

ARTHUR, Eric Ross (1898 – 1982)

Eric Arthur played a pivotal role in the development of architecture in Ontario. As a teacher, author, preservationist and architect he was not only instrumental in the recognition and retention of many of Ontario's historic buildings, but also was a champion of the best in modern design, as demonstrated in his teachings and his own work. Eric Arthur played a significant part in the formation of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario in 1932.

Born on July 1, 1898 in Dunedin, New Zealand, he was educated at the Otago Boys School where he won the New Zealand Art Society's medal for drawing. After service in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force he entered the Liverpool school of Architecture, graduating with first-class honors in architectural design in 1919. He furthered his studies at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris and then worked in the office of Sir Edwin Lutyens, an architect he greatly admired. In 1923 he was offered an associate professorship at the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto where he taught for many years.

He designed the J.S. McLean Estate on Bayview Avenue, Toronto in 1932. It was executed in limestone with a noble profile created by a slate bellcast roof pierced by dormers, giving true grandeur to its Georgian form. In 1937 he was awarded the gold medal by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and Ontario Association of Architects for his

outstanding design of the Canada Packers plant in Edmonton, Alberta. It is a progressive combination of brick accented by steel girders and concrete, harmoniously brought together through careful composition of wall openings.

Arthur also designed St. George's Chapel in St. James Cathedral, Toronto. He prepared designs for the restoration of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Niagara-on-the Lake (1936-37) and St. Lawrence Hall, King St. at Jarvis, Toronto (1964-67), both gems of Ontario Georgian architecture. In the fifties he was instrumental in the competition for Toronto's new City Hall won by Viljo Revell. Over his lifetime he served on many Boards and Committees which were influential in the shaping of Ontario's 20th century architectural legacy.

Eric Arthur was the author of numerous architectural publications which are held in high esteem, including: *Small Houses of the Late 18th and early 19th Century in Ontario* (1929); *The Barn* (1972); *From Front Street To Queen's Park* (1979) and his glowing tribute to metalwork, *Iron* (1982). *Toronto No Mean City* initially published in 1964 was one of the first and finest appraisals of Toronto's architectural heritage and did much to guide many in its preservation. During his lifetime he received several awards in recognition of his great achievements and was made a Companion of the Order of Canada.