

MACBETH, Robert Ian (1891 – 1978)

An Honorary member of the Ontario Architects Association, Robert Ian Macbeth was a prominent architect in the Niagara Peninsula who designed many of the civic structures throughout this historic area.

Born in Inverness, Scotland on March 15, 1891, Macbeth graduated from Edinburgh University in 1907. While practicing architecture with Robert John Macbeth at Inverness he attended the Royal Academy School there and later the Inverness Technical College. After graduating from the latter institution in 1912 he practiced under his own name until 1914 when he emigrated to Canada. Settling in St. Catharines he worked for architect A. E. Nicholson from 1918 to 1920. After a brief sojourn in Toronto in 1920 and 1921 where he worked for Wickson & Gregg and at the local office of Thomas W. Lamb, he returned to St. Catharines and formed a partnership with his former employer A. E. Nicholson.

Macbeth was responsible for the design of the

Registry Building, the YM-YWCA and the Central Fire Station in St. Catharines. He also influenced the design and implementation of Wartime Housing in the Niagara Peninsula. His most prominent building no doubt is the St. Catharines City Hall (1938) designed in a severe classically inspired Art Deco style with highly stylized details.

Recognizing the need for greater municipal planning, Macbeth was active in the formation of a planning committee for St. Catharines before such bodies were common in the province.

Macbeth was a Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. He was also an active member of the Rotary Club, the St. Catharines Club and the St. Catharines Golf and Country Club.

In 1961, Macbeth retired from practice. In 1978, having been predeceased by his wife Irene Gordon, Macbeth died at the age of 87 having contributed greatly to the architectural development of the Niagara Peninsula.

Important work:

Public Utilities Commission, storage and testing building, Head St. at Race St., St. Catharines	1934
City Hall and Police building, Church St. at James St., St. Catharines	1936-37
Bell Telephone building, King St. at Helliwell's Lane, St. Catharines	1946
Central Fire Hall, Geneva St. at Niagara St., St. Catharines	1949