

## MOFFAT, Robert Reid (1906 – 1960)

**R**obert Reid Moffat practiced architecture in Toronto for about twenty years between the completion of his architectural studies in 1931 and his death in 1960. In 1945, he joined with Leonard E. Shore to establish Shore & Moffat, Architects, which became one of the most important architectural firms in the province. In the next fifteen years, he acted as the design partner in that firm, responsible for the design of many notable buildings in Ontario and Saskatchewan.

Moffat was born on March 17, 1906 in Edrans, Manitoba. Later that year his family moved to Bradwell, Saskatchewan. He attended primary school in Bradwell and Nutana Collegiate in Saskatoon. He then studied chemistry at the University of Saskatchewan, graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Science in 1926. After working for a year as a draftsman for Webster & Gilbert, Architects, Saskatoon, he studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Architecture in 1931.

After his graduation from MIT, Moffat settled in Toronto where he worked for architects Darling & Pearson and for Wickson & Gregg. He then worked for four years as assistant to the Superintendent of Buildings for the University of Toronto, doing considerable work at the Royal Ontario Museum and Connaught Laboratories. He subsequently operated his own practice for about four years. In 1940, he was employed as an architect by General Engineering Company on a fuse-filling factory in Scarborough, Ontario, and when this plant opened in 1941 he stayed on briefly as its Superintendent of Buildings. From 1942 to 1945, he served as the Assistant Director of Works and Buildings for the Royal Canadian Navy in Ottawa.

In 1945 Moffat joined with Leonard Shore to establish the firm of Shore & Moffat, Architects, in Toronto. In the next ten years the firm became one of the leading architectural firms in Ontario, recognized as one of the foremost proponents of Modern design in the province. Between 1945 and 1962 Shore & Moffat designed at least a hundred buildings of all types many of which received Massey Medals or other awards for excellence in design.

Whereas Shore was more concerned with the management aspects of the firm, Moffat assumed the role of the design partner and in the following fifteen years was responsible for the design of many important buildings, mainly in Ontario but also in his native Saskatchewan. He was a Modernist in his approach to design. In the words of the obituary in the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) Journal, Moffat "approached every architectural problem from the scientific point of view, and was adept at reducing problems to their barest fundamentals.... his prime interest lay in finding a functional solution to any architectural problem ...."

Some of the important buildings for which Moffat was responsible were the Ontario Food Terminal in Etobicoke, the Imperial Oil Research Laboratory in Sarnia, the Union Carbide Building in Toronto, the William Lyon Mackenzie Building in Toronto and the Sir Alexander Campbell Building in Ottawa, Defence Training Centre buildings in Regina and London, the Arts Building and Memorial Union Building at the University of Saskatchewan, and the Township (now City) of York Municipal Offices. Several of these buildings received Massey Medals or Honorable Mentions.

Moffat joined the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) in 1936, and remained a member until his death. He was a member of the OAA School Room Planning Committee from its inception in 1950 to 1959, and served on the RAIC committee on Standard Practices in the early fifties. Moffat was also Chairman of the Toronto Chapter Advisory Committee on Civic Design from 1951 to 1955; this committee participated in the design of the lighting and street furniture for Yonge Street in Toronto in connection with the building of the Toronto subway line.

Bob Moffat died on December 17, 1960, survived by his wife Gabrielle. He is remembered for his part in establishing Shore & Moffat, and for the many fine buildings for which he was responsible as a partner in that firm.