



SIMPSON, Bruce Napier Jr. (1925 – 1978)

Bruce Napier Simpson Jr. ("Nape") made a significant contribution to architectural heritage in Ontario. He personally enjoyed working on small-scale restorations, but he was committed to architectural preservation on a grander scale.

Bruce Napier Simpson Jr. was born on May 3, 1925.

Simpson studied architecture at the University of Toronto and graduated in 1951.

Upon graduation he went to work for Mackenzie Waters, a prominent Toronto architect. Waters was known both for his neo-Georgian and colonial designs and his skills in the Art Deco and International Styles. Waters, too, was committed to Ontario's architectural heritage and helped to form the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. The Conservancy was established by Professor Eric Arthur, a contemporary of Mackenzie Waters.

In April 1953 Simpson joined the Ontario Association of Architects. The same year he also became a member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

Simpson began a private practice in Thornhill, Ontario. He concentrated on the design of private residences and restoring heritage buildings. His practice was the successor to Mackenzie Waters.

As a member of the Executive Board of the Architectural Conservancy, Simpson became involved in the campaign to save Old Toronto City Hall. A task force was struck in 1965 by the Conservancy, headed by Alice Alison, to oppose the destruction of the 1899 building designed by architect Edward Lennox. The new City Hall had just been completed and Eaton's had made an offer to the city for the land for the development of the Eaton Centre. The Old City Hall was saved from demolition, partly due to the contribution of "Nape" Simpson.

For more than 20 years he was an active member of the Toronto Historical Board. He worked as consultant or designer on numerous projects including the rehabilitation of Fort York, Mackenzie House, and Colborne Lodge. He served as vice-chairman and was instrumental in assisting with the selection of historically designated structures in the City of Toronto.

Simpson was a design consultant for the Ontario St. Lawrence Development Commission. He played an integral part in the establishment of Upper Canada Village. Reflective of Simpson's interests, Upper Canada Village is one of Ontario's most notable accomplishments in preserving the built environment and lifestyles of an early 1800s community.

During this time, Simpson also served as the architect for the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. He guided the establishment and growth of the Black Creek Pioneer Village north of Toronto.

Simpson was committed to public service. He gave architectural tours of historic buildings; lectured to schools and universities; and took part in panel discussions and conferences.

He was active in the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. He served as president of the organization which had as its mission the preservation of buildings of historical significant and of natural beauty.

In 1975 he became a director of the Ontario Heritage Foundation. He had been a key figure on the Heritage Foundation's Architectural Committee.

Simpson was appointed to the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada where he helped to direct the preservation and presentation of national historic sites. On his way to a meeting of the Board at a prominent Canadian historical site in Anse Aux Meadows, Newfoundland, B. Napier Simpson was tragically killed in an air crash June 23, 1978.