THE INHERITANCE

Ever since its founding by William Morris in 1877 the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has had a particular philosophy. This can be summed up in the words "conservative repair" and is the antithesis of "conjectural restoration".

The basic idea is that ancient fabric should be disturbed as little as possible, the patina of age left on unscraped surfaces, and history not falsified by moving buildings to other sites or completing unfinished portions. When repairs are necessary they should be done with materials sympathetic to the existing structure but not concealed by artificial tooling, ageing, or staining.

We should only approach old buildings humbly, being, as Morris said, "only the Trustees for those who come after us". Indeed the best attention we may pay them is to "stave off decay with daily care". Simple operations like keeping gutters clean, pointing sound, and woodwork painted, will maintain buildings at minimum expense for generations.

David Pearce, in introduction to 1981 reprint of A. R. Powys, "Repair of Ancient Buildings", 1929.

The architect may be disappointed that the advice given is not more precise, and the layman may complain that it is too technical. If that is so I would remind the first of these critics that each case must be treated as a separate problem, that he can expect to find nothing in the text of this book which will completely apply to any actual case. The advice is intended to be helpful in suggesting a right treatment, and not as providing dogmatic instructions as to the only way to proceed; and if the layman learns from the following pages that the difficulties are greater and the alternative methods more in number than he had thought, and therefore comes to realise what an infinity of care must be exercised in arranging for, and carrying out, such works, my two objects will be fulfilled.

A. R. Powys, in preface to "Repair of Ancient Buildings", 1929.

Heritage resources: their variety and importance

Classics is good stuff. Anything that gives you a foot in the past is good stuff. Can't understand the present if you don't know the past, what?

Robertson Davies, "What's Bred in the Bone", 1985

The built environment — an irreplaceable legacy

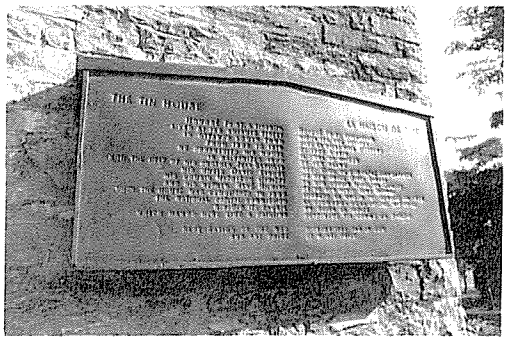
It is easy nowadays (much easier than a decade ago) to argue for the protection of great monumental buildings, seats of government, former mansions of the rich, even the more humble architecture of the picturesque village. These places are rare and are intimately connected to both history and the tales we embroider onto history. They are not, however, typical of the myriad buildings more closely woven into everyday existence — houses, shops, factories, schools, farms.

We have inherited a great stock of more or less commonplace building that appears in statistical accounts as a pool of capital investment, aging and needing constant maintenance and repair. But each item in this stock, each building, is an individual worth careful consideration. Though most are ordinary working parts of the environment, each may be worth as much to our cultural inheritance as the grandest edifice, if only we look carefully and understand what we see.

Every old building or structure has distinctive qualities that may make it worthy of attention when advanced age and other factors force an irreversible decision about its fate.

Giving the inheritance its names

Several different terms — "historic architecture", "historic buildings", "built heritage", "architectural heritage", and so on — refer to much the same thing. Each includes the inherited stock of old buildings and properties constructed and maintained by human activity. In this context, one should think of "architecture" very generally, for very few older buildings can be traced to any single person, much less one called "architect". "Buildings" include not only houses and other forms of shelter, but also structures such as bridges and factories, even roads and fencelines. All of this together is the "built environment".



Interpretive and commemorative markers explain the value and importance of many heritage resources, be they buildings, sites or landscapes.

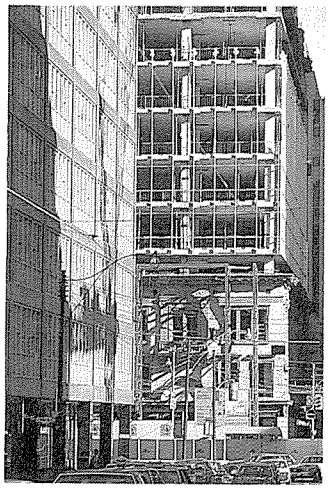
Geographers call this combination of building, site and environment "cultural landscape". An even broader concept — "cultural heritage" — covers the entire spectrum of artifacts produced by a culture, including fixed places, portable items, oral traditions, even systems of belief. Museum professionals refer to the "material culture" of artifacts in collections, but often include the outside world of buildings and environments. Environmentalists and planners consider every element of the environment a potential "resource" available for use or deserving of protection — thus, "heritage resources".

Clearly, these related concepts overlap, and distinctions may be subtle. They are specialized terms for similar concepts, calling attention to the character of individual places and objects, particular contexts and common threads. They recognize and name creations that fulfil human needs and protect important values.

Understanding the inheritance

The value of any portion of this inheritance is its importance to those with economic resources or authority to decide on its future. The worth of the past is its worth for the future. Though a site or building may be deemed important enough to be saved, it cannot be saved without the means to sustain its future. Revealing a building's importance as a heritage resource can help affirm its value for future use.

The past is a collection of memories, individual and shared. The built environment is an essential part of the achievements of the society that constructed it. An individual building may be important for what it embodies of its builders or for what it represents of those builders. The way it looks, the irreplaceable craftsmanship of its construction, the skill evident in its component parts and their combination on a distinctive piece of ground are visual and tactile evidence of the style and quality of construction of a specific era, now gone forever. These factors comprise a building's



Conserving buildings may involve difficult situations and choices. In this case, the three-storey façade is submerged beneath a new office block as an outcome of high land values and development pressures, but the result does not respect the scale, detail and character of what little survives of the historic building.

perceptible "architectural" value. The building is also associated to people and events in the past, to individual and shared memories. This "historic" or "historical" value is less tangible, yet more powerful: reverence for history has a longer and broader tradition than appreciation of architecture and it is more easily communicated. Some remarkably ugly and graceless buildings are nevertheless cherished by their communities. Conversely, some delightful treasures in built form are unprotected and decaying because no one has yet appreciated their excellence, because an entire area has been given up for lost, or because they are threatened with ill-considered "modern improvements".

Coping with change

This threat of modern improvement is the darker side of heritage conservation. The world has been transformed during this century, in both quantity and quality. In many ways, the modernism of previous generations has failed to live up to its promise, and our environment has been despoiled in the name of progress. Many towns and cities have been disfigured by huge office and apartment blocks and by empty sites awaiting development. Even individually well-designed buildings intrude into neighbourhoods, casting deep shadows, funnelling high winds, introducing more and more disruptive traffic and pushing out the people who had once taken pride in their surroundings. There are few guarantees that new development will be more livable than the old, and there is a lot of evidence to demonstrate the opposite. The conservation of buildings and communities has often seemed at war with change, with "progress".

The other side of "improvement" is the abandonment of properties as priorities and economic activities change and even migrate across the landscape. Though development may pass by a community or region and thus lessen the pressure for dramatic change, such circumstances may remove the impetus to maintain properties and thus threaten heritage resources by slow neglect. Clearly, a balance of old and new, of repair and development, must be achieved.

Conservation depends on the future. The importance of the past depends on resources to maintain it into the future, on the very agents of change that threaten it. The value of the built environment must be demonstrated within a context of change. Valuing and evaluating historic architecture is an essential part of planning for the future.

Deciding to conserve

Most publications on heritage conservation take it for granted that the decision about the importance of a property and the need for conservation has already been made. But because conserving a place depends on why and how it has been selected, and by whom, this guide starts from the beginning, that first decision.

The following pages surveying "the inheritance" lay out the background to discovering how all or part of an old building or site may merit care and conservation. They survey the many dimensions of architecture and landscape: their development over time, extraordinary variety, stylistic and artistic character, and variation from region to region. They show how to evaluate the importance of specific places and the reasons for their conservation. Is the place important enough to save? Very often the answer is "yes". But that "yes" raises many other questions, most beginning with "how", whose answers must be sought in the conservation principles and practices that follow.

The built environment is an ensemble made up of many parts; it loses most of its cultural value when its parts are taken apart and taken away.

Building as an historical activity in Ontario

The first question usually asked about an old building is, "When was it built?" But no historical factor is so potentially misleading as mere age. The value of history lies only incidentally in dates; it is far more important to fit a place into its time and circumstances. A construction date is only a first step in evaluation, not a goal. And antiquity may not be a place's only important historical attribute. The oldest surviving house in a neighbourhood may not be the most valuable to the neighbourhood's history. Chronology is far more complex.

The fatal metaphor of progress, which means leaving things behind us, has utterly obscured the real idea of growth, which means leaving things inside us.

G.K. Chesterton, "Fancies Versus Fads", 1923

Construction or development of a building or landscape is invariably part of a larger story, tied into the development of community, region and nation. The year of construction must be seen in context of technology of the time, strength or weakness of the local and wider economies, stylistic fashions of the day, social status of the builder, and other contemporary structures (even those yet to come). Though very early buildings are generally rare, construction has always been subject to multi-year cycles and a building from a slow construction period may well be "rarer" than one put up during an earlier boom.

There are many sources for the economic and social history of the province (some rather dry and academic), but few examine architecture and building as part of that history. A good general survey with regional coverage is CURR63; it provides many useful basic references for both economic and social history. The standard source for economic references is EAST67. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources published TOPI75 as a planning aid for a proposed system of historical parks; though the parks were never built, the report offers a useful potted historical geography of the province that describes and maps what activities were happening where, and when.

No single comprehensive information source can assign a place its historical distinction. There are wide and deep national and provincial influences and more singular influences of region and neighbourhood. Names, dates and politics have little direct effect on the development and look of land and building. By themselves, historical documents seldom offer conclusive evidence about what appeared on the ground at any time.

The following sketch leaves out prehistoric native occupation of the land, which left no permanent buildings and only fragmentary material traces.

Early European settlement

The economic formation of Ontario was not a smooth rise from early trading through colonization of land and resources to the variegated agricultural and industrial force of today . Business growth was cyclical, adoption of new technologies was uncertain, and the flow of people in and out varied with events in the wider world.

Until after the American Revolution, Ontario's only regular European inhabitants were fur traders, and the only establishments with any permanence were their posts and small fortifications. When occupation of Upper Canada's land became necessary for political and defensive reasons after 1784, settlement proceeded in fits and starts with the immediate arrival of Loyalists, followed later by many more American and British immigrants.

The earliest buildings appeared very basic and elemental, with only a rare flash of the Georgian elegance of the mother country or the former colonies to the south. Only after the War of 1812 did local production of some goods become more than mere subsistence. In the early 1820s came rough manufacturing and more-than-rough building, to accommodate a post-war boom in immigration and the large-scale export of timber, the colony's primary staple good. The best of the surviving early residences come from this first period of Upper Canadian prosperity.

Waves of growth

Economic depression coincided with the 1837 rebellions and halted colonial growth. Slow recovery accompanied political reform in the early 1840s, but development then slowed once more. Only when the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 permitted liberalization of trade and access to the American market for staple resources did the provincial economy come alive in a spurt of railway- and town-building. The grand Italianate mansions, railway stations and main-street blocks of this period defined the character of many towns in the south; prosperity could be seen as well in new dwellings that replaced the first humble farmsteads. This boom, based on trade in wheat and lumber and on government action, ground to a halt in 1866, when the Reciprocity Treaty was abrogated. The recession coincided with Confederation and deepened into depression in 1873.

Expansion of the railways to the prairies improved central Canada's financial state, and the early 1880s saw a renewal of the earlier

commercial expansion and growing importance for Ontario's towns and cities in the national economy. Though Canada had hardly begun to capitalize on its western resources, the landscape of southern Ontario was maturing, and the character and scale of many of its main streets were fixed in the brick, metal, glass, and stone that still survive. The large factory joined the earlier small workshop; the farm began to produce more varieties of food for nearby communities, supplanting its earlier dependence on exports of wheat. Though northern Ontario had been economically important for the fur trade long before 1800, permanent settlement became possible only as railway construction opened it to logging and mining. But the boom turned to bust in the 1890s, reaching its nadir in a world-wide depression of 1896, to which Canada's trade was especially vulnerable.

Fortunes changed rapidly, and despite a brief slowdown around 1908, the period from 1897 to well into the First World War was one of great expansion and great building in Ontario, based largely on servicing western expansion. Some older centres of the south were transformed by new factories, commerce and utilities, while the north was opened up by railway-based mining, lumbering and eventually agriculture. By 1920, a post-war lull had slowed development, but the booming late 1920s produced new transformations: paved roads, middle-class subdivisons, even modest skyscrapers. The more successful cities and towns experienced diverse and continuous growth, becoming less susceptible to cycles of boom and bust, but towns based on natural resources or single industries bore the badges of abrupt growth and the scars of equally abrupt decline.

The Depression which followed 1929 reached its deepest point around 1933. After partial recoveries in 1935 and again in 1938, the wartime economy of 1939–45 finally reaffirmed Ontario's economic growth. By this time, though, the "frontier" was essentially closed, even in the north. New building appeared in the gaps of an already filled-out landscape or in complete redevelopments. After some difficult post-war adjustments, the cycles continued: down in the early 1950s, up in the 1960s and '70s, down in the energy crunch of the early 1980s, up again afterwards. Each peak brought a construction boom, and it is now possible to distinguish characteristics unique to each period.

The modern-day character of many Ontario towns can be traced to one or another of these peak building periods — the 1820s, the 1850s, the late 1880s, the 1900s and 1910s, the late 1920s — so that building during slow times, comparatively rare, may well be more valuable than representatives of the peaks; yet the overall character of a neighbourhood or town relies heavily on those peaks.

Timing and the built environment

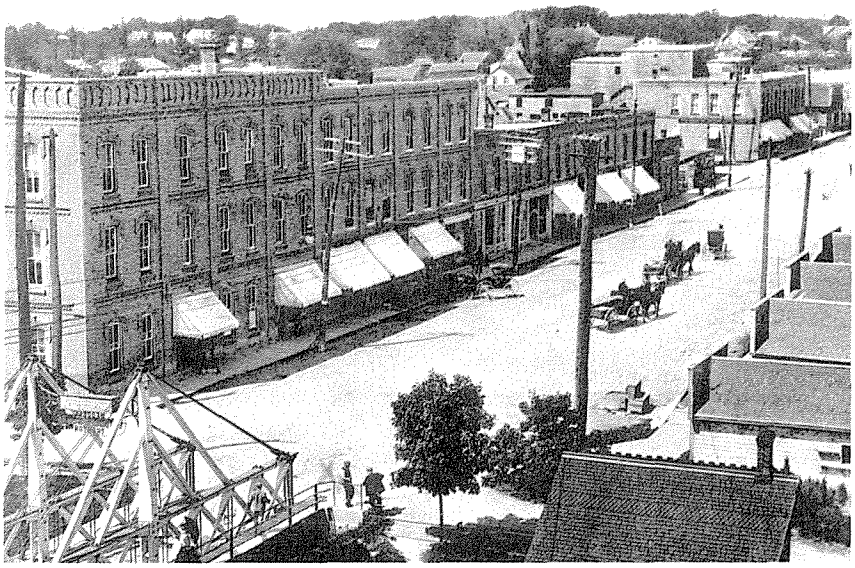
These economic cycles and their associated social and cultural forces cannot in themselves explain the many local variations. Specific events and episodes place a building in its local time. When the railway came or did not come, when a certain pattern book showed up in town, when a prominent local family visited a big city for the first time, when a certain colour of brick became available, when a branch bank failed, when a charismatic preacher arrived — all these are part of the detective puzzle of chronology.

Improvements in transportation are crucial, both directly and indirectly. The railway allowed importation of new materials and tools as well as new people, and consequent differences in woodwork, for example, between buildings before and after the railway can help determine their dates and their influences on other local buildings of the period. A five-year difference between the railway's coming to one town and then another may account for a considerable difference in the look of their buildings. Many towns owe their special character to the coming of the railway at a particular time, and many also owe survival of much of that character to inertia when the railway was abandoned.

Later, the automobile's need for paved roads changed the landscape of entire regions, as well as the design of buildings to better attract the attention of drivers and passengers. Buildings of the 1920s that reflect these changes often stand next to other buildings of the 1920s built in the spirit of the 1890s, or even the 1860s.

The role of government (from local to federal) has also varied from place to place, and from

Waves and cycles in building appear most conspicuously on "main street". Few commercial streets display uniform architecture, because few were built up continuously in a few years. Buildings of several eras and unbuilt lots punctuate every Ontario townscape, giving each its distinctive character and rhythm by echoing the pace of building over many years.



time to time. Public construction often took over when economic slowdowns halted private construction — many courthouses appeared during slow periods throughout the 19th century, and many provincial highways and bridges were built during the Depression. Social and cultural institutions have also filled in gaps in private construction. Some churches preceded development of surrounding residential areas, while others appeared only after their neighbourhoods and congregations had attained stability — few were built *during* a boom.

As towns and rural areas matured from one rush of building to the next, the quality of construction and detail may have generally improved. With community maturity, a building can more likely be attributed to a known architect, builder or contractor.

Among the most lasting effects of the ups-and-downs of building is the movement of population from place to place. Economic disparities have pushed people out of declining regions and lured them to prosperous areas. Regions long since passed over by new developments have often been very stable. Residents of town and countryside often establish strong ties to buildings and land over generations, continuously using and maintaining their built heritage — though lack of resources for maintenance has sometimes led to deterioration. In busier areas, especially around cities and in prime recreational zones, people seem more mobile. In these places, conservation of built heritage relies on the search for and recovery of a community's earlier identity to distinguish among the generic look-alike developments that obscure the traces of that past.

Types and varieties

When you know how to look, you can discover the spirit of an age and the physiognomy of a king even in a door-knocker.

Victor Hugo, "Notre Dame de Paris"

Diversity in the built environment

The "architectural heritage" consists not merely of grand public buildings or the mansions of the rich. Such monumental places are in any case much less evident in today's rapidly developing towns and cities. More modest material reminders of the past, from industrial sites to main streets to working farmsteads, have become far more valuable as vital elements of present and future plans. Even the most humble place or building has potential for continued or enhanced use in a new context.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to decide if a generating station is more historically important or practically reusable than a theatre or a row of workers' cottages. Each type of place must be considered on its own merits, with its own problems and potentials. As every historical activity has contributed to the distinction of a town or rural area, types of building or landscape associated with those activities deserve attention.

There are many ways to classify built features, and the following breakdown is by no means definitive. Each type has characteristics of its own yet each overlaps with other types. Every town or district has a particular combination of "standard" elements that may well exist individually in other places. Nevertheless, even houses built from a pattern book widely available during a given era are different because of their particular contexts of time, place and people. Seemingly similar wildlands may differ based on the history of their logging and their abandoned relics.

The knotty questions of style and importance must respect the type of building or district: commercial versions of a style may vary from residential treatments, and may be comparable with one another only detail by detail (see ELEMENTS AND STYLES).

Texts on the types of buildings and environments found in Ontario are increasing rapidly in number. These include several volumes by Macrae and Adamson, newer regional studies that examine architecture or landscape by type, and research studies published by federal and provincial heritage agencies, some of which are hard to find but worth the search. An excellent series of sources for rural southern Ontario houses and mills are Blake's historical studies in the conservation authority reports of the 1950s, generalized in BLAK69. A useful digest of the types on which this section is based is in FRAM84a.

See, in general, BLAK69, CHAP66, GREE74, HUMP80 and RICHnd; for waterways, LEGG76; for road bridges, CUMI84; for wildlands, HILT86 as well as early conservation authority reports; for farms, ARTH72; for mills, PRIA76; for dwellings, MACR63 and REMP80; for churches, MACR75 and REMP80; for courthouses and town halls, CART83b, MACR83 and DECA87; for parks and gardens, VONB84; for commerce, PRIA78, HOLD85 and LONG87.

A catalogue of types

Waterways

Roads and bridges

Railways and stations

Communications

Abandoned lands

Woodlands

Mines

Mills

Fields

Farmsteads

Dwellings

Churches and cemeteries

Schools

Community initiatives

Parks and gardens

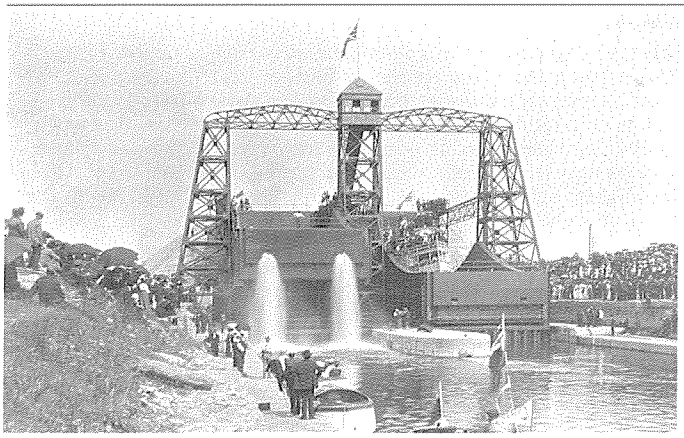
Public works and utilities

Social institutions

Industries

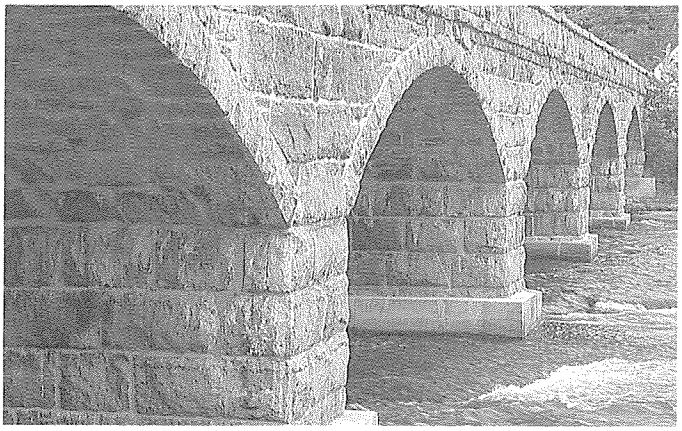
Commerce and main street

Hotels and entertainment



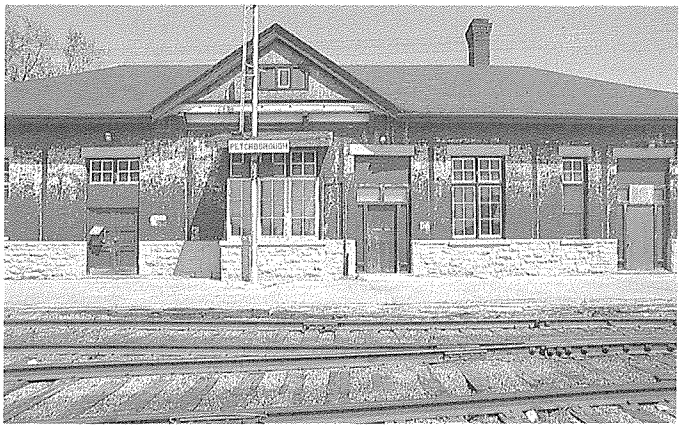
WATERWAYS

Most of the province was first settled via its watercourses, and many in the south were improved with canals, locks and harbours to make navigation easier and more reliable. At first, such improvements were both commercial and military. The Rideau waterway is the oldest of this type still in use. There are traces, both relic and operating, of many other navigation improvements, in wood and stone, and later concrete. Locks, docks, wharves, warehouses, lighthouses, elevators and shipyards may have been taken for granted in the past, but where they have survived have become attractions for residents and visitors. Many are no-nonsense products of basic engineering, modest but well built; some have been embellished with architectural detail of great charm and interest. Some waterfronts, attractive for tourism and recreation because of their historic interest, have difficulty maintaining that distinction in the face of out-of-key new developments.



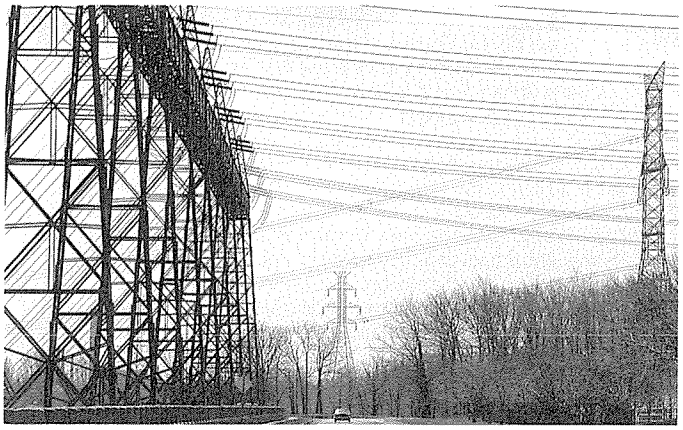
ROADS AND BRIDGES

Only in this century have roads and streets been paved as a matter of course; until the era of bicycles and automobiles, road travel in country and even town was unreliable. Yet even the most primitive early roads were vital, providing access and defining the present-day network of land ownership. Most modern highways follow the routes of the first settlers or the even earlier native peoples. The frequent roadside rows of trees in both town and country are human additions of the last century, to shelter fields and improve neighbourhoods. The unspectacular but lumpy topography of Ontario has required bridges of all types since its earliest settlement, from modest wooden, metal and concrete structures to the great arches and suspension spans at the province's borders. Each bridge is an important visual and historical landmark, and many embody engineering and design innovations unique to their era.



RAILWAYS AND STATIONS

Waterways and muddy tracks may have colonized Ontario, but railways enriched and industrialized it. Agriculture, lumbering and mining were all transformed and modernized by the railway. On occasion railway companies built entire settlements. Tracks, with their embankments, trestles and bridges, transformed the landscape and have massive traces even where abandoned. Stations were and in a few cases still are magnificent gateways for the traveller, built in grand style to rival any public building. Though passenger travel is no longer what it was, many stations remain, sometimes recycled to new commercial or public uses. There are northern communities whose sole land access is by rail, and whose look and livelihood depend on trains. Every southern community owes its character, even its building materials, to some 19th-century decision by a railway to pass through, or pass by.



COMMUNICATIONS

Though often consisting of little more than towers and wires, or even less substantial lines of sight between towers, the routes and terminals of energy and communication are vital components of the contemporary landscape. Their origins lie in the earliest hydroelectric developments of the late 19th century. Some of these were bold architectural monuments to a new industrial age, and some still produce power. The lacy towers of electric transmission are seldom considered visual assets, though the oldest lines near the oldest stations have historical importance as engineering structures. Few early communication features have outlasted rapid technological change, though some early aircraft hangars and communication towers of unusual or innovative design survive; their protection must be based on their intrinsic historic importance, since their visual interest is admittedly unconventional.

ABANDONED LANDS

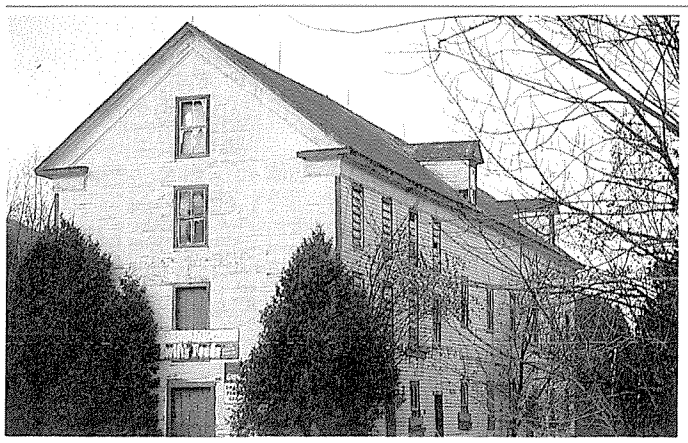
Very little of what we regard as wilderness is really untamed. Much of Ontario that looks wild is second- or third-generation forest growth that contains relics of prehistoric occupation or of later efforts to trade in its furs or to log or mine its resources. Yet this landscape, now much used for recreation, has its own history and relics of recreational use, back as early as the first retired officers going to the hunt in the 1820s. The railways opened many such opportunities in the north, creating and selling the wilderness idea as a tourist draw. Where "virgin" unharvested land does survive, it is a rare reminder of pre-settlement Ontario. Other wild-looking places may be evidence of settlement gone sour, of the land exhausted. They often hold traces of their past almost undisturbed, but newly vulnerable to destruction if made accessible again.

WOODLANDS

Almost all of Ontario has been at one time productive woodland, complete with shanties, loggers, sawmills and itinerant camps. Lumbering is dynamic, moving into the wilderness and leaving in its wake new communities and farmland, but also much wasteland. Regeneration is very slow in Ontario's climate, and most producing woodlands are in the north. But small mills, some even able to run under a head of water, still survive in southern woodlots, reminders of the wholesale harvesting of the great hardwood and pine forests by early loggers and settlers.

MINES

Isolated minesites exist throughout the province from the nation's earliest oilfields in the southwest, to the latest gold strikes in the north. Many sites have been abandoned, and they offer evidence, often in decaying condition, of the fortunes of a risky business: headframes, ore houses, workshops, underground works and open pits. Though Sudbury's metal mines are important to the world, Ontario's most conspicuous mining is not for precious ores, but for building materials: shale, clay, sand, gravel. Their huge pits are both gross disfigurements of the rural landscape and impressive monuments of industrial growth. Technical experimentation and innovation has been important in mining, and many structures central to that history survive, deteriorating and almost forgotten, in remote locations.

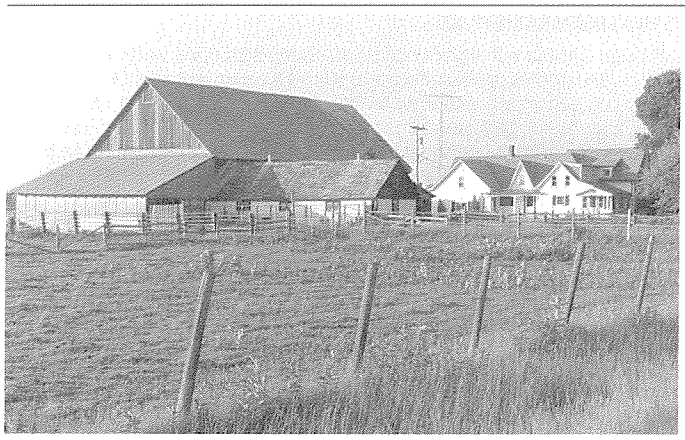


MILLS

Mills are the scattered, water-powered, small-scale precursors to the modern industries of Ontario. Among the first permanent non-military buildings were British-built gristmills that gave early settlers some self-sufficiency. Almost every early settlement was based on mills that ground flour, sawed lumber, processed wool into cloth, distilled alcohol, tanned leather or forged metal. Built of heavy timber, sometimes encased in stone, these structures have often survived while their communities disappeared. A few still operate as mills. Their landmark character comes from their size, simple yet refined architectural details and well-thought proportioning. Sawmills were often built of their own products as a form of advertising, though fire or rot has claimed many. The stone grist- or fulling-mill survives in many small communities, sometimes recycled to new use, but often still vulnerable to continued neglect.

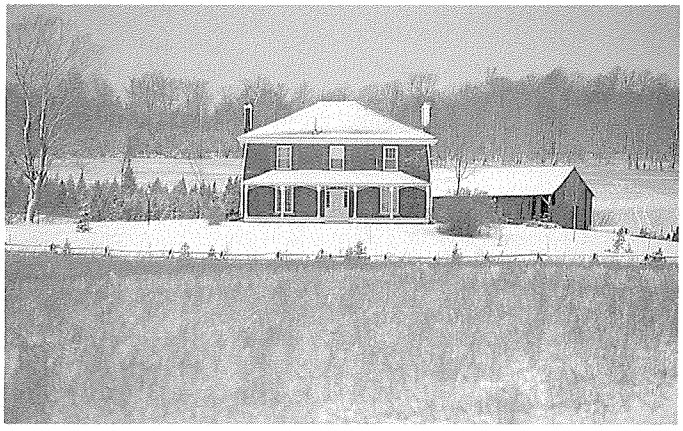
FIELDS

Southern rural landscapes, whether flat or rolling, are framed and given their characteristic form by rows of fences, trees and bush. The field-landscape is a vital reminder of both early settlement and maturing agricultural practice in the 19th century. There remain occasional reminders, in more remote and hard-to-farm areas, of the stony and stump-strewn fields of the pioneers. More productive areas in the south still present semblances of the rolling terrain of wheat that dominated the early railway era and the smaller variegated fields that followed, but recent tendencies to much larger fields and to neglect or demolition of the tree-lined drives and traditional field patterns have exposed the land to erosion and removed many of its prettiest views. Orchards in Niagara and market gardens near southern cities are overrun by urban development; only rarely does any feature but the road grid survive urbanization.



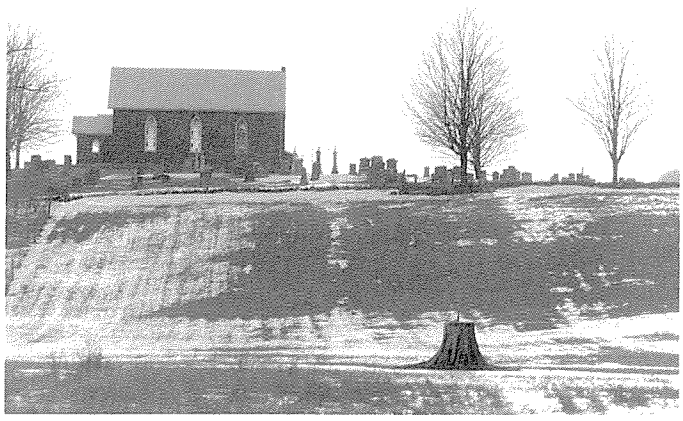
FARMSTEADS

The heart of the agricultural industry, and the social forces that go with it, is in the huddle of farmhouse, barns, sheds, cribs and windbreaks that lies at the heart of every farm. The growth and emerging prosperity of many farms are often visible in the sequence of houses built on the same property by succeeding generations; even the oldest cabin sometimes survives as a shed. The house grows larger, becomes more stylish and comfortable; the barn gets bigger, housing more equipment, more livestock, more grain. The most prosperous farms acquire canneries or tanneries. But others never prosper, never get beyond the first or second house on account of poor soil or poor management, and these survive next to the successes, presenting a vivid cross-section of history. The big barn is key to this historic assemblage — it can no longer be built in traditional form or materials, and it is vulnerable to decay at the hands of both natural elements and barnboard thieves.



DWELLINGS

Every residence from the rural cottage to the city mansion displays both the stylistic interests and social status of builders and occupants in traces both subtle and conspicuous. In numbers, this is the most ubiquitous type; in character, the most variable. Covered in almost any durable material, in almost any conceivable style, most Ontario houses have skeletons of wood, with windows and decoration in wood. Where original forms and details survive, external styling and internal planning can date a house almost as surely as a cornerstone. Dwellings may also display an entire history of use and change, and conservation often involves a delicate balance of preservation and use. In this sense, a modest house may be a no less important and valuable artifact than a grand residence. Multiple housing, especially urban apartment blocks, is not common in Ontario; the rarity of early examples gives them special importance.

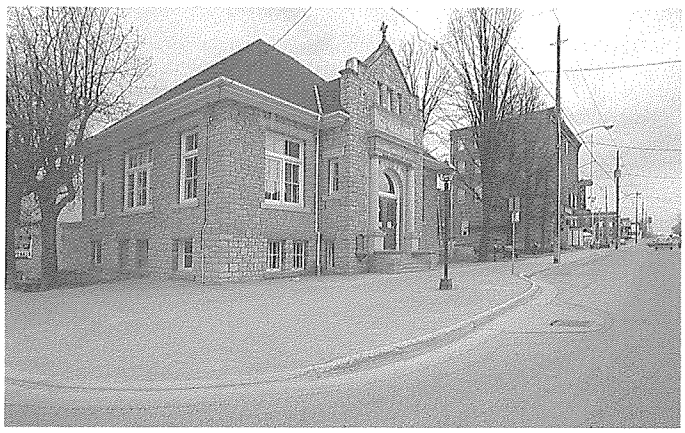


CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

The characteristic skyline of Ontario towns and villages punctures the horizon with steeples. Just as for farm residences, church-building becomes more and more ambitious with the prosperity of congregations. Ontario's traditionally multiform Christianity has bequeathed several churches to even the smallest 19th-century towns, and most have been well kept. They express both deep attachment to the faith of the old country and the drive and ambition of the new. Denominations other than Protestantism have built places of worship at once similar to the main Protestant streams and distinct from them in both plan and detail. The characteristic greenery of Ontario communities is enriched by the burial grounds adjacent to these churches, with finely cut and carved stones and sculptures that are both artistic and informative. But church and cemetery face their advancing age, and its toll on their fabric, with dwindling resources.

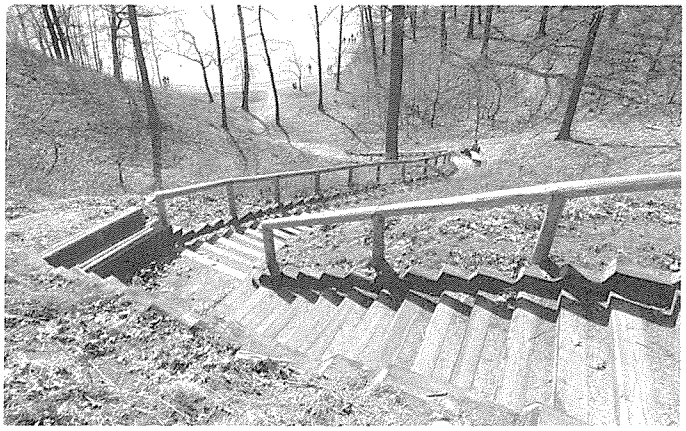
SCHOOLS

School-building has been at the boundary between private and public responsibilities since the first lessons in private homes, and schools have both domestic and public aspects. Ontario's 19th-century educational reforms in curriculum and construction produced many well-built and even innovative designs. Many communities still have a one-room schoolhouse, though few are still in educational use. Larger schools have become community landmarks, clothed in modest versions of the grand public-building styles of the day. Some may survive with their original layout more or less intact. University education began early in Ontario; University College in Toronto is recognized as one of the world's finest Gothic Revival college buildings. Even some recent educational buildings have architectural distinction, expressing continued aspirations to academic excellence; but older structures face uncertain futures on account of age, changing requirements, and tightening budgets.



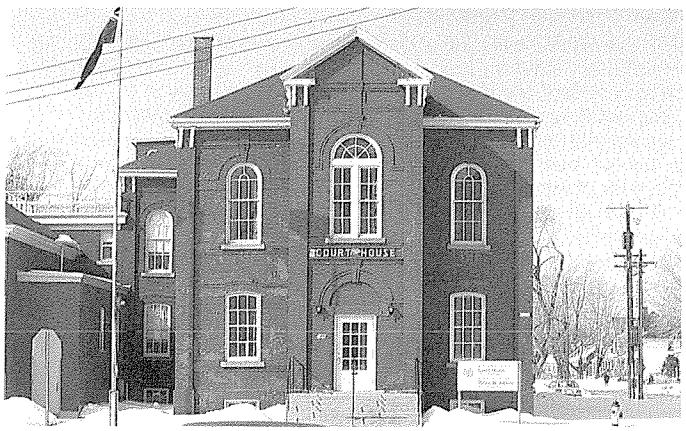
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Although Ontario society's chief traditional institutions were home, church and school, public life became more open and secular as prosperity permitted, and then demanded. Public parks, community halls, fraternal organizations, public libraries and other philanthropic facilities are features of most communities, though their presence did and does vary considerably from place to place. Their architecture ranges from modest to ornate, clearly related to the community's prosperity, or its lack, at the time of construction. Some buildings emulated the commercial street (fraternal halls often let their ground floors for rent); some followed the more official architecture of government (Carnegie libraries could be richer-looking than the town hall). The most conspicuous local community initiative seems now to be the hockey arena, though national centennial and provincial bicentennial have contributed to rehabilitation and renewal of many earlier facilities.



PARKS AND GARDENS

Early aesthetic improvements to the landscape came as farmers began to replant rows of trees as windbreaks, and as horticulture matured into a widespread social pursuit, from railway-station gardens to agricultural colleges. Private estates and their gardens became important badges of prosperity in late Victorian times, though formal gardens had always been part of the intentions, if not achievements, of early settlers in the extreme climates of Ontario. Public gardens, conservatories, bandshells and street beautification became popular at the turn of the century, and the most reform-minded towns of the era inherited a legacy of handsome parks and streets as a result. Public recreation became a watchword for mid-20th-century towns and even for "wilderness", as public bodies began to reserve lands to satisfy burgeoning leisure demands. The look of designed landscapes still oscillates between deliberate formality and (even more deliberate) "naturalness".



PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES

While community initiatives sprang from local pride and prosperity, public works emerged from more pragmatic local needs and from the programs of provincial and national governments. The first public works were defensive, including forts and other works along the U.S. border; much later the military became more concerned with facilities for enemies further distant. The second agenda for government was to construct administrative and judicial facilities, from legislative buildings to courthouses, gaols and post offices. With increasing population and urbanization came demands for clean water, waste disposal, firefighting and police protection, and many of these produced architecture of quality and distinction. Provincial and federal buildings often followed standard designs with only small modifications for local conditions, thus enabling ready identification from place to place. Still, many local variants survive.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The construction of hospitals, asylums and other social service facilities from the mid-19th century tried to satisfy both the political demands of communities and the moral demands of professionals and their clients and patients. The provincial government recognized early an obligation to build facilities for the very ill, from tuberculosis sanatoriums to "insane asylums", and many such complexes are still in use, albeit with different functions and treatments. The first asylums paved the way for more humane convalescent facilities for the war-wounded. The earliest gaols paved the way for massive prison complexes, whose architectural elegance may be quite different from their real character. Early pride of community and government in such constructions has faded to more quiet discomfort — newer institutions seem to seek anonymity in forms little different from, say, suburban schools.

INDUSTRIES

While hydraulic power drove the early rural mills, capital and labour powered the industrial expansion of Ontario communities into this century, producing a legacy of building that ranges from rough back-lane workshops to huge factories. The most ambitious or prosperous industries erected buildings of substance and up-to-the-minute style, emulating the tastes of their bankers and shareholders. Even simple urban warehouses could wear the stylish ornament of main-street commerce. Resource- or energy-dependent operations such as distilleries could build entire settlements. But even modest factories had to be substantial buildings to withstand the forces of their machinery. These began to be reused for a variety of non-industrial purposes once technology began to demand the sprawling single-storey plants typical of today's large-scale industry.

COMMERCE AND MAIN STREET

Community prosperity is readily visible in the activities and buildings of its markets, shops and banks and their aggregations on its main streets. Some public markets evolved from an open lot by the town hall into a large covered building. Shops evolved from the parlour of the merchant's house into huge glazed fronts of multi-storey mixed-use buildings. Though shops and fronts have changed greatly, much of an original façade may survive above, usually because of costs rather than conservation-mindedness. The suburban mall has left many main streets vulnerable to decay but has also freed them from some of the pressures to deface themselves. Much government assistance has gone toward main-street rehabilitation in order to help conserve the wider community; this has sometimes imposed standard street treatments and furnishings on towns that were once quite different in appearance.

HOTELS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Because early travel was so slow, inns and taverns popped up everywhere, often augmenting simple houses with enlarged porches and outlying stables. Though temperance legislation altered their forms later, full-blown hotels became essential parts of main-street commerce. The railway and later the automobile permitted lodge and resort development throughout Ontario's well-watered "wilderness"; the motel is merely their modern descendant. Urban recreation in the form of opera house, theatre or cinema was housed in both modest storefronts and grand halls. Many communities still possess auditoriums that echo with the memories of performances far grander than could be put on today. Even the once-condemned drive-in is now a rare historic artifact of the pre-video era.

Elements and styles

Historical periods don't die — they are just reinterpreted.
Charles Gwathmey

Styles and labels

Much of Ontario's built environment can be sorted and catalogued not only by type and function but also by appearance. While every building is a unique response to the needs of its builders and occupants, characteristics shared from building to building and place to place add up to a recognizable look for a given era. These shared characteristics are often called a building's "style". Strictly speaking, style refers to the way something is described, so that styles should offer a straightforward system of classification. But "style" has other very subjective connotations: something may have style, something else may have *no* style. In considering the value of the built environment, there is no such distinction. Style is *always* present. It is the visible character of a place, the other side of the coin of function, yet equal in value.

Style must be taken seriously. However, while the conventional idea of style offers a convenient set of labels to recognize and compare buildings of a given era and locality, the label itself is never sufficient to understand the importance of the style. *Real* style is the result of countless decisions about design, about arrangement of function, about the way in which builder and occupant wish to "display" themselves. The importance of these factors cannot be packaged neatly and labelled definitively. The label is poor shorthand for the much fuller visual description.

There are many "style" books: chronological listings and descriptions of features of generally accepted style labels. Some are visual glossaries, while others are more analytical. Most are concerned with residential styles, though LONG87 is a notable exception dealing with commercial forms. There is no guide specific to Ontario at this writing. For general guides to Canadian and North American styles, see WHIF69, BLUM77, GEBH77, WALK81, POPP83, or MCAL84. An excellent regional visual reference to architectural details is found at the end of CRUI84. One of the rare examples that does not restrict its coverage to residences is in MCHU85, covering central Toronto. The building-type studies by Macrae and Adamson (MACR63, MACR75, and MACR83) explore styles as well, each in a different way; the variation among their treatments reflect not only typological differences, but also more than two decades of reassessing what the labels actually mean.

Glossaries of architectural and building terminology are also common; FLEM80 and HARR75 seem the most thorough and readily useful for old-building terminology. See also Appendix 6, "Charters, glossaries, and specialized references".

Dimensions of style

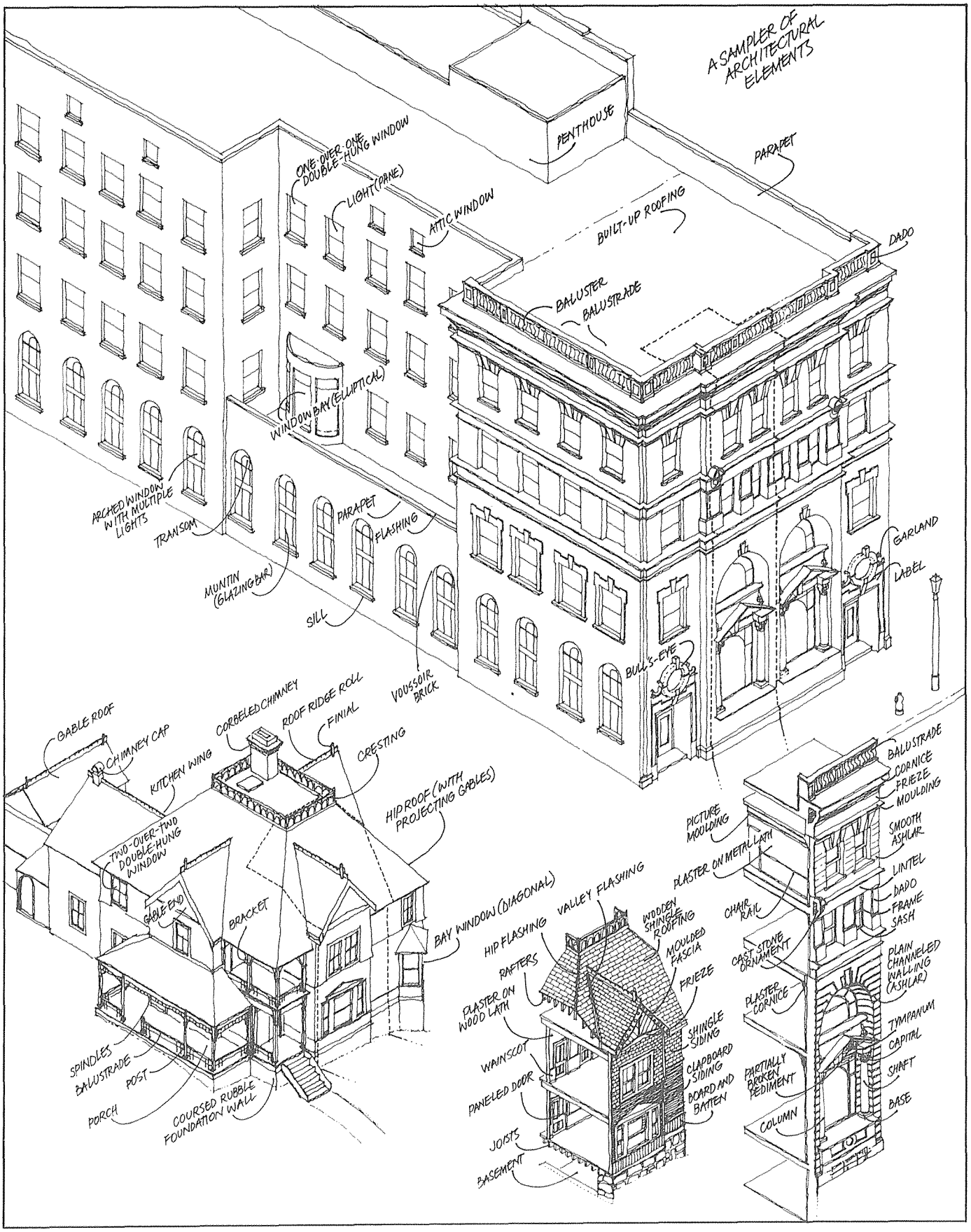
Architectural character is composed of elements that may contribute to an overall impression of a building or add variety and drama within the whole. These elements include the profile or skyline of a building, massing, balance, dimensions and proportions of its parts, use of or preference for certain materials (for both physical and visual properties), colours, and workmanship of details. A brief style-label can seldom do justice to the complexities of a single building, though the effort of assigning the label may permit some comparison to other similar buildings or features.

There are few sharp boundaries between styles, and modern labels for historical styles have frequently been invented after the fact. In the 19th century, most architecture was called "modern"; today we call the same buildings "Victorian". The desire to tag fashions of style with special labels seems to have been a 19th century invention. The 20th century's modern movements have not stopped this penchant for identifying new fashions and coining names for them.

A label such as "Victorian" is close to meaningless unless part of a longer phrase. It is important to distinguish the specialized usage of a name for architectural description from its more generalized use. It is also important to distinguish building types — the characteristics of any style will depend on functional attributes of entrances, windows, floor heights and visibility that are very different in residential, commercial or institutional architecture. An Art Deco office can be compared with an Art Deco bridge, but only after taking into account their functions.

Many buildings do not fit into conventional categories of style. They may be eccentric or innovative. A given structure may have been built "between" two styles, in a gray area which, even if named, might be the only one of its kind. Any attempt to drag a building of unusual distinction into a general category may abuse both building and label. Though every style (even the most "modern") has precursors, accurately describing revival styles can be difficult, if the original's influence is visible only in applied decoration.

For instance, Tudor Revival residences often consisted of fake half-timbering on a conventional structure and layout. Though "Tudor Revival" would be accurate so far as it goes, it would be far from complete without further definition and would obscure differences in the style over time. Dimensions and functions of rooms and spaces in a given type of structure built during one period tend to be remarkably consistent, even where style-labels are quite different, but over time these basic plans and functions tend to change. A 1910s Tudor Revival house might at first glance look like a 1940s Tudor Revival house, but the room sizes and ceiling heights of the 1910s version will have much more in common with those of other styles of the 1910s than with what comes later.


A SAMPLER OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS
PENTHOUSE
PARAPET
ONE-OVER-ONE DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOW
LIGHT (PANE)
ATTIC WINDOW
BUILT-UP ROOFING
DADO
BALUSTER
BALUSTRADE
WINDOW BAY (ELLIPTICAL)
ARCHED WINDOW WITH MULTIPLE LIGHTS
TRANSOM
PARAPET
FLASHING
MUNTIN (GLAZING BAR)
SILL
VOUSSOIR BRICK
BULL'S-EYE
GARLAND
LABEL
GABLE ROOF
CHIMNEY CAP
KITCHEN WING
CORBELED CHIMNEY
ROOF RIDGE ROLL
FINIAL
CRESTING
HIP ROOF (WITH PROJECTING GABLES)
TWO-OVER-TWO DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOW
GABLE END
BRACKET
BAY WINDOW (DIAGONAL)
SPINDLES
BALUSTRADE
POST
PORCH
COURSED RUBBLE FOUNDATION WALL
HIP FLASHING
VALLEY FLASHING
WOODEN SHINGLE ROOFING
RAFTERS
MOULDED FASCIA
PLASTER ON WOOD LATH
FRIEZE
SHINGLE SIDING
WAINSCOT
CLAPBOARD SIDING
PANELED DOOR
BOARD AND BATTEN
JOISTS
BASEMENT
BALUSTRADE
CORNICE
FRIEZE
MOULDING
PICTURE MOULDING
SMOOTH ASHLAR
PLASTER ON METAL LATH
LINTEL
DADO
CHAIR RAIL
FRAME
SASH
CAST-STONE ORNAMENT
PLAIN CHANNELED WALLING (ASHLAR)
PLASTER CORNICE
TYMPANUM
CAPITAL
PARTIALLY BROKEN PEDIMENT
SHAFT
BASE
COLUMN

Origins and transformations of style

Almost always, style labels come from buildings of the wealthy — from mansions or from main streets. These were the buildings first and most frequently written about in early accounts. In colonial settlements the difference between wealthy and modest examples of style was a matter of degree. Basic proportional systems and functional characteristics were often common to every building; these affected building cost very little. What distinguished wealth from modest means was size and scale of building and elaborateness of ornament and finish. In this respect, "Georgian" describes not only a specific style, but as well a more fundamental *approach* to matters of style that was to change quite radically soon after Upper Canada came to be.

Early in the 19th century the wealthy of the English-speaking world (first in Britain and the United States, eventually in Canada and other colonies) adopted a vogue for "the new", for changing style to keep ahead of more modest emulations. Hence the "battles" of styles and the tremendous eclecticism we now associate with the 19th century. This was not new to architectural history, which can be interpreted as constant oscillation between simple and ornate from one period to the next, as constant re-evaluation of the visual "density" of spaces and details. But in the "Victorian era", coincident with tremendous industrial growth and population movements, the pace of oscillation accelerated dramatically. New decorative elements and materials appeared first in mansions, cathedrals and commercial buildings. When these tastes moved later to more modest houses, local churches and even industrial structures, the wealthy and powerful tried to move on to something "new".

These currents of change were greatly enhanced by the adoption of Gothic antecedents. Forms of Gothic inspiration permitted great variation within the overall profile and mass of a building, instead of the much more disciplined regularity of earlier (Georgian) Classicism. This movement was so strong that by the end of the century even Classical elements had been grafted into the wild variety of eclectic forms. Much has been written about the change in social ideology and economic structure that coincided with these new architectural fashions. But the basic, materialistic impulse to "keep ahead of the Joneses" may have been the factor most responsible for the overwhelming variety of historic styles in architecture in Ontario, as elsewhere in North America.

Ontario style-labels from the 1780s to the 1940s

The following is by no means a definitive breakdown; it has obvious overlaps, and equally obvious gaps. Its purpose is to point out things to look for. For many architectural observers, assigning labels has its own recreational value, apart from its utility in comparing buildings. There is no agreement about the breaks between styles or even about some of the names themselves. A label for Ontario may describe something differently from its usage elsewhere. The cautions noted above apply to this catalogue as well as every other such listing — and the better guides will say this quite clearly in their own introductions.

This catalogue omits pre-Loyalist constructions and leaves off just before the mid-20th century. This is not to say that very recent buildings have no heritage value, merely that labels for them will be much too tentative to be of lasting use. The ranges of dates are quite generalized, and a good example of a style may have been built well after its period, especially in remote areas of both south and north. An excellent example of a labelled style may not be the best building of its era or locale (see EVALUATION AND DECISION-MAKING).

"Sources" refers to the influences or roots that best account for the genesis of a style. Sometimes the origin is geographic, part of a set of cultural fashions imported by a group of immigrants. Sometimes the source is one or more publications, particularly commercial pattern-books, and even popular magazines. Occasionally a specific building or architect is responsible for a host of subsequent imitators: for instance, the names of Robert Adam and H. H. Richardson are integral to the labels for the styles that followed their work.

"Composition" refers to the overall character, proportions, symmetry and planning of a

building as an ensemble. Since composition varies so much from building to building even within a style, many of the words used to describe similarities within a style are subjective and open to many interpretations. Nevertheless, this overall character is seldom reproducible in modern dress and is an essential part of the justification for our "attachments" to older buildings.

"Details" such as materials, windows or woodwork are much more consistent among buildings of the same style-label and are more readily distinguishable and describable identifiers of a style — which means they are usually the most crucial items to conserve. Comments on the specific application of style-labels to types of heritage features are split between "Residences" and "Others", since most of these labels came from studies of residential types and were only later applied to commercial, public or even engineering structures.

This brief catalogue offers but a few indications of what distinguishes one style-label from another. Further information should be mined from one of the many comprehensive surveys, though most of these confine themselves to residential forms.

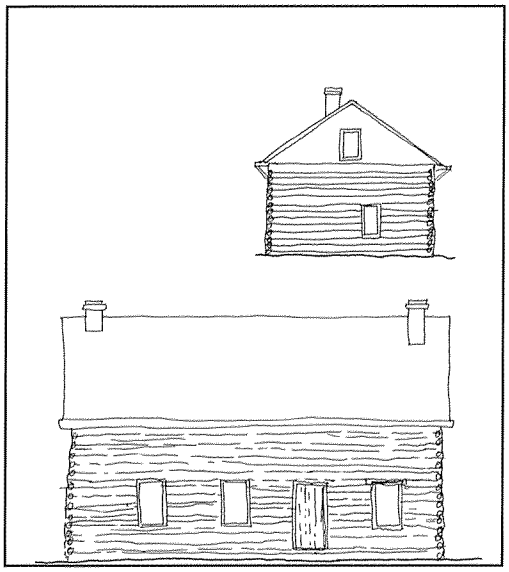
The inclusion of a category of "mixtures and others" acknowledges the difficulty of pinning down a label for buildings that may be not simply impure representatives of conventional styles, but isolated cases that resemble no conventional style at all. Sometimes idiosyncracy is quite deliberate, as in the case of oriental influences, but more often represents unconventional, even naïve, personal tastes.

Whenever it is difficult to apply a conventional label, good conservation practice demands that the place be described fully and carefully; the shorthand label can come later.

A catalogue of styles

Log houses and shanties (1780s–1980s)
Loyalist/Georgian (1780s–1860s)
Neoclassical/Adamesque (1810s–1830s)
Regency/Picturesque (1820s–1840s)
Greek Revival (1830s–1860s)
Gothic Revival (1840s–1870s)
Italianate/Italian Villa (1840s–1870s)
Octagon (1850s–1870s)
High Victorian Gothic (1860s–1890s)
Second Empire (1860s–1880s)
Stick Style/Carpenter Gothic (1870s–1890s)
Queen Anne (1880s–1910s)
Richardsonian Romanesque (1880s–1900s)
Chateauesque (1880s–1930s)
Beaux Arts/Classical Revival (1880s–1940s)
Colonial/Georgian Revival (1890s–1940s)
Late Gothic Revival (1890s–1940s)
Industrial/Functional (1900s–1930s)
Prairie/Craftsman (1900s–1930s)
Tudor Revival (1900s–1940s)
Mission/Spanish Revival (1910s–1930s)
Art Deco/Art Moderne (1920s–1950s)
International (1930s–1960s)

Mixtures and others



LOG HOUSES AND SHANTIES (1780s–1980s)

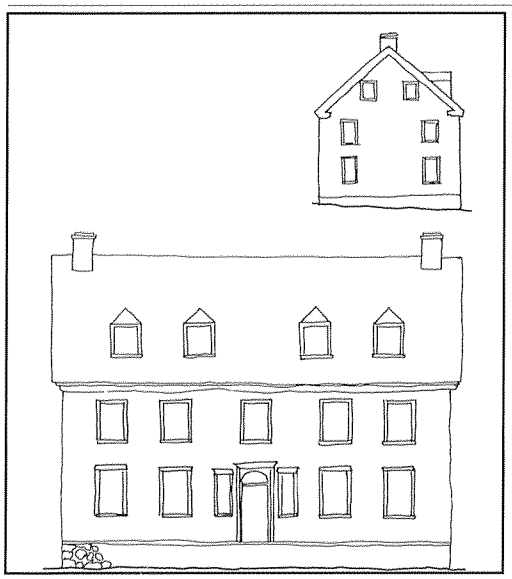
ORIGINS — expediency, haste and the need for temporary shelter, based on earlier American and Québecois practice. Northern European ethnic practices added later refinements. Though the form died out with sawn lumber and lightweight framing, it became "rustic style" in the late 19th century, especially in the north and parklands, for cottages and lodges. It is still considered "style"-ish for rural owner-builders and houses made from kits.

COMPOSITION — as a shanty or first homestead, usually one large box, sometimes subdivided by partitions. The basic building had a shed or simple gable roof, rubble stone chimney and tiny windows. Later versions were better proportioned and roomier, sometimes with summer-kitchen tails of log or frame.

DETAILS — horizontal logs, keyed at corners, more or less rough, with moss or dirt chinking. Corner-keying techniques often followed ethnic traditions; *pisé* (vertical timbers) was rare in Ontario. Proper windows and frames were uncommon at first, but simple Georgian mouldings appeared later around enlarged windows to "civilize" the exterior. Later hewn-log constructions were usually covered with clapboard or brick cladding.

RESIDENCES — primarily a residential and farmstead form. Some large barns survive.

OTHERS — lodges and resorts on Canadian Shield used log construction and rustic "ornaments" as tourist attractions, though modelled more on western or American forms rather than local precedents.



LOYALIST/GEORGIAN (1780s–1860s)

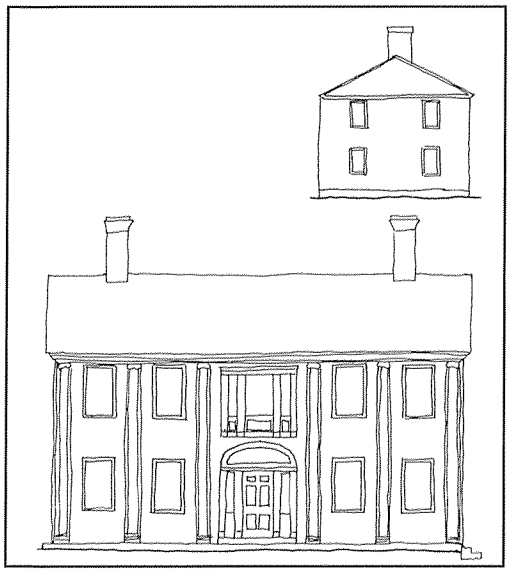
ORIGINS — from English Palladian and Scottish Georgian styles, derived in turn from the Italian Renaissance through style books. The fashions arrived with the merchant-class elites of Upper Canadian Loyalists and later British immigrants.

COMPOSITION — generally box-like, symmetrical elevations, with Classical (via Renaissance) proportions. Five-bay fronts, with two windows on each side of a central doorway, were most characteristic. Structures were from one to three storeys, but usually two, with centre-hall plans. Larger compositions comprised a central block with symmetrical wings. The typically side-gabled roof was often pitched high enough to allow a half-floor in the attic.

DETAILS — simple cornices with returns at gable ends, sometimes with dentils. Other typical features included panelled doors, small-paned double-hung windows (often 12 panes over 12, 4 panes wide), and simple classical mouldings in modest pediments and arches. Flat-topped or shallow-arched fanlights, transoms, and sidelights marked the central entry, sometimes with a Palladian window centered in the storey above. At first plainly clad with clapboard, the style was adapted to stone and brick; corners were sometimes embellished as contrasting quoins.

RESIDENCES — mostly detached houses, though there were urban rows or terraces, usually with three-bay fronts and side-hall plans.

OTHERS — public buildings emulating large-house compositions, stretched into multiple bays. The style's simplicity suited it to non-conformist churches.



NEOCLASSICAL/ADAMESQUE (1810s–1830s)

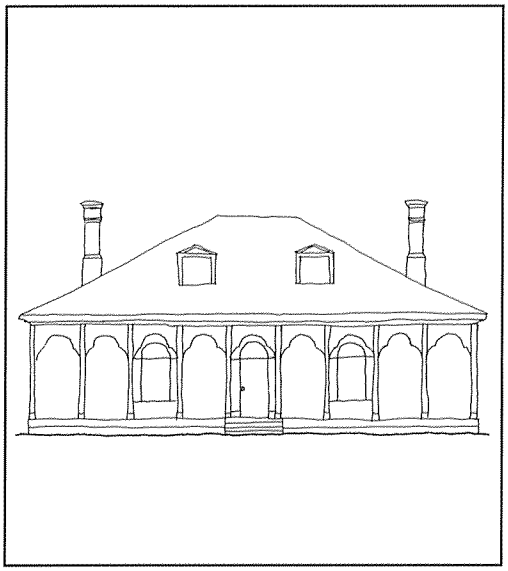
ORIGINS — refinement of Georgian details in Britain (Robert Adam) through closer study of Classical originals, especially Roman (though *thought* to be Greek). The forms were spread through influential pattern books, and popularized through the extensive use of the similar Federal style in the U.S.

COMPOSITION — much the same as its Georgian precursors but somewhat different in detail, including a somewhat lower roof pitch.

DETAILS — departed from its Georgian predecessors, with less robust, thinner and sharper mouldings. Its applied pilasters or arches punctuated plain Georgian wall surfaces,with semi-elliptical entryway fanlights and more elaborate Palladian windows. The style's more ornately decorated surfaces often featured ornamented panels on elevations, with carved garlands and swags, and semi-circular louvred vents in gable ends. Corners were emphasized with pilasters, and cornices punctuated with elaborate dentils.

RESIDENCES — popularly felt to be a fashionable refinement, and thus an improvement, of the earlier Georgian look. Neoclassicism appealed as an "advanced" style, especially for town-house interiors aspiring to elegance.

OTHERS — primarily a residential style, though it influenced churches. Some details appeared in Anglican churches, especially in their interior proportions and elaborate multi-paned windows.



REGENCY/PICTURESQUE (1820s–1840s)

ORIGINS — influenced by English taste for the picturesque in painting and gardens, and by architectural forms in other British colonies. This period saw a new appreciation of setting and landscape and romanticized rusticity in garden design.

COMPOSITION — symmetrical plans and elevations, and occasionally four-square symmetry. Single or one-and-a-half storey structures typically featured hipped or gabled roofs with broad eaves. Verandahs and porches made their first appearance, adapted from both Québecois porches and bungalows in British India. Deep verandahs were constructed on one or two fronts but seldom wrapped around fully as in tropical British colonies.

DETAILS — mouldings, windows and entrances still Classically-based. Large windows and even French doors opened from several rooms to the verandah. Wooden treillage supported the sometimes upswept-curved ("bell-cast") verandah roof, often with decoratively exposed rafter-ends. While stucco walls were considered most stylish, brick walls were as common.

RESIDENCES — primarily a residential style characteristic of southern Ontario, but quite uncommon in adjacent U.S. states.

OTHERS — churches began to show Gothic and picturesque features, including pointed windows with trellis-like glazing, mock castellations and ornamental woodwork.

GREEK REVIVAL (1830s–1860s)

ORIGINS — resurgence in Europe of the recording and emulation of Classical originals leading to the bolder "correct" usage of Classical elements. Further influenced by American republican ideology (which in turn emulated ancient Greek democratic tradition), Classical architectural forms were spread through pattern books, especially those by U.S. architect Asher Benjamin.

COMPOSITION — symmetrical plans, similar to earlier classical styles. Narrow-lot adaptations featured side-hall plans disguised by symmetrical elevations. Gabled "temple" fronts were fashioned from either pedimented porticos or gable ends. Double-height porches were supported by monumental, usually Doric, columns, echoed by pilasters.

DETAILS — reversion to very simple ornamentation, if any. Larger windows and panes (9 over 9, or 6 over 6) were retained. Doorways became heavier and deeper, but still featured sidelights and transoms. Beneath the cornice were plain, wide, sometimes continuous entablatures; gable ends had deep returns. Walls were typically clad with clapboard or ashlar (finely dressed stone) or with stucco scored to imitate ashlar.

RESIDENCES — in Ontario, primarily a residential style (as distinct from the U.S.). Non-standard improvisations derived from pattern books were especially common away from towns.

OTHERS — occasional temple fronts on churches; public buildings featured wide, shallow mouldings and entablatures surrounding doors and windows.

GOTHIC REVIVAL (1840s–1870s)

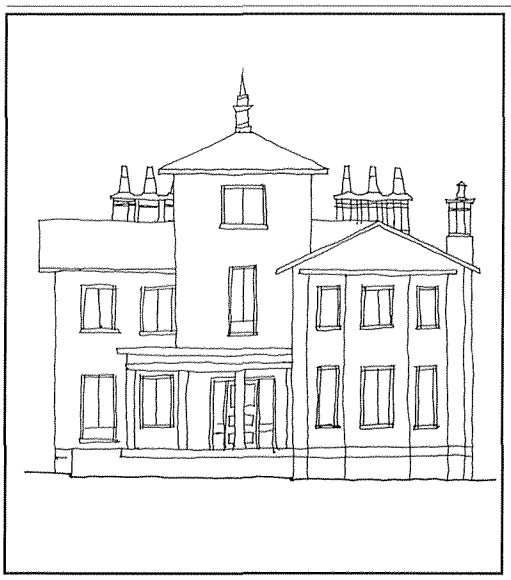
ORIGINS — from England, championed by A.W.N. Pugin. Building on picturesque tastes, the style revived specific mediaeval Gothic forms in a manner similar to the earlier revival of correct Classical precedents. It spread rapidly via pattern books, most notably those by U.S. architects A.J. Downing and A.J. Davis.

COMPOSITION — generally symmetrical in organization from part to part, though independently symmetrical parts might be assembled irregularly. Both roof pitches and gables were steep. Wall continuity was broken up by projecting or recessed bays.

DETAILS — verticality emphasized wherever possible, with features such as board and batten cladding, crenellations, extra gables, and pointed arches for windows and entrances. Porches with split posts and shallow roofs were built across the front. The style is notable for its profusion of carved and turned woodwork featured on finials, decorated verge boards, verandahs and entrances. Polychrome brickwork heightened the decorative effects.

RESIDENCES — best known is the ubiquitous Ontario Gothic centre-gabled farmhouse, often possessing a "tail" with its own central gable and a second porch. There were also larger mansions in the style, with irregular plans and elevations.

OTHERS — beginning of the "true" ecclesiological church styles, for all denominations, featuring pointed arches and ornate carvings.



ITALIANATE/ITALIAN VILLA (1840s–1870s)

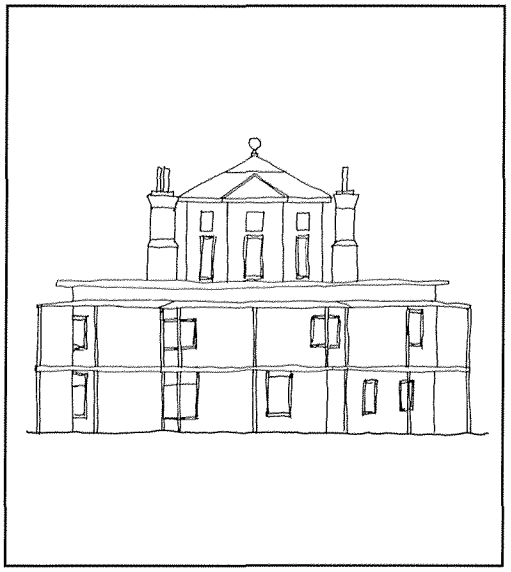
ORIGINS — from the English picturesque tradition and its constant search for new forms of rusticity. This form was inspired by informal Italian farmhouses with characteristic square towers, combined with Classical Italian Renaissance townhouse features. Indirect influences came from American pattern books (A.J. Downing and Samuel Sloan).

COMPOSITION — more controlled irregularity than the Gothic, but still variable. Despite marked horizontal features — low-pitched hipped rooflines and wide overhanging eaves — the style maintains vertical emphasis with square-plan towers or belvederes and angular bays.

DETAILS — tall, heavily moulded openings; deeply panelled double doors; paired or triplet windows with round or shallow semi-elliptical arches; deep mouldings in wood or stone. The Italianate is sometimes called "bracketed", from its numerous heavily carved wooden brackets under broad eaves and bracketed mouldings over windows or doors. Corners were often emphasized by quoins.

RESIDENCES — encompasses a wide range of variation (even different style-labels), from farm to city. This style offered new distinction to row housing, with its emphasis on articulating windows and doors.

OTHERS — first distinctive commercial storefront style, with deep recesses, very large plate-glass windows, cast-iron posts and pressed-metal cornices.



OCTAGON (1850s–1870s)

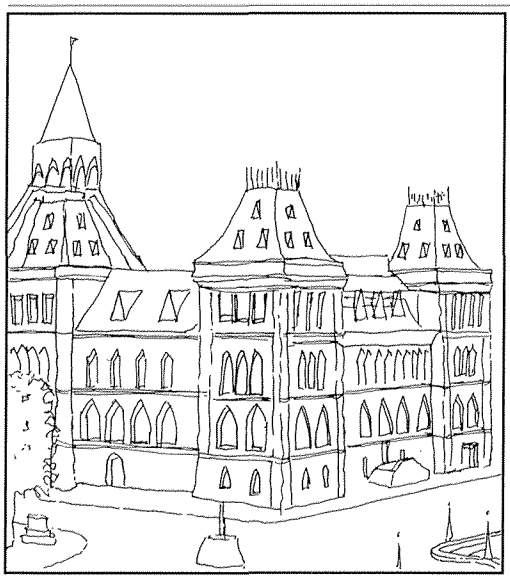
ORIGINS — an oddity based on American phrenologist Orson Fowler's 1849 theory of healthy and economical construction through the "efficient" geometry of an octagonal plan. Spread through pattern books, this building type was confined to upstate New York, southern Ontario and the near American midwest.

COMPOSITION — octagonal floor plan, usually two storeys, often with belvedere and surrounding porch. A shallow hipped roof was typical.

DETAILS — Fowler's prescriptions were austere. Most octagon buildings followed Italianate styling and featured deep bracketed eaves and Classical designs for spindles and porch posts. Structures were typically of frame construction with wood or stucco cladding.

RESIDENCES — primarily a residential phenomenon. Though few in number, they were invariably well-known landmarks and remain so.

OTHERS — some barns built as octagons or polygons for the sake of efficiency, though survivors are rare. A few early town plans (e.g. Goderich) were based on the same geometry (predating Fowler).



HIGH VICTORIAN GOTHIC (1860s–1890s)

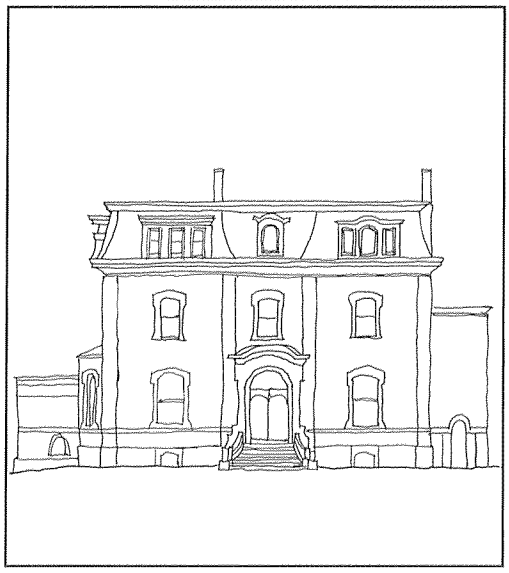
ORIGINS — derived from the earlier domestic and ecclesiastical Gothic Revival, adding variations from both ancient and recent examples. Promoted by John Ruskin and new professional publications like "The Builder", it gained acceptance as a suitable secular style for British public buildings (Houses of Parliament), and was adopted subsequently for Canada's own Parliament buildings.

COMPOSITION — characterized by steep roof pitches, steep gables, turrets, crenellations, castellations, deep recesses, reveals, bays and rambling porches. Massing was irregular, though assembled from symmetrical parts.

DETAILS — polychrome brick and stonework, often rusticated. Heavily carved wood or stone surrounded doors and windows. Roofs were of slate, sometimes polychrome, rather than wood, and ornamental ironwork was applied to finials and cresting. Tall, narrow openings were marked by pointed arches and lancet windows, though at its most ornate this style even accommodated such Classical details as round arches.

RESIDENCES — much decorative brickwork, especially contrasting red and yellow. Bargeboards and finials on gables were very ornate. Large panes of glass (2 over 2, even 1 over 1) were generally used.

OTHERS — used extensively for churches, courthouses, government buildings and colleges. Residential motifs were greatly expanded in scale, "domesticating" the appearance of these institutions.



SECOND EMPIRE (1860s–1880s)

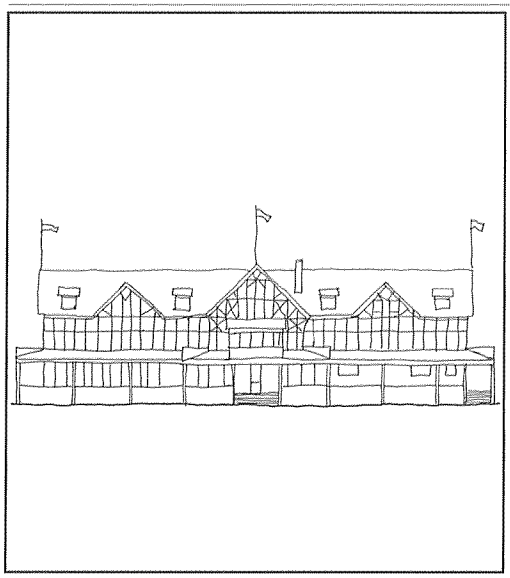
ORIGINS — direct rival to High Victorian Gothic. Imported from France (the Second Empire was that of Napoleon III, 1852–70) via both England and the U.S., the fashion was transmitted more by personal "high-style" contacts, architects and professional journals than by pattern books.

COMPOSITION — most conspicuously the mansard roofline, which provided a fully usable attic storey. Roofs were straight-sided, concave or convex, with dormers. Mansard-roofed towers were occasionally featured. Vertical massing was more generally symmetrical than other contemporary styles, though still somewhat irregular.

DETAILS — heavy bracketing, similar to Italianate though eaves not so broad. Deep Classical window and door mouldings encasing large panes of glass emphasized the vertical. Roofs were often of polychrome slate with iron cresting. Dormers were universally used as part of the style rather than as add-ons. Dormer windows took on many different shapes including pediment and even round styles. Favoured materials were brick and ashlar. Pressed metal ornament sometimes replaced and emulated stonecarving.

RESIDENCES — much used for urban row housing and small town lots due to the added floor space afforded by the mansard roof.

OTHERS — important main-street commercial style, with decorated upper storeys atop fully glazed ground floor. Many public buildings and even factories carried mansard rooflines.



STICK STYLE/CARPENTER GOTHIC (1870s–1890s)

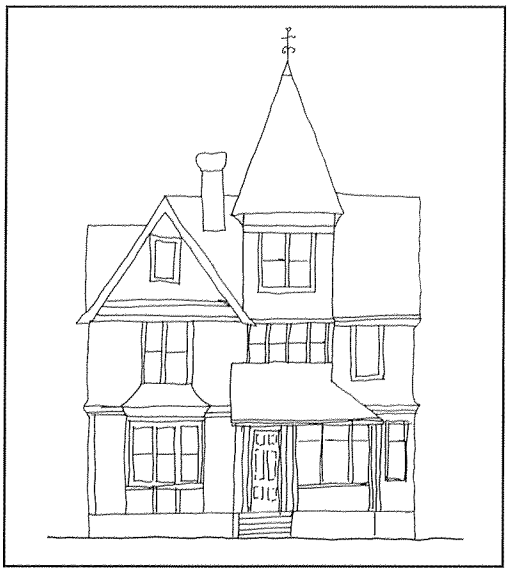
ORIGINS — revival of the earlier Gothic Revival, spread by pattern books and lumber and hardware mills. These styles were a transitional stage leading to the Queen Anne and eventually to the Tudor Revival.

COMPOSITION — rather subdued from earlier Gothic forms, with a less steeply pitched roof and rectilinear rather than angular volumes and projections. Many examples featured gables with deep overhanging eaves and sometimes cross gables at the same height as the main roof.

DETAILS — often Tudor-like raised "sticks" against clapboard or shingled walls and gables to "express" the underlying structure. Angular supports and decoration, chamfered braces and exposed rafter ends were typical. Simplified lancet or flat-topped windows were set in shallow frames and mouldings.

RESIDENCES — most frequently used in central and "near-northern" Shield communities as the first large-house style, though many examples were built in suburbs near larger towns.

OTHERS — motifs used by lodges and lumber mills to impart a "woodlands" character. The fire hazard presented by the exposed wooden construction precluded its use in urban settings. Its lancet windows and pointed spires graced many early northern churches.



QUEEN ANNE (1880s–1910s)

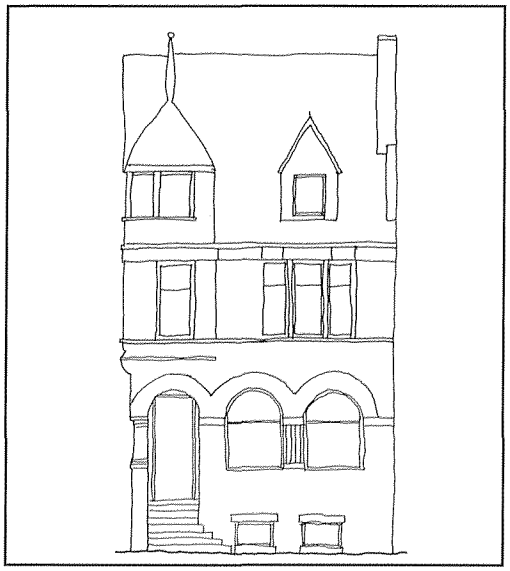
ORIGINS — zenith of 19th century picturesque, created by R.N. Shaw in England and spread through Canada via American architectural magazines. Primarily based on rural, rustic Elizabethan and Jacobean forms, the style also incorporated some Classical motifs in vogue during Queen Anne's reign (1702-14).

COMPOSITION — irregular plans, elevations and silhouettes with both hipped and gabled roofs. Structures built in this style featured projecting polygonal bays, turrets, towers and chimneys.

DETAILS — distinguished by tremendous variety and complexity of detail. Spindlework and other intricate woodwork adorned porch supports and gable ends. Unrestricted by convention, Classical features such as Palladian windows appeared in gables, with decorated pediments. Eclectic wall surfaces typically featured "half-timbering" of stucco around exposed sticks, or mixed shingles, tiles, brick and stone. Windows often contained coloured glass, often as small panes surrounding a large clear pane.

RESIDENCES — primarily a residential style. A wood-clad version of this style was used extensively in large-lot suburban or small-town settings. However, large numbers of narrow-lot versions in terra cotta, masonry and wood were built in Toronto, Ottawa, London and other cities of the era.

OTHERS — some use in public buildings and urban churches, with Classical details muting the flamboyance of High Victorian Gothic. Though its commercial use was minimal, it pointed to a subsequent revival of Classical motifs for main streets.



RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE (1880s–1900s)

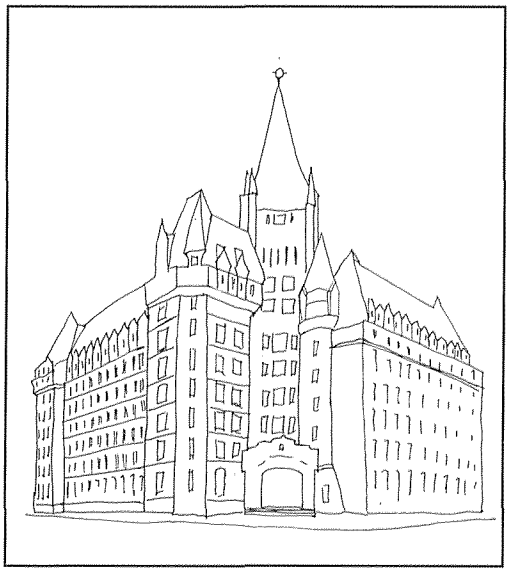
ORIGINS — based on 11th-century French and English forms. Recorded by H.H. Richardson during his French Beaux-Arts training, Romanesque features were applied as a masonry-based variant of the Queen Anne style. Diffused through journals, Richardson's designs were widely emulated, especially for public buildings, in cities where codes required (fireproof) masonry exteriors.

COMPOSITION — much the same as Queen Anne (see above) but with a more massive profile and masonry walls replacing wood cladding. Projections were less dramatic, and more rounded than polygonal; recesses were deeper and darker.

DETAILS — dominated by round arches, both Romanesque (sitting on piers or walls) and Syrian (springing almost from ground level). Heavily rusticated masonry, especially sandstone, contrasted with smooth brickwork in both texture and colour. Ornately carved stone ornament was common. There was much use of unglazed terra cotta. This style also featured deeply recessed windows and doorways with stone mullions and gabled dormers.

RESIDENCES — only mansions could afford expensive stone masonry. Many large houses in this style were built on relatively small city lots, especially in Toronto.

OTHERS — primarily a public building style, the successor to High Victorian Gothic, for post offices, government buildings and town halls. It was seldom used for commercial buildings.



CHATEAUESQUE (1880s–1930s)

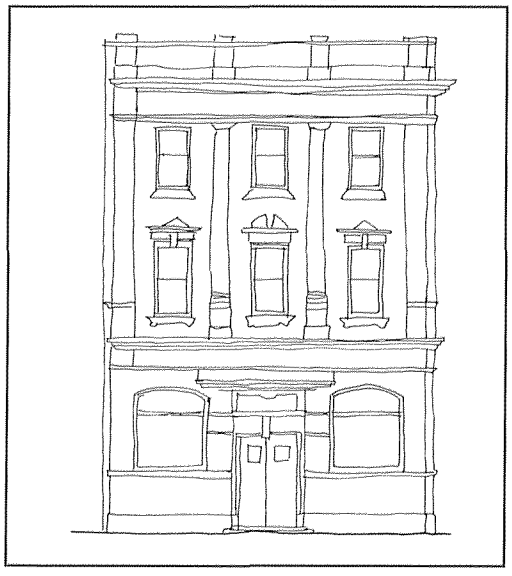
ORIGINS — based on châteaux of the era of François 1 (1515-1547), mixing Italian Renaissance with French Gothic. The form was championed by R.M. Hunt, the first American architect to study at the École des Beaux Arts. It was diffused via American journals as a residential style for the very wealthy.

COMPOSITION — steeply pitched hipped roofs, round or rectilinear bays, multiple dormers. Symmetrical parts were combined within an asymmetrical whole. Turrets, towers and chimneys emphasized verticality, while bands of classical mouldings defined the horizontal.

DETAILS — predominantly stone facades (usually gray limestone) featuring finely cut ashlar walls or mildly rusticated coursed stone, classical mouldings, stone window mullions and carved pinnacles. Carved motifs were both Classical and Gothic. Cast iron was used for roof cresting and other ornamentation. Roofscapes were punctuated with small "attic" dormers next to gabled and wall dormers. Early taste for plain slate roofs gave way to copper.

RESIDENCES — primarily mansions for the wealthy. The style was too expensive for wide emulation. Cast stone was substituted for some carving and moulding on less costly structures.

OTHERS — notable as the railway-hotel style across Canada. It was also used for federal government buildings, well into the 20th century.



BEAUX ARTS/CLASSICAL REVIVAL (1880s–1930s)

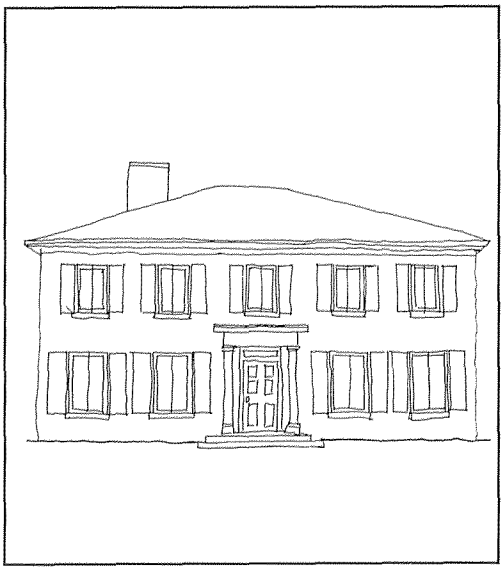
ORIGINS — last of several styles brought back by American architects trained at the École des Beaux Arts. Diffused through office apprentices and magazines, revived Classical forms were championed by urban reformers and popularized at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

COMPOSITION — based on "correct" Classicism, directly from Greek and Roman precedents. Symmetrical structures featured flat or low-hipped roofs with cornices, balustraded parapets, colonnades, arcades, temple fronts and rectilinear bays. "Beaux Arts" was distinguished from the more "refined" (restrained) Classical Revival by grandiose compositions, dramatic scale, statuary, and Roman orders and arches.

DETAILS — predominantly stone facades (usually gray limestone, sometimes cast-stone substitutions) featuring finely cut ashlar walls and elaborate mouldings. Measured orders, especially Ionic and Corinthian, were often used for coupled columns or pilasters. Carved stone balustrades, cartouches, swags and other Classical details were conspicuous. Entrances and windows were often very large openings.

RESIDENCES — used primarily for mansions for the wealthy, but forms and materials were too expensive for wide emulation. Cost savings were sometimes achieved by substituting cast stone for carved ornament.

OTHERS — primarily a public and commercial style, particularly identified with banks. This style was also used in many planning schemes for park layouts and civic squares, very few of which were ever executed.



COLONIAL/GEORGIAN REVIVAL (1890s–1940s)

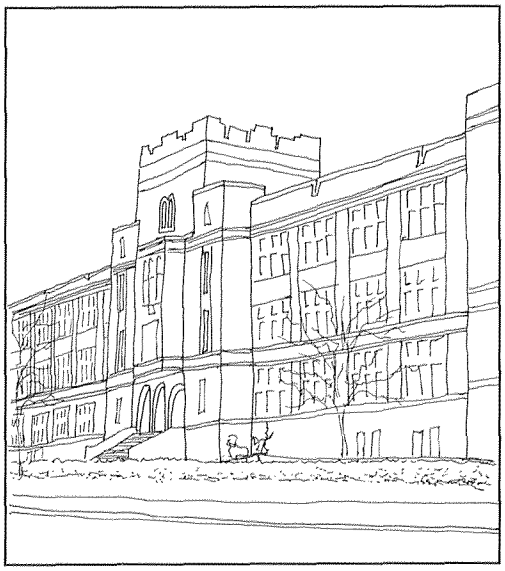
ORIGINS — first revival style based on North American models (themselves revivals of still earlier forms). It marked a return to "roots", and to more simplified forms from the eclecticism of the recent past. It was popularized through consumer magazines, professional journals and textbooks as the "style" in which to clothe modern functional homes.

COMPOSITION — simple rectangular volumes with shallow gabled or hipped roofs and symmetrical window and door arrangements. Small dormers were hipped or gabled.

DETAILS — self-conscious but inaccurate emulation of earlier styles, mixing American Colonial with Upper Canadian Georgian. Clad in shingle, clapboard or brick, these revivals featured restrained Classical detailing in columns, engaged piers and cornices. Windows were shuttered and sometimes small-paned.

RESIDENCES — most often used for detached houses in middle-class suburbs of the 1920s, but still in common use today. The search for local precedents to emulate motivated early survey and preservation activity in the 1930s.

OTHERS — very much a domestic style. American suburban commercial variants were not popular here.



LATE GOTHIC REVIVAL (1890s–1940s)

ORIGINS — return to more accurate, sober renditions of Gothic style derived primarily from English precedents and inspired by published illustrations of English Gothic country-house revivals.

COMPOSITION — low, long, rectangular, generally symmetrical masses, but following site irregularities. Gabled roofs featured gable-end dormers. Occasional low towers or subsidiary bays were tucked into inside corners in courtyards.

DETAILS — use of stone both inside and out. Walls displayed simple but irregular rough coursing. Openings were framed by cut stone. Leaded and stained glass windows, often elaborate, were supported by stone mullions. Bay windows with window seats were sometimes incorporated into the design. Exterior walls were occasionally inhanced with panels of stucco or half-timbering (seguing into Tudor Revival).

RESIDENCES — one of several middle-class suburban styles whose popularity peaked in the 1920s. The boxy plans used for these suburban houses differed little from those of other revival styles used in similar contexts.

OTHERS — primarily a public building style. Often called "Collegiate" Gothic, elements of this style are found in early skyscrapers, college buildings, institutions and even hydro-electric stations.

INDUSTRIAL/FUNCTIONAL (1900s–1930s)

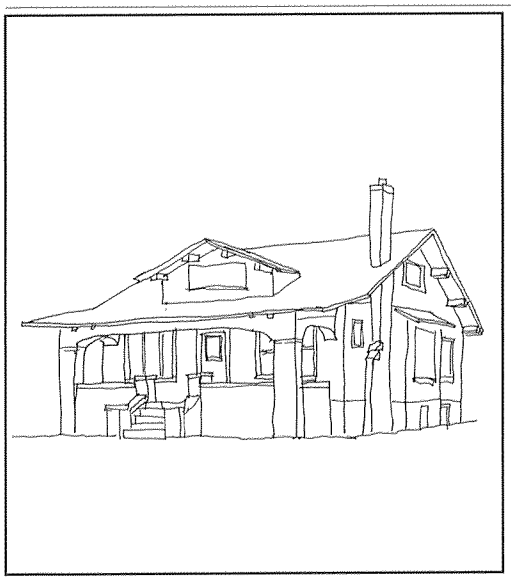
ORIGINS — a long tradition of increasingly massive engineering structures was marked not by style-labels but by function, form and size: grain elevators, bridges, gasworks. New construction techniques and materials helped to create forms that were important in the establishment of "modern" style-labels later on. While engineering tradition evolved apart from architectural currents, engineering innovations greatly affected subsequent architectural styles.

COMPOSITION — geometric forms based on structural and functional requirements: silos for bulk storage, open frames for factory-building, arches and trusses for bridges.

DETAILS — dependent on materials and functions, seldom applying decoration, except when in the public view. Abstract geometric decoration was used occasionally. Reinforced concrete was introduced for both structure and surface, with occasional attention to coloured or patterned aggregate.

RESIDENCES — not a residential style, though it eventually inspired "modern" houses.

OTHERS — multi-storey factory buildings with concrete or steel frames and large expanses of steel-framed multi-pane glazing, sometimes with brick infill panels and exposed concrete frames. Numerous concrete truss and arch bridges were constructed during this period.



PRAIRIE/CRAFTSMAN (1900s–1930s)

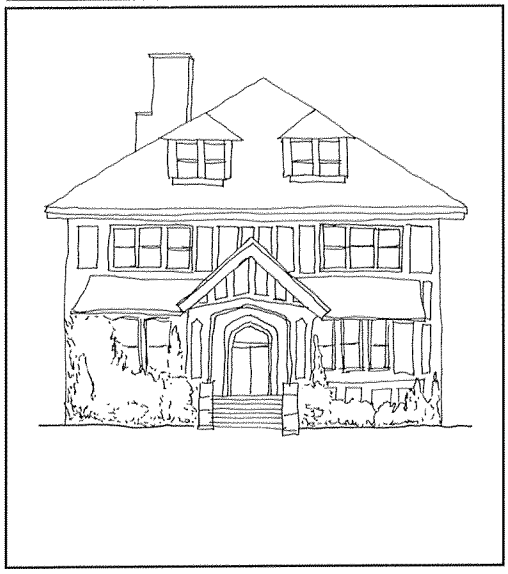
ORIGINS — two threads from the same skein. Prairie styling arose from the U.S. mid-west, where the extensive works of Sullivan and Wright were based on structural clarity and expression tied to natural forms of decoration. Craftsman styling, based on similar arts and crafts movements in England and the U.S., was diffused through popular magazines as a "modern" house style.

COMPOSITION — low, broad "bungaloid" massing responding more to the dictates of the site than to formai planning. The Prairie style tended to hipped roofs, the Craftsman to gables. Both styles favoured broad eaves and horizontal emphasis. Boxy Sullivanesque variants featured flat roofs, modulated brick and tile or terra cotta surfaces.

DETAILS — exposed structural members, especially rafter ends (sometimes faked). Angular geometric designs were used for doors and leaded windowpanes, while simple coloured glazing served as accents. Deep porches were supported by chunky wood or masonry piers. Stucco, shingle or brick sheathing often had timber stick accents.

RESIDENCES — Craftsman was the principal small-house style through the 1910s and 1920s, especially in big-city suburbs and new towns in the north. This style was even promoted as the "provincial" style in planned resource communities.

OTHERS — used for rural institutions (convalescent hospitals and sanatoriums) and for "wilderness"-based tourist lodges and cottages. Commercial examples can be found in suburbs or in the north where the American influence was more direct.



TUDOR REVIVAL (1900s–1940s)

ORIGINS — no single source. Like the Queen Anne, it came from England, out of Late Gothic Revival and the Arts and Crafts movement, and was popularized through U.S. magazines. Tudor Revival followed the trend to more faithful emulations of historical styles. Often called "Jacobethan", its intrinsic eclecticism satisfied contemporary eclectic tastes.

COMPOSITION — boxy, though often contrived to appear L-shaped, with steeply pitched roofs, prominent gable ends and elaborate chimneys. Roofs were typically shingled in slate or wood, occasionally curved in to resemble thatch.

DETAILS — chiefly distinguished by false half-timbered wall surfaces with stucco infill between dark-stained or painted wood. Later variants were partly stone-faced with cast-stone trim. Windows were tall, narrow and small-paned, often grouped. The entry was often recessed, sometimes in a very small porch projection. Wrought iron ornament and hardware were typical.

RESIDENCES — very popular in most suburbs, peaking in the 1920s and again in the 1940s. Elements of the style remain in common use today.

OTHERS — almost completely a residential style (see Late Gothic Revival as public and educational version).

MISSION/SPANISH REVIVAL (1910s–1930s)

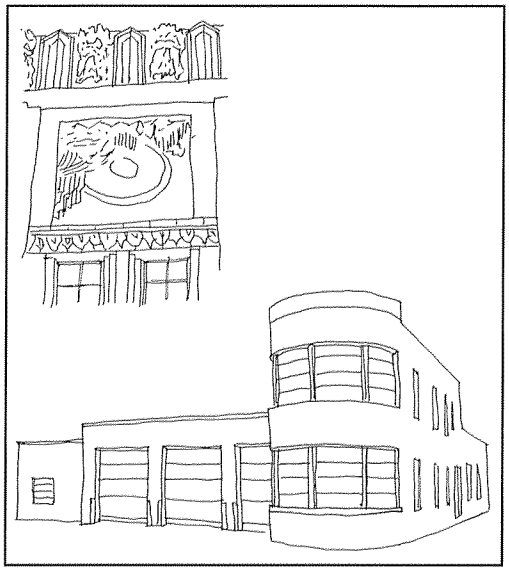
ORIGINS — derived from Mediterranean/Spanish Baroque via Mexico and the U.S. southwest, and popularized through magazines. Along the way, the original style was simplified, idealized and mixed in with southwestern U.S. adobe vernacular, sometimes with Islamic overtones.

COMPOSITION — shallow pitched clay-tile roofs, and multiple-curved parapets on wall-gables. Broad eaves in earlier versions retreated to a more boxy form later on. Structures were generally one or two storeys high.

DETAILS — smooth and shaped stucco walls; recessed, arcaded entries; small recessed windows; and rose windows set in gables. Rounded arches were used for windows and ground-floor arcaded porches. Terra cotta, wrought iron and even pressed metal were used for ornament and hardware. Details often used forms taken from other styles, including both Tudor Revival and Deco.

RESIDENCES — mostly used for detached houses, but also garden apartments and small residential blocks. The style was often used for residential garages, regardless of the house style, reflecting the 1920s boom in car ownership.

OTHERS — commonly used for public garages and filling stations, suburban commercial areas, and urban park structures.



ART DECO/ART MODERNE (1920s–1950s)

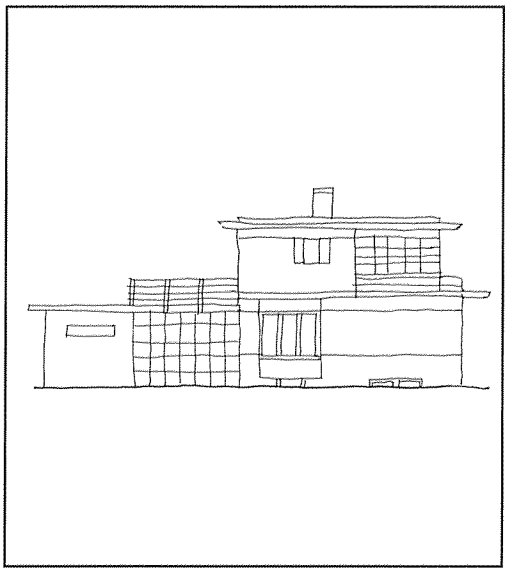
ORIGINS — Deco from post–1918 Europe as a primarily jazz-age style of "deco"–ration, interiors and jewellery; Moderne a decade later from the U.S., influenced by machine aesthetic, streamlining and industrial design. Moderne peaked at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Though they had functional attributes, both were promoted as modern decorative "styles". Both drew public attention as runners-up in architectural competitions.

COMPOSITION — Deco was a style of details stuck on plain boxes. Moderne emphasized horizontality (flat roofs, horizontal window bands, rounded corners) and asymmetry. Smooth stucco walls were typical of Moderne structures.

DETAILS — Deco, nicknamed Zig-Zag, was very angular, featuring geometric, stylized and multicoloured motifs evocative of "primitive" art and ornament, often displayed in terra cotta or cast-stone reliefs. Towers and projections appeared above the roofline. Moderne, on the other hand, continued its horizontal planes and curves in window mullions and railings. Many new materials and techniques were introduced or adapted in new forms: glass block, stainless steel, vitrolite (carrara glass), terrazzo, indirect lighting.

RESIDENCES — not extensively used for private houses, but their essential motifs were widely used for apartment blocks (balconies, interiors), especially in the 1930s to 1950s.

OTHERS — prominent in storefronts, cinemas and other commercial structures. Deco ornaments were placed atop many pre–1940 skyscrapers.



INTERNATIONAL (1930s–1960s)

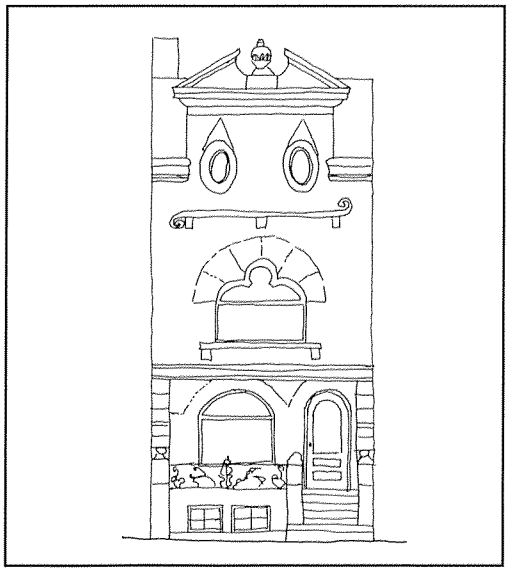
ORIGINS — claimed to be an ahistorical overthrow of received historical styles in favour of pure functionalism, but was promoted in print as a style in itself. European modernism in art and social thinking promoted the idea of architecture as a reforming agent, reflected in polemics and designs by the "greats" (Le Corbusier, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe). But the style was actually spread by poor emulators, with many successors and variants after 1945.

COMPOSITION — overwhelming emphasis on horizontality: flat roofs without parapets, sometimes with overhangs. An appearance of thinness and lightness was created in deliberate contrast to surrounding buildings. Later variations were forced to seek contrast using different forms.

DETAILS — stucco, concrete or smooth brick walls appeared as undecorated neutral surfaces. Extensive areas of glass, usually in horizontal bands, were integrated in the wall plane. White became the dominant "colour", reinforcing institutional overtones. Industrial-type materials, especially metals, were used.

RESIDENCES — very avant-garde style for residences. There are few pre–1940 examples in Ontario.

OTHERS — primarily a commercial style, especially for office blocks, suburban commerce and light industry; few pre–1940 examples in Ontario.



MIXTURES AND OTHERS

ORIGINS — a catchall for many idiosyncratic buildings whose commonality lies in their departure from established forms. Examples range from the subtle to the bizarre, and exist in every era though early survivors are very rare. Many designs were influenced by Oriental styles (both actual and mythical, especially Egypt or India), but usually via the U.S.

COMPOSITION — mixed, but generally similar to the other styles of the day. These buildings were largely distinguished by their detail rather than by compositional distinctions.

DETAILS — generally characterized by collisions and clashes of features from quite different styles, especially Gothic and Romanesque in more ornate examples. Their builders were sometimes deliberately "creative", sometimes unselfconscious. Buildings and features often masqueraded as something else altogether.

RESIDENCES — rare, found occasionally in affluent suburbs or in rural areas. Idiosyncratic houses appear to be poor neighbours.

OTHERS — most outrageous designs were and are for commerce, including some Egyptian/Classical bank branches. Fairground architecture was often deliberately exotic. Main-street auto-age commerce was also influenced by this type of design.

Explaining exactly what regional architecture is, might be a job for Jesuits rather than designers.

David Dillon

There are no studies as yet that compare one region of Ontario to another in terms of building styles, techniques or materials, nor are there wider Canadian treatments of the subject. There are, however, many regional or local studies that can be mined for useful information about specific areas (for example, BUCO76, MILL78, CRUI84, and TAUS86); consult a local library or the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communication's resource centre in Toronto. A comprehensive regional study for south-central Ontario is HERI80. A surprisingly useful guide to regional architectural variation in southern Ontario is CHAP66; though non-architectural, it offers information about physiographic influences on buildings and their materials. Some historical and environmental influences can be traced in maps and atlases; see DEAN69, GENT84 and HARR87.

Some building-type studies look at regional variation in the south: see ARTH72, MACR63, MACR75, MACR83, BLAK69, GREE74 and REMP80. There is unfortunately no adequate reference for architecture and landscape in northern Ontario, though there are studies of individual public buildings in the limited publications of Parks Canada, and of remote industrial buildings in unpublished files of the Ministry of Culture and Communications; see RASK84.

Looking for changes from place to place

Ontario comprises a huge area of land in the centre of a vast country. Its distances offer great potential for variety. Even within its relatively compact south, the province displays many variations in character. Nevertheless, because its physiography is seldom dramatic and its settlement was carefully controlled by government and commerce, differences in the way the land has been settled, used and built on are often very subtle.

Architectural variation from place to place requires close examination. The influences that dominate the look of the built environment are both physiographic and cultural. Bedrock, soil, vegetation and climate provide the matrix of possibilities for land use; the social, economic and cultural inheritance of settlers and dwellers directs the ways in which those possibilities are harnessed. As these conditions vary across the territory, so the ultimate look of the land and its human artifacts differ from place to place.

Topography and physiography

In Ontario, regional variations of culture and physiography are often muted; hard edges are seldom visible between regions. In general, the subdivision and ownership of land were ordained before almost all of the earliest permanent settlements. This meant little variation in the planning and building of communities so long as topography, drainage and soils permitted laying out of generally standard roads and plot lines. Only where topography prevented the standard survey grid are there picturesque or dramatic views, odd-shaped building plots, or unusual siting. Much of the difference between one place and the next is found in subtleties of material, detail and colour, or in different uses of proportions and measuring systems within the wider conventions and styles of a given era.

The strongest effect of physiographic variation has been on the availability and uses of building materials. This is most evident in the concentrations of stone buildings in eastern Ontario, especially near settlements on the Rideau waterway, from Kingston to Ottawa. Limestone and sandstone structures appear in many places in the province but are much more prevalent where stone was quarried on a large scale (for instance, at St. Marys) or left over after the clearing of fields (for instance, along the glaciated Oak Ridge moraine north of Lake Ontario). Different colours of local clay have given some areas quite distinctive colours of brick, from the creamy white of Galt to the orange of Toronto. Building materials tended to be associated with quite small areas until the arrival of railways and the increased mechanization of lumbering and brick-making. By the end of the 19th century, regional distinction had been almost completely erased — for example, many of northern Ontario's bricks came by rail from Toronto.

Some local peculiarities still survive, such as the cobblestone veneers of Paris or the log houses and lodges of the Shield in "cottage country". Such examples link the physiographic factor to the cultural. Paris's cobblestone architecture is a pattern imported from upper New York by American immigrants early in the 19th century. The log architecture of the Shield is a less direct import; though settlers throughout Ontario started out with some form of log shanty, cultural groups previously familiar with the type maintained it for their second or third homestead. "Wilderness rusticity" was even established as a style in some districts with the first railway tourists of the late 19th century.

Cultural habits and tastes

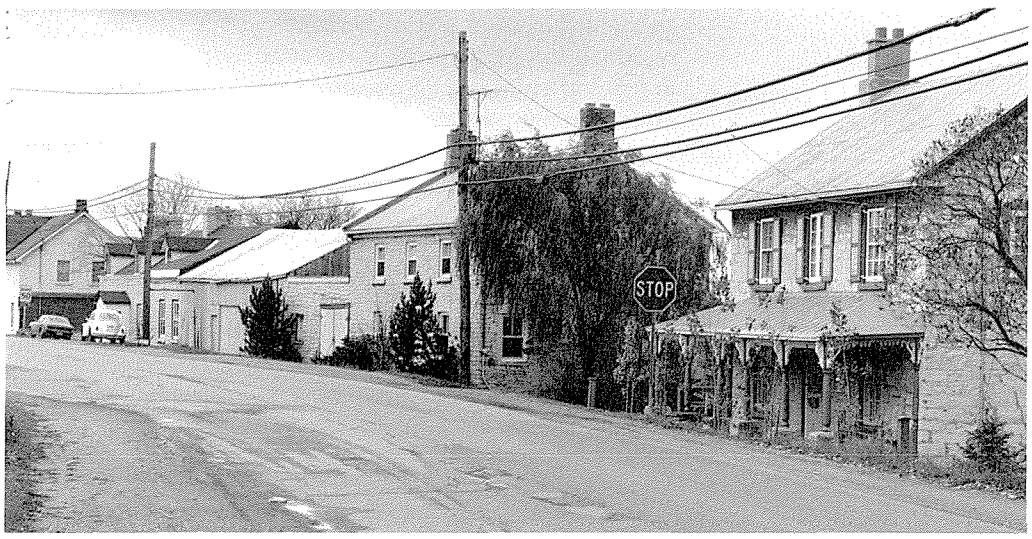
Cultural variation between regions is not conspicuous in Ontario architecture, though there are important if subtle differences. Few regions have large populations distinct from mainstream Anglo-American and Scotch-Irish traditions of 19th-century Ontario. Even areas with sizeable groups outside this mainstream tended to emulate majority styles and fashions. For instance, areas of early French settlement in the Ottawa and St. Lawrence valleys and along the Detroit River display few obvious features of the traditional architecture of New France or Québec, except in very recent copies of revival styles currently popular in the province of Québec. The long narrow seigneurial land subdivisions are more conspicuously French than the buildings themselves.

In some areas a particular culture may show itself in its uses of material, proportion and detailed workmanship. Polish settlements along the colonization roads of Renfrew County have architectural woodwork no less traceable in style to European antecedents than that of their furniture. Mennonite areas of Wellington and Waterloo counties have Pennsylvania-German barns and simple farmhouses similar in form to neighbouring Scottish houses but with subtly different proportion and detail (again, much like their respective differences in furniture-making).

Surviving buildings from the early 19th century in such places as Prince Edward County and along the shore of Lake Erie display differences between Loyalist architectural taste and that of later American arrivals, even in houses built at the same time. Each group shared the other's cultural traditions, but one favoured Georgian features and proportions imported directly from Britain while the other preferred its Georgian "filtered" through American examples. Many such "stories" are legible in the architecture of specific areas, but studies documenting them are unfortunately few in number.

Historical maps can give some rough indications of regional influences and identifiable variations in older architecture across the province. But in practice, only individual investigations and close observation will reveal patterns and relationships in local architecture and landscape. Despite its difficulty, recognition of subtle differences between communities and regions is vital to conserving their character.

Ethnic patterns and their historic effects on Ontario architecture can be inferred in some ways from furniture design; see PAIN78. The contributions of specific ethnic groups to the look of North American architecture is treated in UPTO86. Photographic archives are often good sources of raw material for local architecture and its variation from place to place. Major collections exist at the Archives of Ontario (Toronto), the National Archives of Canada (Ottawa), Queen's University (Kingston), the University of Western Ontario (London), and the University of Toronto. Local photographic collections, and the photographs that may be reproduced in local histories, will also offer useful references for the distinguishing characteristics of communities in the past. There may well have been university studies of the local architecture of a specific area; check with departments of geography, history or "Canadian studies" at nearby universities.



Only subtle variation in colour of brick or profile of moulding may distinguish buildings of the same era in different regions. More conspicuous variants, such as the cobblestone walls of Paris (top) or the robust limestone houses along the Rideau waterway (bottom), are relatively rare. Formal styles tended to appear in many places simultaneously, especially after the railway booms of the 19th century that permitted not only rapid communication of ideas, but transportation of manufactured building products as well.

Evaluation and decision-making

One of these days two young people are going to stumble across a ruined farmhouse and leave it alone. . . . Well, what are you sitting there gaping at?

S.J. Perelman, "Down with the Restoration!", 1938

Asking the right questions

Assigning importance to a building or site — determining its value as "historic" or "architectural" or "cultural" resource — is primarily a matter of knowledgeable opinion. Often, the requisite knowledge belongs to an expert or specialist. But because non-specialists often decide what to do about a heritage resource, they must learn how to understand a resource's importance and what that means in practice.

A systematic approach to evaluation may be contentious. No matter how many objective factors are identified, the ultimate decision relies heavily on the relative weight of each factor, and weighting is often very subjective. Some evaluation schemes are based more or less on connoisseurship and emphasize well-known architects, or the "best" of a kind, excluding modest places without such pedigree. In contrast, environmental evaluation schemes describe places without pre-judging them, giving them benefit of any doubt and permitting flexible responses tailored to actual or potential threats. Ideally, any heritage evaluation scheme should combine the best qualities of both, and emphasize making and directing arguments for importance to the right audience.

Most of the literature about evaluation methods and systems is in specialized professional journals; see especially the publications of the Association for Preservation Technology (APT). Provincial and federal heritage agencies have done much work in this area and may be able to offer useful general advice, though they have not published much advisory material for wider use. See KALM80 (or KALM80a), SYKE84, and MADD85. For environmental evaluation techniques that go beyond the art-historical models used in most heritage inventories, see NEWC79 and MCAL80.

Evaluation schemes must correspond to the types of resources they work with — no single "master" evaluation scheme fits every type of heritage property. A principal criterion of value is how well a resource relates to others of its type, and many features of, say, a bridge cannot be compared with a house or a factory. So the questions that follow do not comprise an evaluation scheme for all heritage resources, but a framework that may be used to develop a program for research, inspection, and reporting — even scoring — for a community, or a set of comparable properties or even a single old building.

The questions follow a sequence from intrinsic character to outside threat and, given sufficient time, it makes sense to try to answer them in that order. But when there is some immediate threat or urgency, it may make better sense to ask them in *reverse* order. (For guidance on gathering information to answer these questions, see HISTORICAL RESEARCH, INSPECTION and RECORDING.)

What is it?

Is it a house, a bridge, a village, a farm, a street? Is it an earthwork made by human hands or a product of natural erosion? Is it an office that was once a mansion, a house that was once an inn, a cottage that was once a mill? Before anything else, look carefully at what it is, what it's used for, what it may have been before, what it was or might have been when built. Identify its use, describe its physical characteristics, note its surroundings, and record these observations in a comprehensible form.

How is it tied to the past?

Is the place associated with specific events or notable people? Does it more generally represent broader themes of economic change and social development? Or does it merely look old and arouse nostalgic feelings for "the past" in a general, impressionistic way? Answering these questions requires research into documents and other objects that may not be located at the place.

How does it compare with others of its type?

Is it the best of its kind? the first? the last? Did it influence later examples? Is it quite different from other examples or an ideal representative for all of its kind? Answers may require general expertise about the type of feature and research into other fields of knowledge as well.

How is it unique, and special in its surroundings?

What are its physical qualities, inside and out? Is it well crafted, by hand or by machine? Are its parts artistically arranged? How does it suit its setting? Is it a recognized landmark? Are its surroundings enhanced — or devalued — by its presence? These questions can be answered only through very careful looking, not necessarily the preserve of experts. Anyone who is willing to learn the discipline of observation can see and record these qualities.

What knowledge may be created by its conservation?

Are there physical remains of other cultures or other times hidden inside a structure or buried in its environs? Can the knowledge compiled and recorded for this project be useful elsewhere? Will this knowledge be useful to experts? to the wider public? Even the most specialized knowledge can be applied in unanticipated ways. But the brokers of this knowledge are most likely to be scholars and teachers, in history, geography, archaeology, and so on.

To whom is it important?

Who has — or may have — a stake or investment in the continued existence of a place? Do individuals or groups have attachments to a place? Are there individuals or groups with general interest in conserving architecture or landscape or artifacts? Can these people influence others? Will they act? Do they know they can — and should? Though often embroiled in conservation, "the community" or "the government" does not actually conserve heritage. Only real and identifiable people do.

For what purpose is it important?

Is it useful for science, for the advancement of understanding and knowledge? Is it a resource for community education and recreation? Is it a vehicle or focus for expressing a community's pride and ambition? Will it attract visitors and tourists? Does it perform any of these roles now? Will it in the future? These are questions for the most part about planning, and answers may be contradictory: for instance, scholarly research may not mesh well with busloads of tourists.

In how large an area is its importance felt?

Does it attract attention within its neighbourhood? the wider community? the county or region? Ontario? Canada? the continent and beyond? Breadth of importance is as large as the organization that recognizes it. Municipalities list and designate properties within their boundaries; UNESCO maintains a World Heritage list. Between lie many compilations, general or specialized, of recognized resources. Though relied on heavily, such lists are seldom complete or even sufficient, and recognition of an important place is not automatic.

Is it threatened?

Has a place been left to rot? Is it not being maintained? Is it no longer useful for its original purpose? Is its original purpose no longer useful? Is it being overwhelmed by its use? Is it in the way of some "improvement"? These are questions of planning, of the future. They often have no clear-cut answers, as they involve many external influences. Conservation is almost always a response to these influences, rather than a strong influence of its own — though that may be changing.

Finding the right answers

Answering questions about a heritage resource is primarily a matter of diligent applied research. An investigator must look into records of the past and plans for the future. And he or she must be most attentive to the present state of the thing itself.

Research into the past requires the use of books, correspondence, drawings, deeds and photographs and any other existing records of the building or site. Some of these may be as old or even older than the subject of the research, while some may be quite recent. Such documents may exist within a building under examination, but quite often research demands a thorough look through libraries, archives, museums, municipal files and personal papers. Research also can make use of material artifacts associated with a property, be they furnishings or archaeological finds and other items of material culture that may survive in the hands of an individual or in local museums.

Historical research for the evaluation of buildings and landscapes requires accurately locating a place in its particular context of time and events. There are many scales of time, and many ways a building can be associated with time. And there are many ways this association can be made meaningful for purposes of protecting the building itself. A building or site or entire community may be most important in relation to one specific

person at one specific time: for instance, its founding or construction by a notable person. A place may be important chiefly for its association with a long-term development — for instance, a characteristic pattern of fields and farmsteads peculiar to a specialized form of agriculture in one area over several decades.

Research into the future may be no less important for many buildings and sites. Documents such as comprehensive municipal plans, zoning by-laws, redevelopment and improvement plans, feasibility studies and even newspaper accounts provide information that can suggest what sort of future is faced by one or many heritage resources. Determining the likelihood of change in the surroundings of a place will permit reasoned assessment of its long-term usefulness. Finding information about such change is as much a job of detection as the archival prowling for data about the past — though municipal planners and their consultants are likely to have most of the information. Other levels of government are less readily accessible and must sometimes be actively pursued for information, especially about large-scale environmental projects that will affect communities and countrysides.

The hinge between past and future is the present state of the place, its use and condition, and its special, irreplaceable character. Considered as an artifact, a heritage resource is a special kind of document, linking past with potential. The place must answer many of the most practical questions. It must be assessed by knowledgeable eyes and hands, and the data thus gathered properly collated and interpreted by knowledgeable heads. There are many aids for this work of inspection and understanding: sketches, measured drawings, photographs, notes, interviews. Though these are prepared by people at the site for their own use, they can help others who may not see the place at all, but who may be instrumental in making decisions.

The answers that support evaluations and decisions become important documents whose care and protection is also a concern for conservationists. Our principal means of communication about heritage is on paper, in text and pictures. Documents enable us to compare places, tie pre-existing information to a place, and relate a place to the knowledge that will permit its fullest possible understanding. Each added documentary record is a vital and useful expansion of that knowledge.

From evaluation to action: keeping principles in mind

An existing building limits the possibilities for satisfying the needs of clients and future users. But it can offer a dividend in return, an added set of qualities, spaces and details that no new construction can match. It offers a different balance of past to future, and the designer's approach must respect that balance. A new-building design approach cannot deal with the realities of a building often much older than the new-building designer.

Though new buildings are supposed to be have higher standards of structure and safety than older ones, an old building may actually be far sturdier. Though much less regulated by legal standards, historic practice often used more generous margins for structural safety and strength than modern codes. Traditional building techniques have proved reliable for centuries. Many modern practices and materials are disappointing, requiring expensive repairs within a few years. Much deterioration now suffered by historic buildings has been caused by quite recent repairs.

No matter how un-modern and un-standard an old building may be, it embodies and displays quality and distinction that have lasting value. It deserves the utmost respect in making decisions about extending its useful life. It can be just as or even more durable, safe and solid than new, if conserved with care and understanding. There is no single best way to conserve every building or site for the future. Many courses of action may have to be explored. The keys to successful conservation are careful choice of a plan of action, and implementation in the most responsible, and principled, way.

Evaluating heritage resources is becoming more reasoned and scientific as demands on those resources have diversified. Worthy exemplars of a given style may be modest or grand, but each has an equal claim to recognition and protection. With greater public appreciation of built heritage the view of importance has broadened so that "value" is a function of several factors rather than just one.