

CANADA

Changing approaches to conservation education and training in Canada

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The climate for conservation of cultural heritage has changed dramatically in Canada in the last ten years. The purpose of our conservation work has shifted too — we're interested less in commemorating the cultural mile-posts in our history, and more in providing our society with a strength of purpose in the face of rapid change — with a sense of our time and place on the evolutionary continuum, in order to give our lives greater stability and meaning. With our shift in goals has come an accompanying shift in methods. We've become much less interested in the autocratic forces of preservation — restrictive laws and legislated controls and the requisite involvement of public authorities — than in mobilizing communities to identify and care for their heritage.

The measures most appropriate to community involvement focus on education and participation. These approaches also share certain characteristics:

1. An acceptance of *change as inevitable and desirable*, the goal of conservation being to ensure changes are managed for the benefit of all concerned;
2. A bias for developments which are *incremental* in nature, filling in and repairing where required, rather than automatically renewing;
3. A *collaborative approach* to the setting of goals and the choice of means, to bring the heritage and development communities together in definition and pursuit of common goals.

These approaches have taken many forms throughout Canada: the Main Street programmes of Heritage Canada operating in 70 towns across the country; the B.C. Government's Community Pride Programme «enabling» community members to succeed in the heritage field; the Ontario Government's efforts to enlist the province's amateur divers in protection of underwater archaeological

resources; the creation of a new generation of post-graduate conservation programmes across the country; the home renovation courses given by Heritage Montreal to hundreds of home-owners; the Ontario Government's development of technical training programmes for community members to raise standards of practice; the Federal Government's adoption of the FHBRO programme for the heritage buildings in its ownership and the growth of an «ACTION» network of teachers and educators in the youth/heritage field, just to name a few.

All these initiatives have one thing in common: their dependence, directly or indirectly, on training or education programmes for their success. This paper looks at the nature of these initiatives for those involved in professional practice, in community heritage initiatives and in bringing heritage understanding to the young.

1. *Professional Practice*

There are two main challenges facing present and future professionals.

1. *The study of conservation requires recognition of conservation as a discipline in its own right.*

The need for conservation training, once recognized in Canada has usually been dealt with by attaching it to other disciplines or activities such as anthropology or architecture, as a secondary focus.

This approach has allowed conservation courses to be introduced into universities and colleges through existing departments relatively easily, as the extension programmes of established universities are not subject to the same degree of scrutiny as those proposed within more conventional academic channels. This approach also recognizes that for many students, conservation activity may not be a full-time career, but rather a speciality within a wider discipline.

At the same time, however, treating conservation as a secondary focus within other programmes may not provide the opportunity to achieve the broader impact sought by those in the movement. As the conservation field broadens, people increasingly are being asked to work in environments where they are isolated from other conservation professionals, and must rely on their own initiative and judgment on a wide range of conservation issues. This demands a different kind of self-confidence in conservation theory and practice than

that required for those earlier practitioners who worked at specialized tasks in specific government agencies. Accordingly, in many minds, the next step in improving the capacity of professionals to meet these changing demands should be the consolidation of scattered courses and programmes under the unifying umbrella of independent conservation programmes.

This will allow conservation to develop not only as a craft and a secondary profession, but also as a primary profession and a field of academic inquiry — as a discipline in and of itself.

Steps in this direction are being taken by a number of universities, notably the University of Montreal and the Technical University of Nova Scotia in the area of architectural conservation; Carleton University and Trent University in the area of cultural resource conservation; and the Universities of Calgary and Victoria in building on the base established by their extension programmes.

2. *The growing interest in achieving conservation goals through wider involvement of those affected has resulted in a shift in role for the professional.* Formerly viewed as experts, decreeing what should be saved and how, conservators are now often seen as facilitators, assisting communities to make similar decisions in defense of their heritage.

Those working in the new fashion accordingly require new skills — those of the facilitators — to equip them to help communities to make the various conservation judgments required.

However, these skills, and the practitioners adopting them, are often viewed by expert colleagues with much suspicion. The focus of their distrust is really the public itself, whose energies and capacities the facilitators are meant to catalyze. This distrust, though misplaced, is hard to overcome, and it is the largest obstacle to increasing the impact of these initiatives. It will not be overcome until contemporary professionals accept the view that working with motivated and concerned groups is more rewarding than working in isolation, and linked to results of greater permanence. As a society, we can't afford any other approach: there aren't enough public funds available to conserve our heritage without enlisting the direct support of those most responsible for the daily care of that heritage.

2. The Community

As we have seen, without any doubt, one of the most valuable Canadian contributions to the conservation movement has been the democratization of the movement, its involvement of new clients and the broadening of the notion of heritage itself.

In other words, Canada has moved from an emphasis on top-down, government-managed prescriptions, to approaches based on grass-roots, bottom-up involvement and action. The reasons for this shift are numerous. Admittedly, some are negative: for example, a reluctance on the part of politicians to advocate measures which would compromise commitments to property rights in the eyes of conservative voters. Or equally, a reluctance to confront the difficulties of developing national policy in a country which enshrines responsibility for property rights at the regional (i.e. provincial) level. But most are positive: a realization that heritage is best cared for by those who have a personal stake in its survival, and a growing confidence in the practices and successes of the alternative approaches.

Success in this new milieu has required those in the movement to abandon specialist language, to clarify their objectives and to work within a framework of individuals promoting a range of legitimate municipal mandates. These include elected officials and municipal civil servants, the merchant community, developers, and the expert consultants: architects, engineers, traffic consultants, etc.

The focus of change here has been efforts to train or educate the larger public. Among groups adopting this approach, Heritage Canada's Main Street programme has had a critical impact. This revitalization programme, focused on the commercial heart of Canadian downtowns and based on the presence of a professional facilitator (engaged by a community for a 3-year period) has encouraged merchant communities to develop strategies designed to improve business success, to channel development in appropriate directions and to build on the heritage character of downtown buildings.

The Main Street training programmes have promoted understanding that the long-term health of the downtown design environment owes most to the ability of individual merchants to identify the success of their businesses with the image of their buildings, and with the value of collective action in pursuit of common goals.

Similarly, the Government of British Columbia's Community Pride Program has attempted since 1988, through provision of an ongoing series of community workshops, to assist the community's heritage leaders in developing workable strategies to achieve their goals in complex political environments.

Another useful initiative in this area has been an Ontario Government programme which provides technical training to members of community heritage advisory groups, so that their improved awareness will help professionals and contractors alike achieve higher standards of work. This training is mandatory for those who wish to receive grant assistance from the Ontario government; though resisted at first, demand for these courses now exceeds supply. Through this programme, heritage advocates in over 200 communities have been assisted to improve their technical understanding.

The same goals have been achieved without government involvement, through the efforts of Heritage Montreal, a locally based charitable foundation with a conservation mandate. Their ongoing series of home renovation seminars has brought appropriate technical skills and philosophical understanding within the reach of thousands of motivated home-owners.

A last example, again within government, is the approach adopted by the Marine Heritage Conservation Programme of the Ontario Government to the problem of amateur divers looting underwater wrecks of archaeological value. Rather than increase the severity of penalties for abuse of the law prohibiting such activity, or increase policing of such wrecks, the Eastern Ontario Programme enrolled hundreds of divers in archaeological training programmes — ultimately enlisting them as community of allies, interested in documenting and studying rather than plundering the province's underwater resources.

As previously noted, the recent democratization of the conservation approach has required professionals to emerge from their ivory towers and to learn to promote their ideas on the basis of their mainstream acceptability. This has required rethinking training programmes less in terms of their content, than in terms of their emphasizing decision-making processes capable of co-ordinating a wide range of competing interests.

5. Heritage Education for the young

Efforts to increase the sensitivity of the young to heritage reinforce the same point. Only through bringing heritage consciousness to the young can we expect to see individuals of greater conscience and responsibility relative to the needs of their milieu.

In the last years, a multitude of training tools, reference manuals and teaching kits have been produced. The effect of these efforts has been felt within school curriculums which have begun to accord the heritage message a larger place.

However, these successes, isolated and limited in scope, fall short of stimulating the processes necessary to help the young to integrate a conservation approach within their lives. Exchange programmes among the young of various countries could be a powerful means to improve this situation by encouraging greater heritage awareness and stimulating curiosity, acceptance and ultimately understanding for the lives of others. As well, to respond to the needs of teachers and youth educators working with the young, and to remain in contact with each other and their activities, the Action/Youth and Heritage network was initiated by the Heritage Canada Foundation. By means of a newsletter and an accompanying Directory of pertinent activities, tools and publications, interested individuals have been encouraged to take part and share their experiences.

Conclusion:

In Canada, our built heritage is modest in antiquity and richness. Without the preoccupation occasioned by the numerous monuments of the old world, our approach has been freed to focus on the commonplace elements which define the particular identities of our towns and villages and make up the fabric of our communities; conservation has inevitably become a means to knit these communities together in common regard for past values.

This realization encourages speculating on an emerging role for ICOMOS Canada. This paper has documented the emergence of important training initiatives in the recent development of conservation in Canada. These initiatives — be they courses, university programmes, community workshops — require coordination to efficiently respond to growing and changing needs, in the face of limited funds and growing expectations. ICOMOS Canada could play an important role in providing this information. ICOMOS Canada

already acts as a source of information; it also provides a forum for people to meet and exchange. Perhaps we've reached the point where ICOMOS Canada could become a central co-ordination point for managing integration of all the ideas, approaches and initiatives described here within a national conservation framework.

For further information about the programmes mentioned in this paper, please write to:

1. Main Street Canada
(downtown revitalization)

c/o Gordon Fulton, Director
Main Street Canada
P.O. Box 1358, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5R4

2. Community Pride
(community heritage workshops)

c/o Catherine Campbell
B.C. Community Pride Programme
103 - 1216 Broad Street
Victoria, B.C. V8W 2A5

3. Heritage Montreal
(community education)

c/o Dinu Bumbaru, Executive Director.
Heritage Montreal
406, rue Notre-Dame est
Montréal, QC H2Y 1C8

4. Ontario Government
(community technical training)

c/o Gail Sussman/Susann Myers
Technical Advisers
Ministry of Culture & Communications
77 Bloor Street West, 2nd floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2R9

5. Ontario Government
(underwater archaeology programme)

c/o Peter Engelbert/Phill Wright
Marine Heritage Conservation Prog.
Ministry of Culture & Communications
Eastern Region, Room 1105
1 Nicholas Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 7D7

6. Post-graduate conservation programmes

c/o Alastair Kerr, Chairman
ICOMOS Canada Education
& Training Committee
P.O. Box 737, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5R4

7. Federal Heritage Buildings
Review Office (FHBRO)

c/o Margaret Archibald
Executive Secretary, F.H.B.R.O.
Terrasses de la Chaudière
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3

8. «Action/Youth & Heritage»
(network of youth educators
and teachers involved with heritage)

c/o Hélène Deslauriers
Heritage Canada Foundation
P.O. Box 1358, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5R4

*Hélène Deslauriers, Herb Stovel
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Nouvelles orientations pour les programmes d'éducation et de formation en conservation au Canada

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Le monde de la conservation a profondément changé durant les dix dernières années au Canada. Dans un contexte où les changements, dans nos sociétés se font à toute vitesse, le travail de sensibilisation à la conservation se transforme. Il s'agit de moins en moins de glorifier les temps passés et davantage de développer des moyens pour faire face à ces changements. L'objectif consiste, de ce fait, à donner à notre existence un peu plus de stabilité et de signification en la contextualisant dans l'évolution de l'être humain.

Ce changement d'objectif a entraîné inévitablement un changement dans la façon de pratiquer la conservation et dans le choix des actions à poser. Il apparaît davantage utile et efficace de sensibiliser et de mobiliser des communautés afin qu'elles prennent soin elles-mêmes de leur patrimoine plutôt que de laisser l'entière responsabilité de cette démarche à l'Etat. L'éducation et la participation remplacent ainsi, progressivement, les mesures coercitives des lois et des règlements.

De cette approche de la conservation découlent donc certains principes:

1. L'acceptation du changement comme inévitable voire souhaitable dans la mesure où ces changements se font de façon harmonieuse et pour le bénéfice de tous;
2. L'acceptation aussi, d'autre part, que ce changement doit se faire progressivement, en misant sur la conservation de ce qui est en place et non sur le renouvellement complet et continu;
3. L'obligation de développer un climat de collaboration afin que la sauvegarde de l'identité d'un groupe ou d'une communauté et leur croissance économique se fassent en fonction d'objectifs communs de qualité de vie.

Ces changements dans le monde de la conservation ont pris différentes formes un peu partout au Canada: le programme «Rues principales» de la Fondation Héritage Canada qui opère dans 70