



2018 Annual Report Highlights Summary | Niagara Society of Architects (NSA)

Through 2018 the Niagara Society continued with traditional activities, including monthly meetings and ongoing development of the website. Public relations activities were undertaken to increase public, government and business awareness of Niagara area architects. Full pages were taken in the monthly magazine *Business Link Niagara*. In three issues, Niagara area firms placed advertisements; the NSA worked with the publication's staff to create additional advertorial content discussing architecture and architects.

In conjunction with the City of St.Catharines' Performing Arts Centre, the NSA spearheaded and sponsored an Architecture+Design film series. Over the summer three films were shown, followed by a talk and discussion.

The NSA held an 'Architects' Open House', as part of September's Grape and Wine Festival and cultural week-end. The Open House focused on visitor participation. People were invited to judge architectural photographs taken by NSA members and participate in a survey about their reactions to various buildings. A number of submission panels from past Niagara Design Awards were displayed, and local architects discussed architecture and the role of architects. A heritage room displayed models and drawings of noteworthy historic buildings in Niagara and showed a video on the prominent interwar firm of Nicholson & Macbeth. A mid-century modern room included a PowerPoint exhibition of interesting mid-century buildings in Niagara, and there was a children's table with craft supplies, where the children could 'play architect' and create their own building concepts under the guidance of one of the society's members.

The Niagara Architecture Student Bursary was awarded to a Syllabus student working in one of the local offices.

A 'Get Your ConEd Points Day' was held with a programme for architects who needed a few more structured or non-structured points before the end of the 2017-18 cycle.

Ian Ellingham, PhD, FRAIC
Chair, Niagara Society of Architects

Attached material:

- Business Link Niagara* news clippings
- Poster from Architecture + Design Film Series
- Images of Architects' Open House



**NEGOTIATING
OPERATING
COSTS AS RENT**

6



**WHY SMALLER
IS BETTER WITH
INTERVENTIONAL
RADIOLOGY**

9



**PROTECT YOUR
BUSINESS FOR
FUTURE
GENERATIONS**

18

WISE GIRLS

Tee Party

This all-ladies event is guaranteed to be a fabulous day!

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 6 /// NIAGARA

JUNE 2018

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DESIGNING THE FUTURE

For nearly six decades, the Niagara Society of Architects has been committed to building a better Niagara.

By SCOTT LESLIE

Whether you're building a new house, a commercial development or just planning some renovations, an architect can ensure the quality of your building project – from design to construction. And when you need a Niagara-based architect to get things done, it's important to go right to the source – the Niagara Society of Architects.

Originally formed in 1962, the Niagara Society of Architects (NSA) is one of 14 regional non-profit chapters of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA).

Hailing from across Niagara, NSA members come from all walks of life – whether it's professional architects, young interns or members from related professions. Over the years, they've produced hundreds of designs for everything from townhouses and condos to retail outlets and high rises to churches, schools and government offices.

"We have a little bit of everything here," explains Dr. Ian Ellingham, chair of the Niagara Society of Architects. "Everything from large integrated architectural and engineering firms to small boutique practices."

Continued on next page >>



Pathstone/Branscombe Mental Health Centre in St.Catharines, by Emilio Raimondo



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Front of Glenridge Public School, 1929 by Nicholson & Macbeth



2016 exhibition of the work of Nicholson & Macbeth held in Willowbank



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Guided by a four member executive of men and women, the NSA is dedicated to encouraging architectural excellence in Niagara and promoting the importance of quality architectural design in our culture and environment.

Gathering regularly, NSA members meet to network, exchange ideas, promote their profession and discuss how they can improve the environment.

Robert Mackenzie is executive vice-president and director of corporate development at Quartek Group – one of Niagara's largest integrated design firms. An NSA member since 1987, Robert says being an NSA member has its advantages.

"I've met and continue to meet wonderful people there," he says. "The faces change over time but the spirit of contributing to some greater architectural purpose lives on."

Back in the late 1800s and early 1900s, OAA chapters were largely social clubs for people to discuss architecture over cigars and port. Today, it's a much different story.

"We see the need for the sustainability of this great profession," explains Emilio Raimondo, president of Raimondo + Associates Architects Inc., "and the Society provides us with the opportunity for dialogue between our architects and the broader architectural community."

Architecture is an incredibly complex discipline – and that's why many NSA members appreciate the society's commitment to providing its members with so many continuing education opportunities. These include everything from offering all-day workshops and seminars to presentations from guest speakers in the architectural, educational and political fields.

"Architects' careers can go on forever," Ian explains, "so the need for continuous learning never ends."

LOCAL EXPERTISE

According to Ian, hiring a Niagara-based architect for a local building project can offer the client a world of benefits – whether it's the architect's familiarity with the cultural and economic landscape in Niagara or their experience working with local trades, governments and contractors.

"There's a real sense of familiarity and community when you're dealing with local firms and talents," he says. "I've worked in managing projects throughout Quebec and Ontario – and the most trouble-free projects I've worked on have been in Niagara."

Logistics also plays a big role in the success of any Niagara project. Ian points to the increasing gridlock around the Golden Horseshoe Area that often makes it difficult for outside architects, contractors and trades to get in and out of Niagara.

"Hiring an architect here in Niagara means faster response times at your home, office or work site," Ian explains.

A COMMITMENT TO NIAGARA

One of the NSA's key mandates is to keep active in the Niagara community. That way, members can broaden public awareness and understanding of architecture and their profession.

"Architecture has proven to add value in our community," Emilio says, "and we're a group of dedicated people who promote, support and publicize its benefits."

NSA members have a long history of serving on local non-profit boards and committees, and in provincial and national forums. In the past, members have also hosted several public exhibitions and open houses through events like Doors Open. Two years ago for instance, the NSA held a special summer retrospective at Willowbank in Queenston to showcase the work of famed Niagara architects Arthur Nicholson and Robert Macbeth, who practiced together throughout the 1920s and cre-

ated many of Niagara's foremost buildings.

"A lot of our members are interested in studying and informing others on various topics and case studies of our built heritage here in Niagara," Ian says.

Right now, the society is working with the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre to present several architectural documentaries at The Film House starting in June. A major sponsor of the annual Niagara Design Awards, the NSA also supports the Niagara community by providing scholarships to local high school graduates who are pursuing a post-secondary education in the architectural field.

"The Society here in Niagara is always about being part of a larger community," Robert Mackenzie says. "One voice that can speak to issues impacting all our practices or broadcast to the public or local influencers what collective importance locally-derived architecture is to our culture and well-being."

Niagara has changed dramatically in the past two decades, adding more and more attractions and building projects every day. These structures add new energy and enthusiasm to our communities and change our lives for the better. And the Niagara Society of Architects is committed to maintaining that high quality of Niagara's built environment for years to come.

"We're all interested in building a better Niagara and making it more attractive to investment," Ian says. "We want to make it a good place to live."



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BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

Finding the right architect for your project can be a challenge – but there are plenty of talented firms to choose from here in Niagara.

BY IAN ELLINGHAM

A RCHITECTURE IS A COMPLEX process, embedding both art and science. Niagara area practitioners have acquired their skills through a long process of education and apprenticeship, and for most of them, numbers of years of experience in creating buildings, interiors and other elements of the built environment.

"We are hard-wired through our unique training as architects to understand the entire building process holistically from conception to completion, always with our clients' best interests at heart," says Fonthill architect Gina Schafrick.

Gina's firm – these architects inc. – has developed a special focus on creating single family houses which involves nurturing close relationships with clients to understand and interpret their needs, desires and whims, and develop an efficient and effective design with the client. After the concept and design phases, they work closely with builders and

other participants in the process to implement the design.

That firm commitment to the client also applies to an agency like OAN Architect in Welland. OAN Architect's principal Osama Nassar says his company is particularly strong when it comes to areas such as strategic project planning – and has developed close relationships with engineers and other specialist consultants. Over the years, they have planned, designed and worked to implement many commercial projects in and around the Niagara area including numerous restaurants and medical facilities, not to mention single and multi-family residential buildings.

The relationship with an architect is quite personal. The individual or organization contemplating creating or modifying a building should seek out an architectural practice that has a style they can work comfortably with. The right architect brings a thoughtfulness to how people live and work in the spaces they create, as well as an understanding of the local communities. It can be tempting to hire international "big name" firms, but travel times and costs work against having a good working relationship with their principal architects, especially if your own project is not of international size and significance.

Fortunately, there are many capable firms of various sizes and styles in Niagara to choose from to fit your own needs. **BL**

Ian Ellingham is chair of the Niagara Society of Architects. To find out more about the wide range of architects available in the Niagara Region, please go to www.niagaraarchitects.ca.



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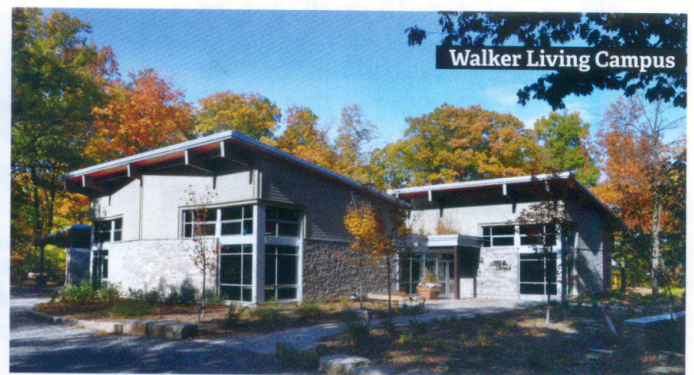
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BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

BY IAN ELLINGHAM

As a way of ensuring our ongoing quality of life, matters of sustainability including energy efficiency and responsible use of resources have come to dominate many areas of today's thinking. In one way, this is simply doing more with less – effectively achieving maximum results for any given input of resources, whether they are measured in terms of money, energy, carbon emissions or something else. This is particularly important with respect to the creation of buildings, unlike most human-created products such as packaging, domestic appliances, cars and clothing, buildings last for decades – sometimes for centuries. Architects have long worked with their clients to imagine and realize robust buildings that will remain efficient and effective into the future.

There are three widely-recognized elements to sustainability: social, economic and environmental. Any piece of the built environment can only approach true sustainability if it addresses all three elements.

As a result, the building design process inevitably requires the successful resolution of conflicting requirements and priorities. For the client with an interest in sustainability, increasing user comfort

and efficiency or decreasing energy costs, there are many approaches that can be undertaken. The architect's knowledge of building materials and systems can guide the integration of such possible constituents as passive solar design, optimum insulation levels, window selection, landscaping and appropriate mechanical systems into an elegant overall scheme to create more sustainable buildings and spaces. Yet, a sustainable building has to be economically and socially successful over long periods of time too. This "triple bottom-line" means that over time a truly sustainable building will be seen to be a desirable commodity in the marketplace – that in the longer-term people, government and businesses will continue to esteem it for its various attributes – that it remains successful socially, economically and environmentally. This might be reflected in increasing rents and capital values as well as in societal esteem and value.

Beyond those concerns are such things as the choice of materials which may have low embodied energy, integrate recycled materials or have a lesser impact on the environment in some other way. Waste disposal and matters of transportation and urban design also become concerns in the design of buildings that can be dealt with by architects.

Over the past few decades, there has been an increasing interest in sustainability by government, industry and the wider public. Buildings are a key component in achieving better environments for everyone. **BL**

Ian Ellingham, PhD, FRAIC, is the chair of the Niagara Society of Architects and the co-author of Whole-Life Sustainability by RIBA Publishing. For more information on the Niagara Society of Architects, please go to www.niagaraarchitects.ca.

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ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN FILM SERIES

This film series is presented in partnership with the Niagara Society of Architects. Join them for post-screening discussions after select films!

Integral Man

Canada, 2017. Directed by Joseph Clement. 63 min. NR

Wed 13 June 7PM

He decided against Frank Gehry, considered Rem Koolhaas, and ultimately chose two young architects that would come to change contemporary architecture. The client is Jim Stewart, the most published mathematician since Euclid, a concert level violinist, calculus professor, philanthropist, and gay rights activist. He is a true polymath, a modern day renaissance man.

"Integral Man is a story of passions doggedly pursued, from music and mathematics to political activism and philanthropy. It's an absolute inspiration."

- Derek Jacobs, *cinemaaxis*

Big Time

Denmark, 2017. Directed by Kaspar Astrup Schröder. 93 min. PG

Wed 18 July 7PM

Big Time follows Bjarke Ingels during the course of seven years (2009-2016), while he struggles to finish his biggest project so far. We are let into Bjarke's creative processes as well as the endless compromises that his work entails.

"Somewhat incredibly, the buildings come to life: Kaspar Astrup Schröder puts Ingels's remarkable communication skills to work through a series of sketches and chats, and then shows us the finished products."

- Alex Bozikoviv, *The Globe and Mail*

Sketches of Frank Gehry

USA, 2005. Directed by Sydney Pollack. 83 min. PG

Wed 8 Aug 7PM

Sketches of Frank Gehry was director Sydney Pollack's first feature length documentary. The two men have been friends for many years, and Pollack completed the film over a period of five years, starting in 2000. Beginning with Gehry's own original sketches for each major project, the film explores Gehry's process of turning these abstract drawings, first into tangible, three-dimensional models, often made simply of cardboard and scotch tape, then into finished buildings of titanium and glass, concrete and steel, wood and stone. The dialogue between Pollack and Gehry, as intimate as that of any two friends of long standing, courses like a continuous melodic line through the film.



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Images from 'Architects' Open House', as part of the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival in September 2018.



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