

Hello Friends of Memorial Library,

On Wednesday, 9 November, an editorial about Memorial Library appeared briefly in the online version of the Globe and Mail. This editorial was written by the G&M editorial staff who are completely at arms length from the travesty that is taking place at Mt A.. Unfortunately the editorial was replaced after a short time and never got to the printed version and does not appear in the G&M archives:

A university that demolishes a memorial to its own war dead seems to be engaging in an act of desecration against itself. Yet Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B., seems to be hell-bent on doing just that.

The Memorial Library, built in 1927, has a plaque that says, "This hall is dedicated to the memory of those Allisonians who gave their lives for the freedom of their country". Seventy-two men and one woman from Mount Allison were killed during the First World War. Subsequently, another 90 students were killed during the Second World War and the Korean War. The names, placed on separate plaques (moved two years ago to another building), were to "go down through the years cherished and revered by successive generations of grateful students". If any more insult were needed, the building was paid for mostly by the families and friends of the deceased.

The university's plan calls for a fine and performing arts centre to be built where the Memorial Library (which has functioned as a meeting place since 1971) now stands. But why doesn't the school look for some other solution or compromise? The new arts centre could incorporate the Memorial Library, according to a prominent architect who has worked with the university. And the campus is not lacking in other building sites. Besides, the Memorial Library is a beautiful building, and the arts centre will look like "a shopping centre at best" says a local professor emeritus. Based on a publicly available rendering of it, he's right.

A university spokeswoman says the school needs to "balance the honour owed to the past with the needs of the present, without encumbering the future". Demolition is not balance. This building is a treasure. Its very walls are a source of knowledge, and the preservation of original sources is part of the job of universities. The university should revisit the drawing board.

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The attached photos of the Memorial Library and War Memorial show how it looked this afternoon. Please pass on the news to other members of the alumni and friends of Mt A and anyone interested in the preservation of heritage buildings. Share the photos if you wish and stay up to date by watching: <http://www.eastmarket.com/smash/>

Sincerely,

Bruce

Bruce Coates (Mt A '69)