

An Open Letter re Sustainability and Architectural Heritage at Mount Allison

It's the Green Campus, Stupid. This green slogan could be the title for the research project prepared in 1994 by my firm, Robert Eaton Architect Limited, to promote sustainable design at Mount Allison. Funded by NRC and authored by Roxanne Button, M Arch, the research paper was entitled 'The Sustainable University Campus: Guidelines for Environmentally-Responsible Campus Planning for Mount Allison University'. (use this link: <http://bit.ly/sustcampus> for the full research paper) The report concludes: 'What is really needed is a **comprehensive campus plan** that puts on paper Mount Allison's planned development for the next 20 years'. Environmentally-responsible campus planning exhibits 'a greater awareness of the ecological, historical and built context'. A general strategy for a sustainable campus affirms that 'existing buildings are a valuable resource, historically and environmentally; their reuse should be clearly stated in the campus plan'. A specific guideline for resource efficiency confirms: 'With many of Mount Allison's buildings having such historic value, the reuse and recycling of buildings becomes an important issue. Buildings are a valuable resource from an environmental perspective because they represent energy and resources that have already been expended.' In the words of conservationist Richard Moe: **The greenest building is one that already exists.**

Following the suggestion in our research paper Mount Allison retained the planning services of Diamond and Schmitt Architects to prepare a 20-year **facilities master plan**. This plan was approved in principle by the Board of Regents in the fall of 2002 and proposed in phase three the development of the site of the University Centre. In recognition of the fact the Memorial Library is an architectural treasure made of red sandstone cut from the local Pickard quarry and designed by "*one of Canada's great architects*", Andrew Randall Cobb, Diamond and Schmitt Architects recommended the historic old building be conserved and an addition made to replace the Tweedie Annex to create the sense of a gateway to the campus. Internationally acclaimed

Dr A.J. Diamond advised that Mount Allison must retain the Alumni Memorial Library to 'honour the historical and physical continuity' of the campus. 'It is simply that demolition is wanton destruction, and a sensitive addition to accommodate whatever space program is required, is feasible'.

The **Heritage Conservation Act** confirms the uniqueness of our provincial heritage and 'the vital task of conserving our past for the benefit of all future generations'. This was the specific request of the Alumnae and Alumni Societies who determined after the Great War "*to erect a library as a memorial to the loyalty and heroism of Mount Allison men and women in the war*" to be 'held in trust' where names placed there will "*go down through the years cherished and revered by successive generations of grateful students*". Registered in the DND National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials, the Memorial Library is an unbreakable link with the past and a beacon of optimism for the future. The Tantramar Heritage Trust made application for recognition and the Minister of Wellness Culture and Sport for New Brunswick has deemed the Memorial Library worthy of designation as a **Provincial Heritage Place**.

In an open letter to Alumni and friends of Mount Allison dated May 07, 2011, President Campbell and Chair McCubbin state: 'the building does not have heritage designation'. With its long and proud history one would expect that Mount Allison would celebrate this provincial heritage designation. Yet I surmise that Mount Allison has filed an objection to the 'Intention to Designate' and is prepared to bring out their big guns to convince the Minister that their "*historic and landmark building*" isn't really that at all. Recalcitrant to the notion of a better solution, CEO Campbell must be reminded this is not a corporate campus, but a place of higher learning, and such actions will not regain the confidence of his shareholders.

Those that strive for excellence do not destroy their architectural heritage.

Robert Eaton

Save the Mount Allison Memorial Library Committee
for more info visit: www.eastmarket.com/smash