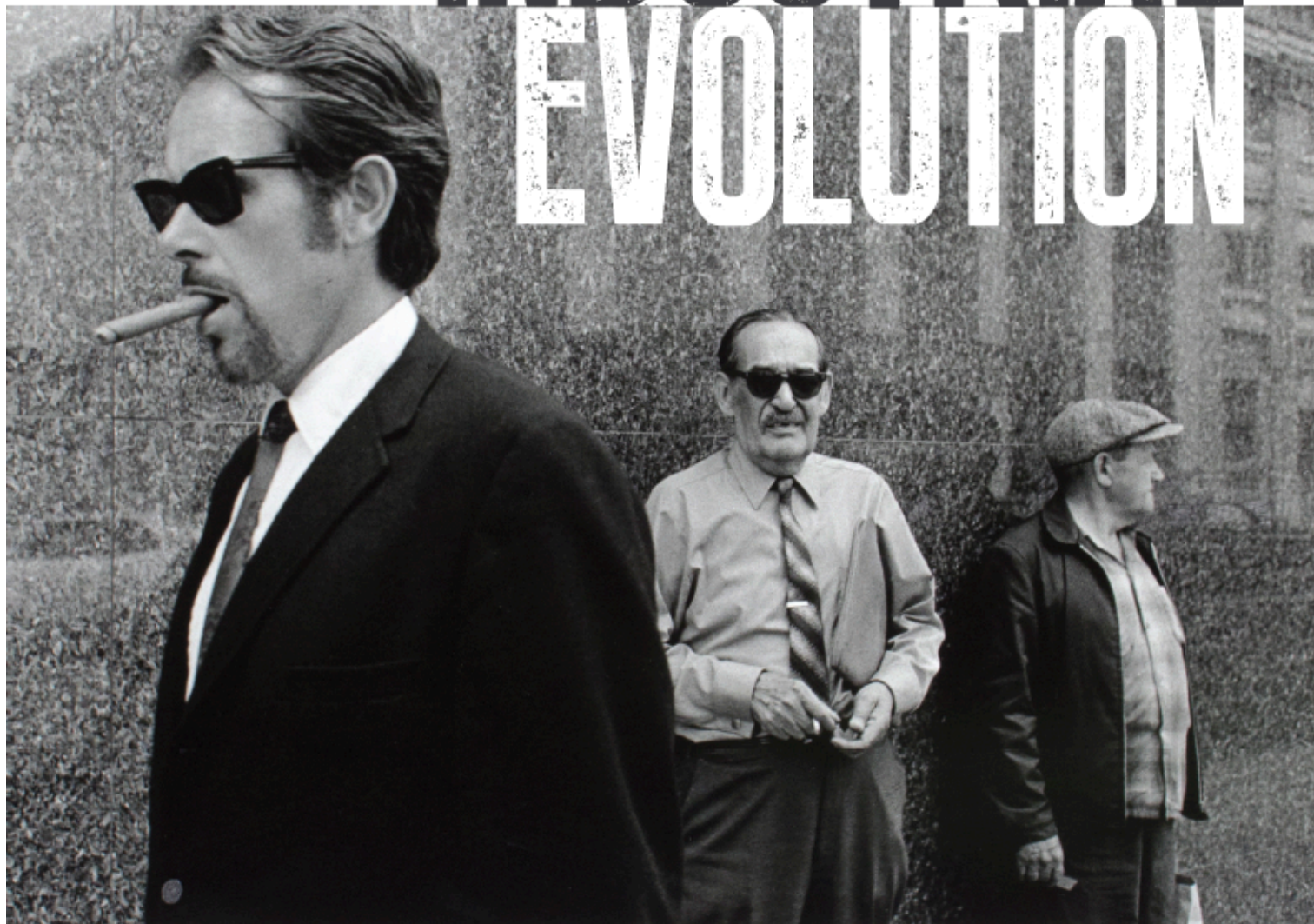


INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION



Much has changed since Hamilton Magazine published its first issue 40 years ago, but urban renewal links the 1970s and our present moment. We look at five classic Hamilton landmarks in the '70s and today.

By Sarah Sheehan



Victor Copps, here pictured in front of Hamilton City Hall, is remembered as the city's favourite mayor. The new HAMILTON sign gives a nod to Stanley Roscoe's masterwork.



A Trudeau partying at the Royal Connaught. Punk rockers playing Westdale Collegiate. The Copps dynasty but no Copps Coliseum. Much has changed since *Hamilton Magazine* published its first issue 40 years ago, but urban renewal links the 1970s and our present moment. In Hamilton's fast-changing cityscape, vintage photographs are vivid reminders of both change and continuity. This summer, to accompany the travelling Vivian Maier show, the Art Gallery of Hamilton presents two exhibits devoted to local street photography. Guided by its '70s origins, *HM* looks to the photo archives for a picture of the city's heritage — and current renaissance.

In Seventies-era Canada, Pierre Trudeau was prime minister, and you could still book a room at the Royal Connaught. In Hamilton, Victor Copps (father of Sheila) continued his 15 years as the city's favourite mayor while, across Lake Ontario, McMaster alumni Eugene Levy and Martin Short were transforming Canadian comedy at SCTV and Second City. The young Floria Sigismondi, who grew up near Gage Park, ended the decade in a Cathedral uniform. (She later transferred to Delta.) The year *HM* launched, punk band Teenage Head released their first single, three years after their debut performance in the Westdale cafeteria.

Images of lesser-known Hamiltonians — private citizens out in their city — are currently on view at the AGH in *James Street North: Vintage Photographs by Cees and Annerie van Gemerden* and the interactive *Living Room: STREETWATCH*. Where the van Gemerdens show keeps a tight focus on James Street North, circa 1984, *STREETWATCH* spans contemporary and vintage work including Jack Whorwood's, long the permanent exhibit at Bar on Locke. In a rare Hamilton image, taken in the early '70s, Czech photographer Viktor Kolář captured the city in transition. By a polished stone wall, two older men wait for a bus; a third, younger

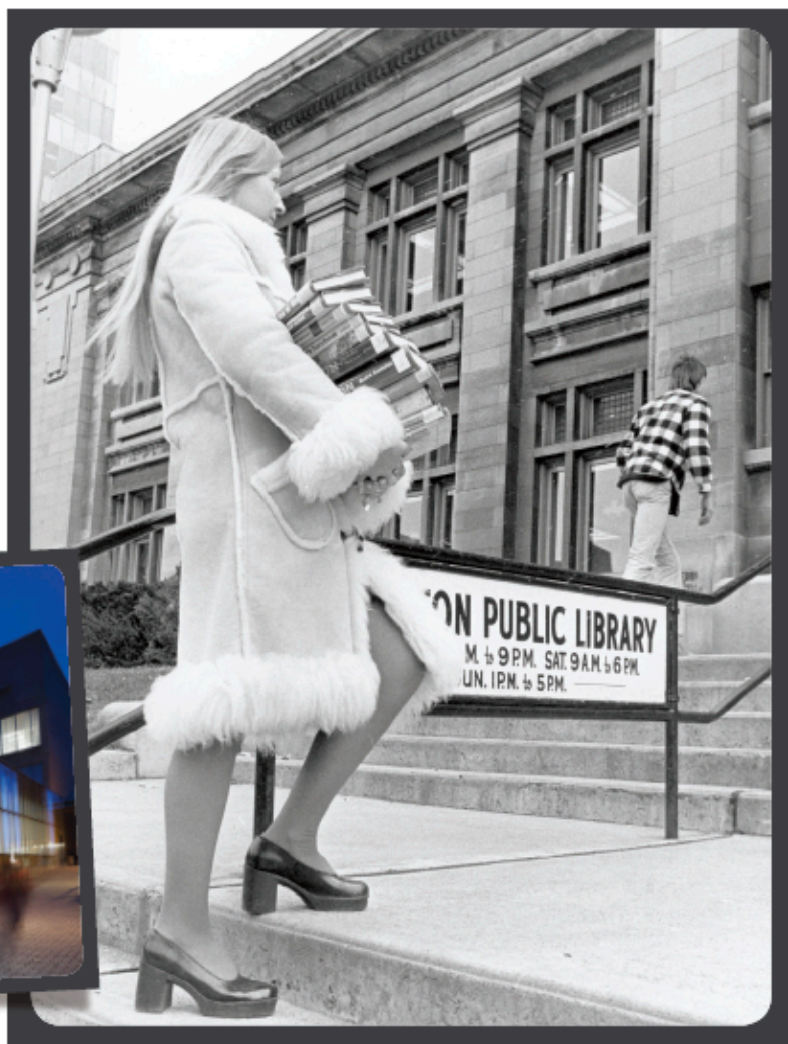
man, walks by, a cigar in his mouth. Perhaps Cigar was leaving the Hamilton Club: the wall reflects the nearby Landed Banking & Loan Co. at James and Main with another building, since demolished.

NEW CITY HALL

In Frank Lennon's iconic portrait of Victor Copps, the mayor stands before City Hall, pointing north. The picture, which appeared on the front page of the *Toronto Star*, was part of the paper's coverage of Hamilton's Civic Square project, the ambitious urban renewal program that replaced much of the city's Victorian core with two superblocks. (As the *Star* reported, this "new downtown heart" confirmed that "Hamilton is not just a lot of smokestacks.") Mayor Copps seems to be indicating the recently completed Phase I of the project: Lloyd D. Jackson Square.

Named for Copps' predecessor, Jackson Square was not just a mall meant to lure Hamiltonians back from the suburbs, but the first step in the city's extreme makeover. The Civic Square superblocks also encompassed Stelco Tower (100 King St. W.), Trevor Garwood-Jones' Brutalist AGH and Hamilton Place (now FirstOntario Concert Hall) and, by the early '80s, the new Central Library/Farmers' Market and Convention Centre (today's Ellen Fairclough Building). The anchor to all this radical redevelopment was Stanley Roscoe's modernist city hall.

Shona Atkins returns books to the old HPL Main Branch. New in 1980, the Brutalist Central Library and Farmers' Market was renovated in 2009-11.



Completed in 1960, Hamilton City Hall is considered Roscoe's masterpiece, a joyous symbol of civic pride designed by Canada's first City Architect. Though later modified, the original plans for Civic Square included landscaping for which it was a focal point. By the new millennium, however, the building required extensive renovations. Avoiding demolition, the restored International Style landmark reopened in 2010. But if the renovated city hall symbolizes urban renewal, it is renewal within a budget. Against heritage recommendations, the city replaced the ageing Georgia marble of Mayor Copps' day not with more durable limestone, but with cheaper precast concrete.

Despite its high profile, Hamilton City Hall remains sufficiently unfamiliar that Guillermo del Toro could cast it as a Baltimore office building in his Oscar-winning *The Shape of Water*. But the new HAMILTON sign could change that. This past April, the city unveiled the clean white LED-illuminated 2.3m letters, which were designed to complement our municipal HQ. (See *HM* Spring '18.) Across Main Street is another Roscoe homage. Joining Bruce Kuwabara's renovated, less-brutal AGH in the civic precinct, McMaster's David Braley Health Sciences Centre mirrors, in weathered copper, the floating council chamber.

HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

A stone's throw from city hall, a *Spectator* photographer clicked the shutter as Shona Atkins climbed the library steps. Atkins was taking advantage of the Hamilton Public Library's Amnesty Week, 1973, to return overdue books without penalty. Although plans were underway to build a new Central Library, HPL's main branch was still the Carnegie library at Main and MacNab. (Dundas had one, too: it's now the Carnegie Gallery.) The Beaux-Arts Main Library was designed by local architect Alfred W. Peene, of Stinson School fame. Now the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, it guards a busy bus stop, but the stone letters above the entrance still say Hamilton Public Library.

In her sheepskin coat and platform shoes, Atkins and her armful of books live on today as an image of the old library. The 1973 *Spec* photo is displayed in the Tim Horton's museum on Ottawa Street North as well as the staff room at Central Branch. It's also a favourite library image for Karen Milligan, the manager of HPL's Local History & Archives. Milligan, who has the text *Shhh...* tattooed on one finger, curates the vast LH&A collection for public exhibits. (She included the library photo in last summer's *Out of the Vaults*

at Redchurch Cafe + Gallery.) Since 1980, that collection has been housed on the third floor of the city's newest central library.

The mid-1970s saw the controversial expropriation and widening of York Street, the old military road to York — modern Toronto. Looming over the renamed York Boulevard “like a slightly demented pyramid,” the new Central Library and Farmers’ Market, designed by Anthony Butler, expanded Hamilton’s Civic Square and spread the Brutalism northward. In 2009-11, Butler’s concrete fortress received a much-lauded renovation, overseen by architect and Hamilton native David Premi. The showpiece of the renovated complex: the continuous glass vestibule, patterned like the pages of a book. “A new-old gem,” wrote Alex Bozikovic, it sets the standard for preserving our Brutalist architectural heritage.

MCMASTER HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

“McMaster has been our Mecca.” So said Dr. Jos Diederiks, part of a team from Maastricht that made a pilgrimage to the McMaster University Medical Centre in the late 1970s. Officially opened in 1972, McMaster’s integrated health sciences faculty and its home in Eberhard Zeidler’s Brutalist medical centre was still attracting worldwide attention. At the time, the facility was radical for combining the schools of medicine and nursing, McMaster Children’s Hospital and Hamilton Health Sciences’ teaching hospital in a single, low-rise structure.

Eb Zeidler, the influential Bauhaus-trained architect of Ontario Place and, later, the Toronto Eaton Centre, devised a flexible, modular concept for the McMaster project. Transparent service towers, exposing the building technologies, signal its adaptability to future health-care developments. But like its contemporary, Jackson Square, the MUMC was built at the expense of local heritage: it replaced

the Sunken Gardens designed by Dunington and Grubb, the landscape architects behind Gage Park.

In 1971, though still under construction, the centre was already one-quarter occupied. *Spectator* photos of the interior reveal glowing earth tones and “psychedelic corridors” made dynamic by Ted Bieler’s cast-concrete walls. The sculptor, who taught at York University, was a friend and collaborator of Zeidler’s. As the architect writes in his autobiography, those trippy walls are also functional: “When you saw this fabulous wall, you knew you were in the ring street.”

Situated in the northwest corner of Zeidler’s complex, McMaster’s Health Sciences Library used to share its ’70s aesthetic. As Drew Hauser, director of McCallumSather, recalls, the library was “surrounded by windowless, concrete walls. The 1971-built structure was state-of-the-art but had grown outdated.” McCallumSather transformed the Health Sciences Library, which reopened in 2007, with a reimagined interior and the addition of the two-storey Jan and Mien Heersink Reading Pavilion. Flooded with natural light, and like a beacon after dark, its transparency and openness are “an important symbol of what the library came to represent on campus,” says Hauser.



McMaster’s award-winning Health Sciences Library updates Eberhard Zeidler’s McMaster University Medical Centre, which made headlines when it opened in the early 1970s.





White elephant no longer, the former CNR Station has new neighbours in Immigration Square and the West Harbour GO. LiUNA Local 837 runs the popular event space and filming location.

HAMILTON CNR STATION

Hamilton's Canadian National Railway Station on James Street North was still in use in the 1970s — barely. CNR had been trying to sell the property since the late '60s and only three trains ran through the station. Though still publicly owned, the crown corporation was getting out of the passenger rail business: GO was already handling commuter service and the newly formed VIA Rail took over CN passenger service in 1978. Still, new ticket counters, salvaged from a demolished CNR building in Toronto, were installed early in the decade and, during the summer of '76, a refurbished steam train stopped here en route from Toronto to Niagara.

The station Vic Copps famously called “a white elephant” was opened in 1931 by the earl of Bessborough, new Governor General Vere Brabazon Ponsonby. In a time when competitor TH&B was planning its Art Moderne station on Hunter Street, CNR architect John Schofield designed a Beaux-Arts take on the Doric temple or, as veteran columnist Paul Wilson would say, the House of CN, the temple of trains. The facade's Deco, industry-themed bas-reliefs were by future Dominion Sculptor William Oosterhoff. Fine materials, including granite and Queenston limestone, bronze fixtures and

terrazzo floors, brought high interwar style to the city's North End.

It seems apt, in film-friendly Steeltown, that the saviour of the city's grand old station should be a trade union, with a little help from Hollywood. Closed since 1993, the station was able to fund a \$1-million renovation thanks to the producers of the 1996 action-thriller *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, starring Geena Davis and Samuel L. Jackson. A few years later, CN finally found a buyer in Local 837 of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LiUNA), the century-old labour union.

LiUNA Station reopened in 2000 as an event space, restored in consultation with local architect John Mokrycke. In the Grand Lobby, which is especially popular with film crews, the ticket booth became a coat check, the newsstand a bar. The high coffered ceiling, with its pair of bronze chandeliers, has its original '30s colours. James North has changed a lot since 2000, says Susanna Alvarez, who joined LiUNA Station soon after it opened. Back then, “You could barely get a sandwich [in the area.]” she says. Now, down at track level, there's a food business in the repair shed (made, as per CN policy, of local brown brick), and across the old rail yard is LiUNA's latest ballroom, designed by Hamilton's Lintack Architects. Up on James Street, rail passengers return to the new West Harbour GO Station, while Immigration Square commemorates the city's history of newcomers.



The Westinghouse logo, designed by the legendary Paul Rand, as seen outside the Canadian Westinghouse head office. Vacant for decades, the Barton East landmark is reopening this fall as Westinghouse HQ.



CANADIAN WESTINGHOUSE HEADQUARTERS

East of LiUNA Station, just past Barton and Wentworth, the Westinghouse building rises from industrial surroundings. The Canadian Westinghouse Company built its Classical Revival head office in 1917 by the site of its original Hamilton plant. (Now occupied by Empire Steel, it still bears the old Westinghouse logo.) The architects were Prack & Perrine, predecessors of the firm behind the Lister Block and Piggott Building. Stately and elegant, the red brick building projects a proud corporate image with carved limestone details displaying the Westinghouse name and insignia.

Westinghouse was still a major employer in 1970s Hamilton. Workers at the Sanford Avenue complex could enjoy nearby amenities like historic Woodlands Park, the Hamilton Forum (the former Barton Street Arena, demolished in 1976), and the Trocadero Tavern. The *Spec* records high-profile company visits from foreign military attachés and future PM Jean Chrétien. In 1978, however, the United Electrical Workers went on a record-breaking, four-month strike. Layoffs followed and the head office soon moved downtown to the new Standard Life building.

In December 1970, industrial photographer Tom Bochsler captured the Westinghouse sign by head office. Standing at the southeast corner of the building, the concrete slab displays Paul Rand's iconic Westinghouse logo. (Rand, who created the logos for IBM, UPS and ABC, got his start painting signs for his father's

Brooklyn grocery.) Visible behind the sign is a now-demolished storage facility.

At the new Westinghouse HQ, there's no trace of the mid-century Westinghouse sign—just a single doorknob with the company logo, found concealed in a cubbyhole. Closed for over three decades, the Barton East landmark is set to reopen as commercial space by fall 2018. Investors, led by Meir Dick and Ray Hutton, are restoring the century-old building with the help of McCallumSather, who will occupy the former executive suite.

Sustainability drives the project, Hauser says, and the restoration process has uncovered many of the original features, "including marble, terrazzo and mosaic tile flooring, decorative ceilings, a hidden theatre and structural systems, including striking steel girders." Dundas' Heritage Mill is restoring the ground-floor windows and a new southern vestibule is being added at grade for accessibility. It's adaptive reuse in action, a far cry from the old urbanism of Hamilton's modern core. And that freshly uncovered corporate theatre? Management plans to open the heritage space to the local community.