

Letter to the Editor

Good Stewards of Our Heritage Buildings

In the October 20 issue of the Sackville Tribune there is an article stating that Mount Allison has decided to tear down the historic Memorial Library. In the text of that article is a statement by David Stewart, vice-president of administration, that 'Mount A has demonstrated its sensitivity to historically important properties'.

Reference is made to the recent restoration of the Wallace McCain Student Centre and I commend the University. This was the centerpiece of the Campus Master Plan as prepared by the architects Diamond & Schmitt in 2002. These are the same architects that recommended the conservation of the Memorial Library. Reference is also made to the current restoration of the Owens Art Gallery and I commend the University. Would it not be wonderful if the original sky lighting could also be reintroduced to brighten up the mausoleum feel of the interior?

However since retiring to Sackville some fifteen years ago, I have witnessed the streetscape of the town dramatically altered by the removal of several heritage buildings from their sites at the hands of Mount Allison University. There was a pile of kindling in my neighbourhood at the end of Rectory Lane known as the Hess House, the picturesque Hillcrest House and French House on Salem at York Street, the attractive Craftsman houses known as Sprague House and Baxter on Salem at University Place, the McGregor House on beautiful York Street and the never to be forgotten Palmer Hall. This is hardly a demonstration of 'sensitivity to historically important properties'.

It can not be an occasional preoccupation, but at all times we must be good stewards of our heritage buildings.

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