a new parliament building and two supporting administrative buildings to its east and west. Countless submissions arrived and in 1859, the designs were awarded to Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones (for the centre block) and to Thomas Stent and Augustus Laver (for the east and west blocks).

Construction of the new houses of government began in 1859 and was completed in 1866. The complex stood 50 years before a fire broke out in the Centre Block in February 1916. The building was completely destroyed and only the adjacent library saved by the quick actions of a librarian.

The Centre Block was rebuilt between 1916 and 1922 and a new tower—the Peace Tower—added to the building in 1927 to commemorate the country's war dead.

The Parliament Buildings and Parliament Hill have served as not only the seat of government in Canada since Confederation, but also as the site of many noteworthy events: celebrations of VE Day in May 1945, the first raising of Canada's new national flag in 1965, the centennial of Confederation in 1967, and even, somewhat surprisingly, a bus hijacking in 1989.

Did you know?

Currier named the building at 24 Sussex Drive "*Gorffwysfa*", a Welsh word meaning "place of peace".

Prime Minister's Residence

24 Sussex Drive

Although 24 Sussex Drive is most commonly associated with the residence of Canada's Prime Minister, its history as such goes back only to the early 1950s.

The home was built in 1868 by Joseph Merrill Currier, a prominent local lumberman. The Edwards family, another prominent lumbering clan, bought the property in 1901. It remained in the family's possession until the mid-1940s

24 Sussex Drive finally became a public asset in 1946. By that time, the federal government owned nearly all the land along the Ottawa River from the French Embassy to Earnscliffe. Seeking to complete its set, the government served the Edwards family with an eviction notice in 1943. The family fought the order in court and eventually lost three years later.

After wresting control of the property from private hands, the government was slow to decide what to do with the residence. In 1950, it finally decided to convert the building into a residence for the Prime Minister.

The Queensway (Ontario Highway 417)

Like many of the iconic structures in town, the Queensway was the brainchild of noted city planner Jacques Gréber. Invited by Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King to propose a grand master plan to revitalize Ottawa, Gréber first proposed that downtown be stripped of its rail lines and then recommended that an east-west expressway be built along what was than a railway line.

Construction started on the first four phases of the highway in 1957—with a budget of $31 million. Phase one ran from Alta Vista Drive east to Highway 17; phase two from Highway 7 to Carling Avenue; phase three from Carling Avenue to O'Connor Street and phase four from O'Connor Street to Alta Vista Drive. Due to the complexities of construction involved on the job, the final phase of the job did not open until 1966.

Expansion of the Queensway followed through the 1970s and 80s to extend the highway out to the western edges of Ottawa's suburbs. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation has further plans to extend the road even further beyond Arnprior and into Pembroke. Meanwhile, construction is underway to widen the road at various key points to allow for better traffic flow.

Did you know?

The plan to extend Highway 417 to Autoroute 40 was born of a need to link Ottawa with Montreal ahead of the latter's hosting of Expo 1967.


75A
417 WEST OUEST
Kanata
Pembroke
75B-C
417 EAST EST
Ottawa

Did you know?

One thousand men, most of them Irish immigrants and French-Canadians, died during construction of the canal. Most died from malaria rather than poor site safety conditions. For example, in 1827 only seven men died as a result of construction accidents. Inquests were held into each death. Several Celtic crosses along the canal's route memorialize the dead.

Rideau Canal

The emergence of modern-day Ottawa as a prosperous national capital is directly tied to construction of the Rideau Canal.

Built between 1826 and 1832 under the watchful eye of Colonel John By, the canal was originally created for defence purposes. The War of 1812 revealed a threat of invasion by the United States via the St. Lawrence River. Supply lines to Upper Canada would have been severed in such a case. An inland route linking the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario was clearly required.

The 202-kilometre canal route was never used for its intended purpose. Instead it became an important commercial route—much easier to navigate than the St. Lawrence—between Montreal and Kingston. Today, it is used exclusively for recreational purposes: for pleasure boating in the summer and as the world's longest skating rink during the winter.

Rideau Hall

1 Sussex Drive

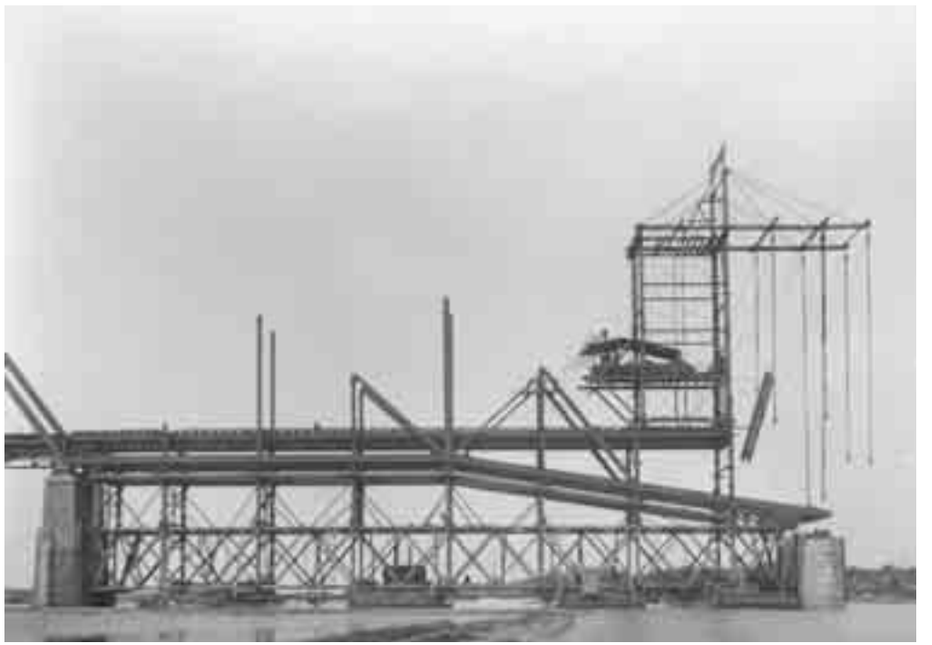
Rideau Hall's history, like that of so many other buildings in town, is directly linked to the life of Scottish stonemason Thomas McKay. After completing work on the locks at the lower section of the Rideau Canal, McKay made Bytown his home. In 1837, he built a stone villa in what would later become New Edinburgh, and which would serve as his home until his death in 1855.

The home stayed in the McKay family for 13 more years, during which time it was leased back to the Canadian government as the official residence for The Viscount Monck, who would become Canada's first governor general. The government bought the home outright in 1868—the year after Confederation—for $82,000 and turned it into an official residence for governors general.

It goes without saying that Rideau Hall has changed a great deal since McKay's days. The footprint of the building is significantly expanded to include some 175 rooms and more than 100,000 square feet. Yet some of the original walls built by McKay remain: in the reception hall and the Pauline Vanier room.

Did you know?

McKay is the founder of New Edinburgh, in which Rideau Hall and 24 Sussex Drive are located. Streets in the neighbourhood are named after McKay himself and his family members. Crichton, for example, was McKay's wife's maiden name, Keefer was his son in law, Thomas, John and Charles his sons.



Royal Alexandra Interprovincial Bridge

Nepean Point

At the time of its inauguration in 1901, the Royal Alexandra Interprovincial Bridge was hailed as one of the world's truly remarkable engineering achievements. Its main cantilever span, which stretches 556 feet, was the longest in the country and fourth longest in the world—a claim the bridge held for nearly 20 years.

The Alexandra Bridge was built by the Ottawa Interprovincial Bridge Company, at the request of the Canadian Pacific Railway, between 1898 and 1900. Construction was hard. Workers relied on barges to move the bridge's steel support beams into position. During the particularly harsh winter of 1899–1900, crews worked day and night to keep the river free of ice so the barges could move freely.

Work on the four support spans finished in September 1900 and the centre span placed into position a month later. After it opened, the bridge mainly served rail traffic between Ottawa and Hull. A lane was also reserved for electric trolley service between the towns. It was not until the late 1950s that the bridge was refurbished to accommodate vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Ten years later, following the closure of Union Station, the last passenger train crossed the bridge. The rail tracks were subsequently removed and the bridge was dedicated to vehicle and pedestrian traffic only.

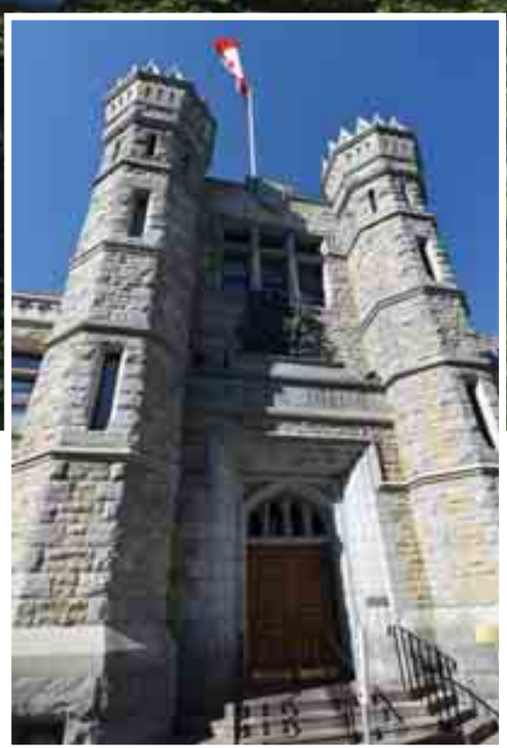
Royal Canadian Mint Building

320 Sussex Drive

Until the early 20th century, Canada's coins were minted in England and shipped to our shores. As Canada emerged as a nation in the late 19th century, it became clear for a number of reasons that Canada should mint its own currency. The idea for construction of a Royal Canadian Mint was first proposed in 1890, but would not be authorized by the government until 1901.

David Ewart, Canada's Chief Dominion Architect between 1896 and 1914 was asked to draw up plans for the mint building. His vision: a sandstone-clad, medieval, fortified-style building that spoke as much to Canada's independence as a nation as it did to role of the building as a storehouse for the nation's wealth.

Construction of the Ottawa Branch of Britain's Royal Mint began in 1905. The building was completed in 1908 and Governor General Lord Grey activated its presses for the first time on January 2 of that year. Additions were made to the property in 1909, 1916 and 1951. The building was all but completely demolished in 1985 during which time the interior was complete reconfigured and the exterior restored to mimic its original construction.



Did you know?

Coin collectors ahoy! In 2007, the Royal Canadian Mint produced the world's first million-dollar coin. The coin was originally created as a showpiece, but after a number of buyers asked about its availability, the Mint opted to produce five for sale. The Million Dollar Coin is manufactured in Ottawa.

Sparks Street

In the mid-19th century, few thoroughfares in Ottawa were more important than Sparks Street. When Ottawa was selected as the national capital, it was a hub of affairs. It was home to various government offices, members of Parliament and a thriving commercial community. Sparks Street remained bustling and vital through the inter-war era, particularly due to its proximity to important local landmarks such as Confederation Square, the Russell House hotel and the old post office.

Yet as Ottawa grew in all directions, business became less centralized and Sparks Street's significance diminished. Government expanded across the city and brought many businesses—existing and new—with it. When the electric streetcar line was removed from Sparks Street in 1959, the final die was cast.

Since the 1960s, much has been made of the future of Sparks Street. It was turned into a pedestrian mall—temporarily at first—in 1961. Today, it remains a government-centric street and is largely unused on evenings and weekends.

Did you know?

Nicholas Sparks, the man after whom Sparks Street was named, once owned most of the lands on which downtown Ottawa now sits. In 1823, he paid £95 to buy 200 acres of land that would today be bordered by Wellington Street to the north, Laurier Avenue to the south, Bronson Avenue to the west and Waller Street to the east.

Did you know?

Two flagstaffs stand outside the Supreme Court building. The western flag flies daily; the eastern only when the Court is in session.

Supreme Court of Canada

301 Wellington Street

Although it was founded in 1875, the Supreme Court of Canada did not earn a permanent home until 1882: on Bank Street at the foot of Parliament Hill. As Ottawa grew and the institutions of government were housed in grander and more elegant buildings, the Court's home appeared ill-matched to its neighbourhood. It had to be replaced.

Plans for a new, more iconic home for the Court were drawn up in the 1930s by Ernest Cormier, a Montreal architect and engineer renowned for his application of the Art Deco style. Construction began in 1939 with the laying of the cornerstone by Queen Elizabeth, the mother of our current monarch. Although the building was completed two years later, it was turned over to the government—not the Court—to house wartime offices. The Court was made to wait until 1946 to first conduct its business in the new building.

And what of the original home of the Court? It was razed in 1955 to make way for a parking lot. In the process, it earned the dubious honour of being the only building on Parliament Hill to be deliberately demolished.

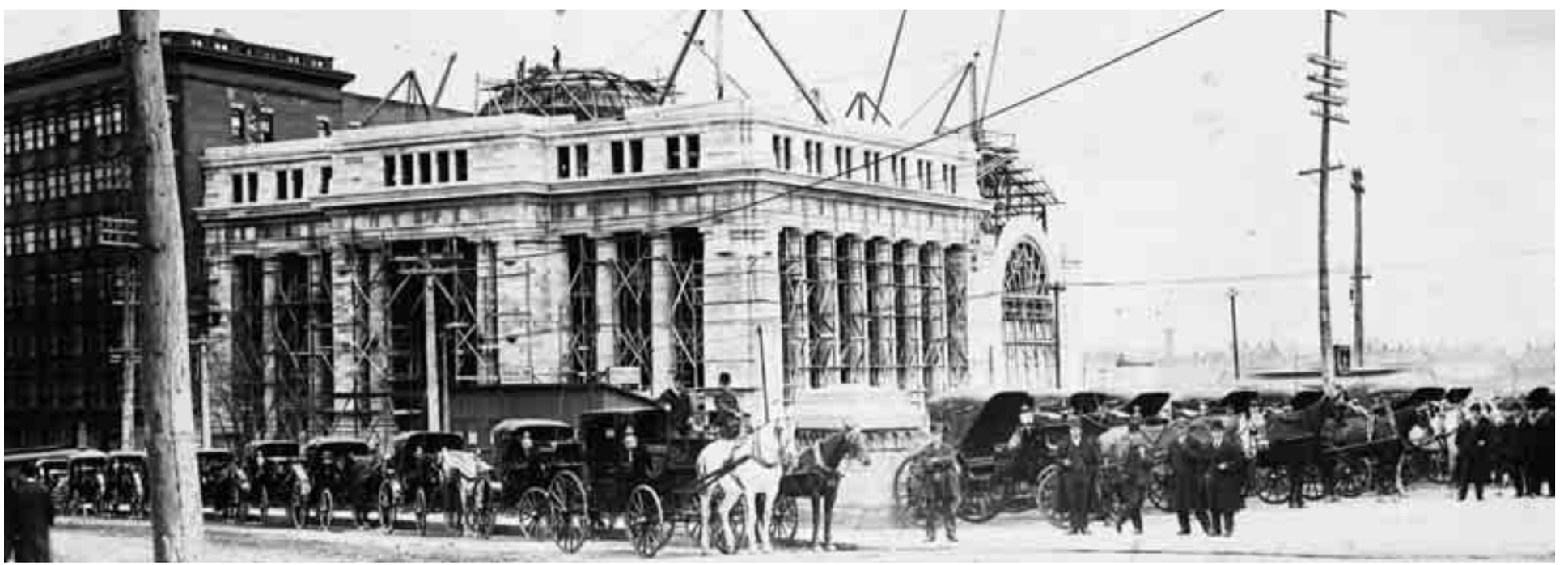
Union Station

2 Rideau Street

As a port of entry to Ottawa, Union Station was impressive in its day. Here was a fine example of the Beaux-Arts style of building: symmetrical and imposing on the exterior, while offering grand open spaces and ornate decorative treatments inside.

Union Station was built between 1909 and 1912—a period concurrent with construction of the Chateau Laurier. Prior to the station's construction, the various railways that served Ottawa did so from their own stations. The vision to create a central station was realized in 1891 and was shared not only by Grand Trunk Railway president Charles Melville Hays, but also Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Ottawa Mayor D'Arcy Scott.

After it opened, the station became the first in town to serve all railways in Ottawa. It did so until 1966 when passenger trains were moved out of the downtown core. Today, although plans have been mooted to turn the building into a grand museum or even another train station, it serves as a conference centre for the federal public service.



Did you know?

Union Station only narrowly avoided demolition after it hosted its last passenger. Plans drafted by the National Capital Commission called for the building to be razed. Yet these were suspended at the last minute due to the fact that the NCC did not want a demolition site to mar Canada's centennial celebrations.

University of Ottawa

75 Laurier Ave E

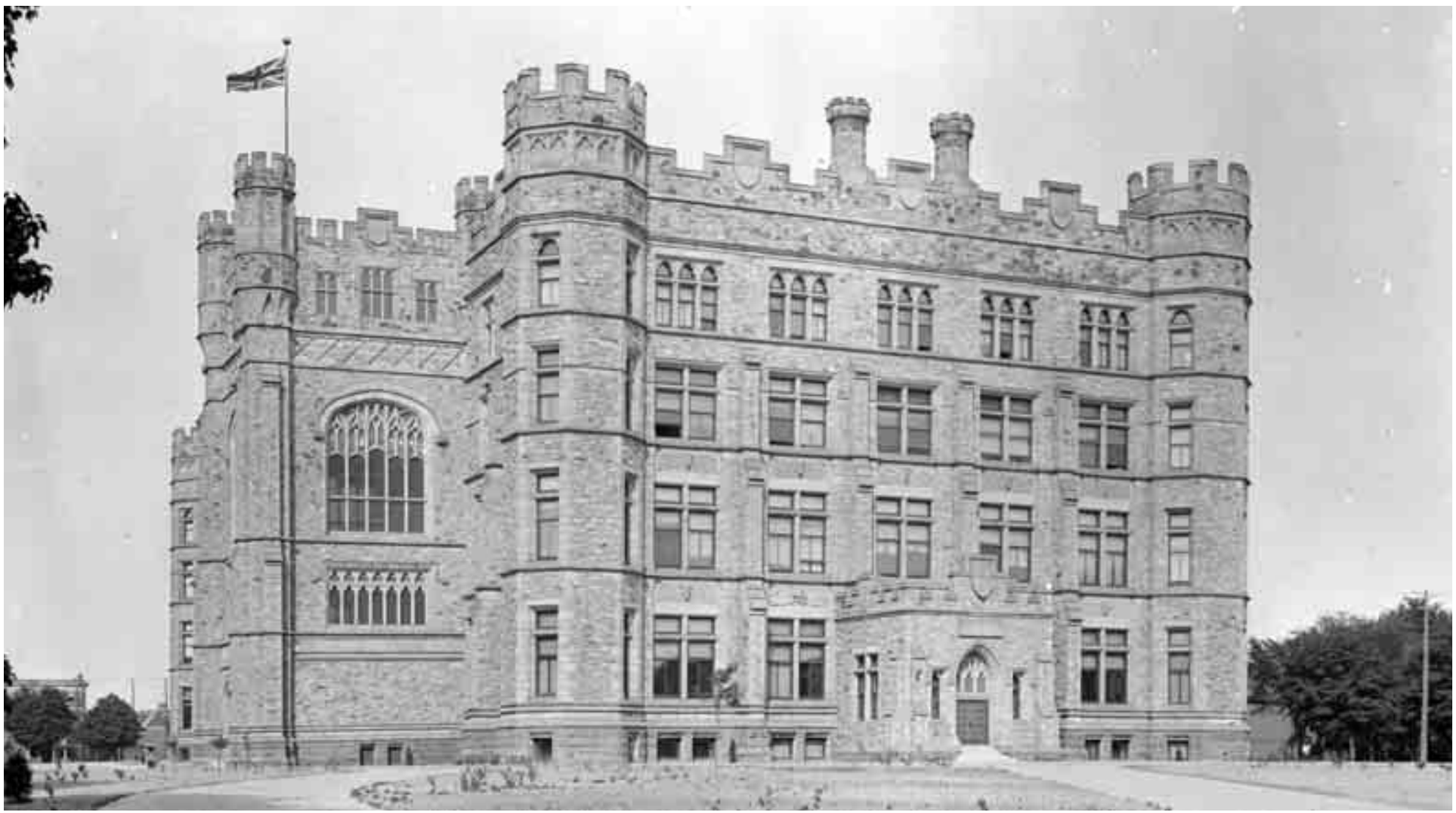
The University of Ottawa was established in 1848 as the College of Bytown by Joseph-Bruno Guigues, Ottawa's first Roman Catholic Bishop. It was housed in a wooden building next door to the Notre Dame Basilica and managed by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

After two moves, the growing college found its current home in Sandy Hill in 1856. It was renamed the College of Ottawa in 1861 and received university status five years later. Today, little remains of the oldest buildings on campus. Its main building, for example was gutted by fire in 1903. Tabaret Hall, the building most commonly associated with the face of the university, was erected on that site in 1905. The oldest remaining building on the campus is 100 Laurier Avenue, which was built in 1893.

The average age of the 30 main buildings on the university's campus is now about 63. In contrast with the very old are ultra-modern structures such as the School of Information Technology and Engineering building (constructed by Daoust Construction) and the Faculty of Social Sciences building (constructed by AECON).

Did you know?

The Victoria Memorial Museum Building acted as home to the House of Commons between 1916 and 1919 after fire destroyed the Centre Block of Parliament. The museum continued to serve as the government nerve centre until 1922.



Victoria Memorial Museum Building

240 McLeod Street

The federal government bought the land on which the Victoria Memorial Museum Building now sits in 1905 with the aim of creating a grand building at the south end of Metcalfe Street to complement the Parliament Buildings at the north.

Overseeing construction of the immense stone building was Chief Dominion Architect David Ewart. At a cost of $1.25 million, the building was built by local contractor George Goodwin and required the specialized expertise of 300 stonemasons from Scotland. Construction lasted between 1905 and 1911.

Yet all was not well with the building. In 1915, engineers found that site soil conditions could not continue to support its massive stone tower. The structure was subsequently torn down. It would not be until 2010, when a massive six-year renovation to the building was completed, that the tower was replaced. In its stead, a team of contractors led by PCL Constructors installed a much lighter, part-glass structure called the Queens' Lantern in honour of Queen Elizabeth II who visited the building in 2010 and Queen Victoria, after whom the building is named.

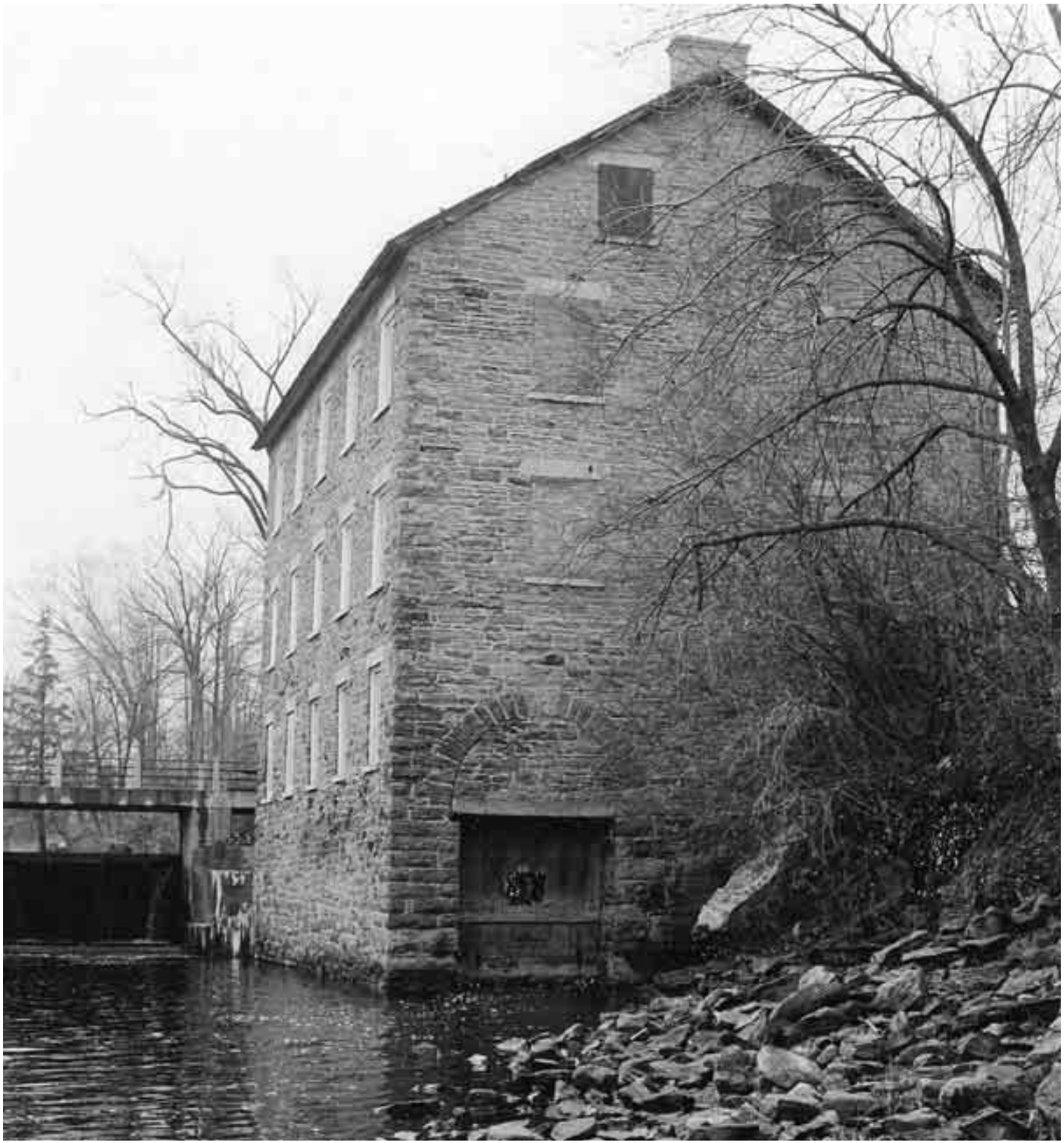
Watson's Mill

5525 Dickinson St

Watson's Mill's originally opened as a flour mill in 1860 and in those days it was known as the Long Island Milling Enterprise. The building was commissioned by two prominent local businessmen: Moss Kent Dickinson, who was known as the King of the Rideau for running freight and passenger boats up and down the Rideau Canal, and Joseph Merrill Currier, a lumber baron who would later build 24 Sussex Drive.

The men contracted with Thomas Langrell to build the mill from local limestone and wood cut at the nearby Long Island Sawmill. Its interior was highly ornamental and its machinery was powered by six turbines that were built in a foundry owned by Currier.

Watson's Mill continues to operate today. Indeed, much of its original machinery is still in good working order and visitors may buy freshly milled flour on the premises. The mill is regarded by many as one of the premier examples of a 19th century Canadian grist mill.



Did you know?

The ghost of Ann Crosby Currier, the second wife of Joseph Currier, is said to haunt Watson's Mill. She died at the mill in 1861 when her dress caught in one of the turbine shafts. The accident prompted Currier to quit the mill operations and sell his share to Dickinson.

Then and now

Comparing construction, buildings and industry trends over the years

Then and now: Ottawa's sports venues

Lansdowne Park, the Ottawa Auditorium and even the Ottawa River

If you asked most Ottawans to name the most significant sports venue in town, they would likely respond with the Canadian Tire Centre. And while the home of the Ottawa Senators has been the most visible venue in town since 1995, it plays second fiddle – by a significant margin – to Lansdowne Park. Over the years, the park has been a focal point for hockey, football, rugby, baseball and countless other sports.

Other venues have also played prominent roles in Ottawa's sports history. As far as hockey is concerned, Dey's Arena on Laurier Avenue near the canal operated between 1907 and 1927 as the home of the Ottawa Hockey Club. The Ottawa Auditorium (which stood on the present site of the YMCA-YWCA building) followed in 1923 and stood until 1967 when it was replaced by the Ottawa Civic Centre.

Meanwhile, sports such as baseball, soccer, rugby union and Australian football have all enjoyed some history in town and were played on various purpose-built and university-owned fields.

Did you know?

Before the Rideau Carleton Raceway and the Connaught Park Racetrack served horseracing fans in the capital, races would be held in winter on the frozen Rideau Canal and the frozen Ottawa River.


CANADIAN TIRE CENTRE

Then and now: trains in Ottawa

From streetcars to inter-city travel

The idea of rail transit in Ottawa may be alien to most people. After all, trains were all but removed from the downtown core in 1966 and a generation of commuters grew up with the idea that rail was an antiquated or distinctly European mode of travel.

The old Ottawa City Passenger Railway Company began ferrying people about town in 1866. Electric streetcars followed in 1891. In the meantime, Ottawa connected itself to the transcontinental rail network in 1886. The introduction of union station in 1912 helped to unify the various stations and lines that ran through town. Rail helped people move not only within town, but throughout North America.

Rail's prominence in Ottawa changed when the National Capital Commission famously removed the rail tracks from the downtown core and relocated them to the current station on Tremblay Road. Buses became the principal means of in-town transportation and commuter rail all but died out.

Today, rail is chiefly used to move people from Ottawa to other parts of the country. The Via Rail *Corridor* passenger line runs from Quebec City to Windsor and is the busiest passenger train route in the country. Passengers access the network from either of two local stations. Freight, meanwhile, is hauled along rail lines through town en route, in part, to locations along the Smiths Falls to Coteau-du-Lac route.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Then and now: interprovincial bridges

Five bridges, tens of thousands of connections every day

Interprovincial bridges have been a reality of life in Ottawa since the 1820s. In those days, Colonel John By ordered construction of an eight-span bridge (known then as the Union Bridge, and today as the Chaudière Bridge) between Bytown and Wrightsville. Parts of that original bridge, some of which was built by Thomas McKay, remain intact today.

Construction of the Alexandra Bridge followed in 1900; when it opened, it was the longest bridge in the country. The bridge was originally intended primarily for rail traffic, but as the city's profile changed so did the bridge's use. Today, it serves cars, trucks, cyclists and pedestrians.

The Federal District Commission ordered construction of the Champlain Bridge between 1924 and 1928. The bridge today is the longest spanning the Ottawa River and was the subject of a major addition in 2002 that was completed by Fuller Construction.

The region's two newest river connections—the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge and the Portage Bridge—were built in 1963 and 1973 respectively to further ease traffic flow between Ontario and Quebec.

Intermittently, plans are discussed to create a sixth vehicular crossing. None has borne fruit.

Did you know?

A second bridge, dedicated to rail traffic, opened in 1880. The Prince of Wales Bridge was built by the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway in what is now Lebreton Flats. Although the bridge currently sits unused, plans suggest it may one day be converted to a pedestrian or cycling bridge.

Then and now: Ottawa's courthouses

Imposing architecture

Those who have run afoul of the law in Ottawa have faced charges laid in the city's courthouses. But until the mid-1980s, when the current courthouse opened on Elgin Street, going to court was a matter of visiting any one of a number of buildings around town. The new nine-storey building, built by EllisDon Corporation and opened in 1986, consolidated the local judiciary with the Ottawa branch of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice as well as the local land registry office.

The first courthouse and jail was built in Ottawa on Daly Street in 1842 and was destroyed by fire in 1869. The Carleton County Courthouse was built in 1870 and stands today on much the same site. It is a classically inspired building with an aura of 19th century justice. The building, which maintains much of its original character, has been entrusted to the Ottawa Arts Court Foundation and is home to more than 30 local arts and cultural groups.

Did you know?

In the early 19th century, the Scotsman John McAdam devised a new strategy for roadbuilding. Rather than laying layers of rock on top of one another to create roads, he theorized that native soils alone could support traffic, provided they were coated with a protective and waterproof crust. The macadamized road was a major innovation in road-building technology.

Then and now: road construction

The popularization of the car gave birth to the roadbuilding profession

Until the late 19th century, land travel in Upper Canada was a checkered business. In urban areas, such as Bytown, dirt roads allowed for the free movement of horse-drawn buggies and a small number of automobiles. In rural and remote areas, travellers relied—if that can be said—on wilderness tracks and so-called Indian roads to move goods. What inter-urban transit there was depended heavily on weather conditions.

It would not be until the popularization of the automobile in the mid-1920s in Ontario that residents began to call for more and better-built roads. Dirt roads were cleared of stumps and coated with tar macadam to allow for cleaner and more consistent surfaces. The face of the road worker changed, too. Early road builders were farm hands, landowners and even convicts forced to do hard time. As times changed, road building became a paid trade with its own set of training and safety standards.

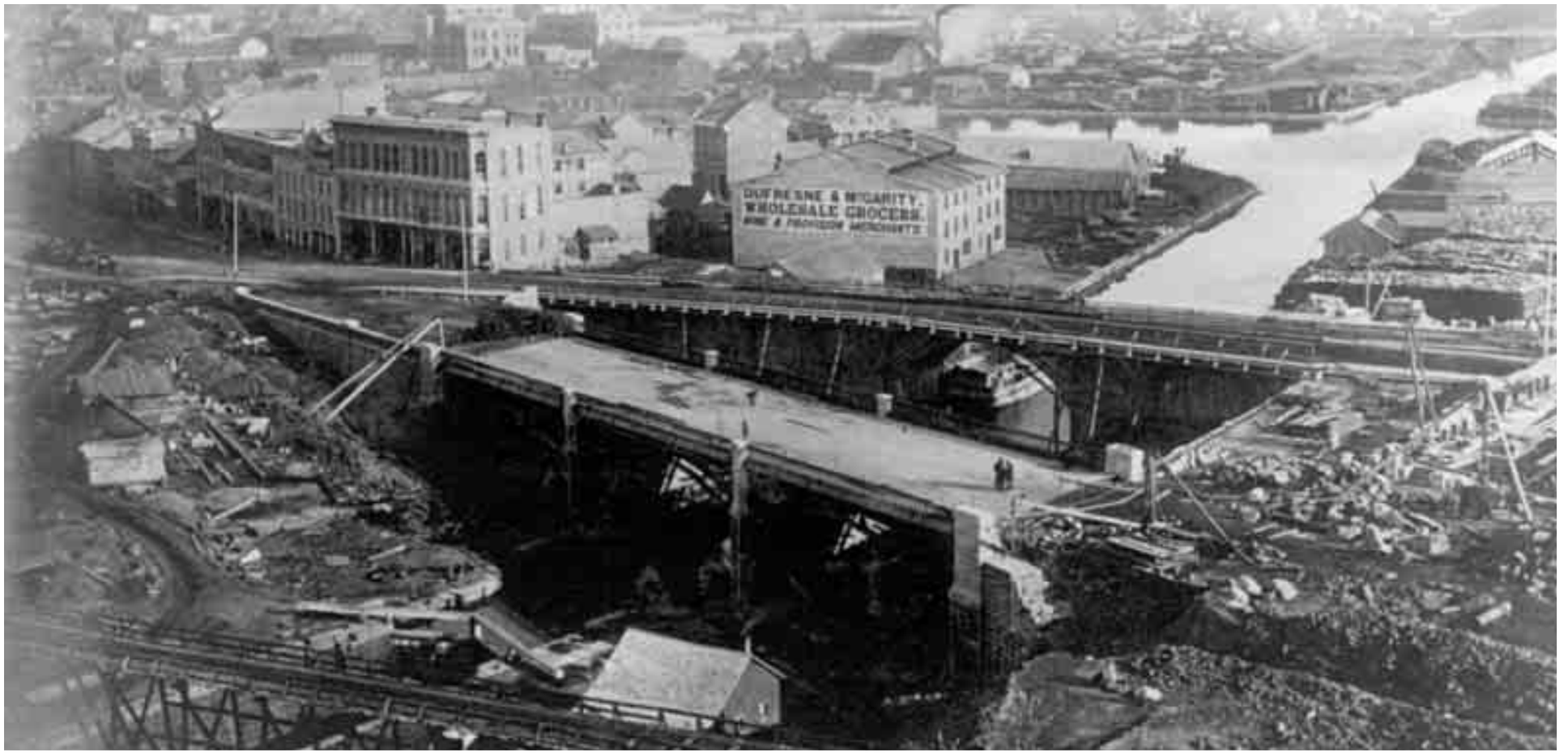
Road construction today is nothing like it was 100 years ago. It is swift, carefully engineered and performed by skilled tradesworkers who have trained for years in their professions. The materials used to build roads have changed too. Macadam gave way to asphalt as Ontario's road-building compound of choice, while concrete too is preferred in parts of the province for its greater durability.

Then and now: bridge construction

From towing spans into place along the Ottawa River to replacing an entire structure in less than a day

During construction of the Alexandra Bridge at the turn of the 20th century, workmen from the Ottawa Transportation Company floated scows onto the Ottawa River in order to properly position and hoist into place the massive cantilever span that formed the bridge's main deck. Assembly of the bridge—and indeed the design of the span itself—was seen in those days to be an engineering marvel.

More than 110 years later, the gold standard for bridge construction is rapid-replacement technology that sees an entire span of a bridge cut away and removed from site and a new span installed and readied for use in less than 24 hours. Rapid replacement has been used several times in Ottawa to date—by R. W. Tomlinson Ltd. and AECON Construction, among others—and is considered by the Ministry of Transportation to be the ideal solution to replacing aging bridges along Highway 417 with minimal disruption to traffic.



Did you know?

Rapid bridge replacement is infinitely quicker and less disruptive than traditional bridge-repair processes. The latter can take years to perform and requires significant efforts to redirect traffic.

Then and now: modern offices

The changing shape and size of modern office towers

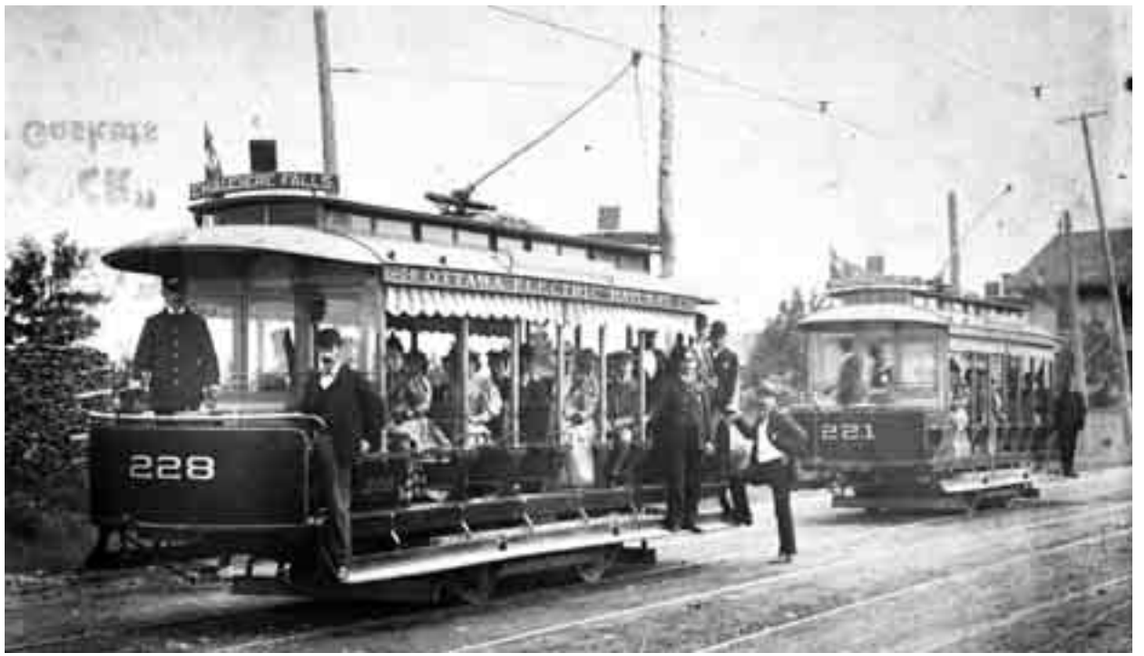
When you think about modern office towers in Ottawa, names such as Constitution Square, the World Exchange Plaza and the Export Development Canada Building rightly come to mind. Each is a prime example of technologically advanced, beautifully designed and well executed space for the business professional.

How will we view each in 30 or 40 years when trends have changed and the face of architecture has transformed? Perhaps as we now view formerly sophisticated buildings such as the Lester B. Pearson building (once considered a bold and dramatic architectural addition to the city's office community), or Place de Ville II – Tower C, which has the distinction of being the tallest building in the city even though it was built in 1972.

The face, shape and function of the modern office tower in Ottawa has changed significantly since high-density office construction came to the forefront of development in the 1960s and 70s. How it changes in the forthcoming years will be anyone's guess.

Did you know?

Carved into the steps of the Plaza of Honour, the outdoor amphitheatre located on the eastern edge of the World Exchange Plaza, are the names of many prominent community builders. Several construction entrepreneurs are among those celebrated.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Then and now: transit

Nearly 150 years of organized mass transit

The history of transit in Ottawa dates back to 1866 when the Ottawa Passenger Railway Company was awarded running rights in the city by the province of Canada. Horse-drawn trams were the local mode of transit in those days and remained so until 1891 when the Ottawa Electric Railway Company introduced electric streetcars.

Automobiles began to make their presence felt in Ottawa just after the turn of the century. It would not be until 1939 that buses became a regular downtown fixture, and then only between Elgin Street and Ottawa East.

The Ottawa Electric Railway was sold to the City of Ottawa in 1950 and the Ottawa Transportation Commission created in its place. The commission took over operation of the streetcar service, gradually phasing it out until the end of the decade.

OC Transpo, or the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission as it was formally known, replaced the OTC in 1973. In the early 1980s, it began construction of a city-wide dedicated rapid bus transit system—the Transitway—that connected the east and west suburbs to the downtown core.

In 2001, OC Transpo made its foray into light rail with the launch of the O-Train. Since then, the train service has come to count more than 10 million riders and is the subject of a massive, $2-billion downtown expansion.

From horse-drawn cars to light rail, transit in Ottawa has evolved significantly and in step with the needs of a growing and increasingly sophisticated city.

Then and now: sewer construction

Underground, never out of sight

Running water came to Ottawa households via underground pipes and sewers in 1876, shortly after the Fleet Street Pumping Station opened. In those days, the water delivered to homeowners would have hardly stood up to the high quality drinking water we enjoy today, yet it served an important purpose nonetheless: to aid in the fighting of fires.

Sewage treatment plants were slow to follow, coming into prominence largely after the First World War. Ottawa's earliest, and one of its most memorable, experiences with sewers came in May 1929 when a series of explosions rocked neighbourhoods across the city. The blasts shot manhole covers high into the air, damaging many buildings and killed one person while injuring others. No cause for the accident was ever determined, but pollution is now suspected as its catalyst.

Sewer pipes and watermains today are far safer and longer lasting than they ever have been. They are installed every day by experienced workers and qualified contractors who perform such complex work quickly, safely and efficiently.


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Workers on site during construction of the Parliament Buildings, July 1924.
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