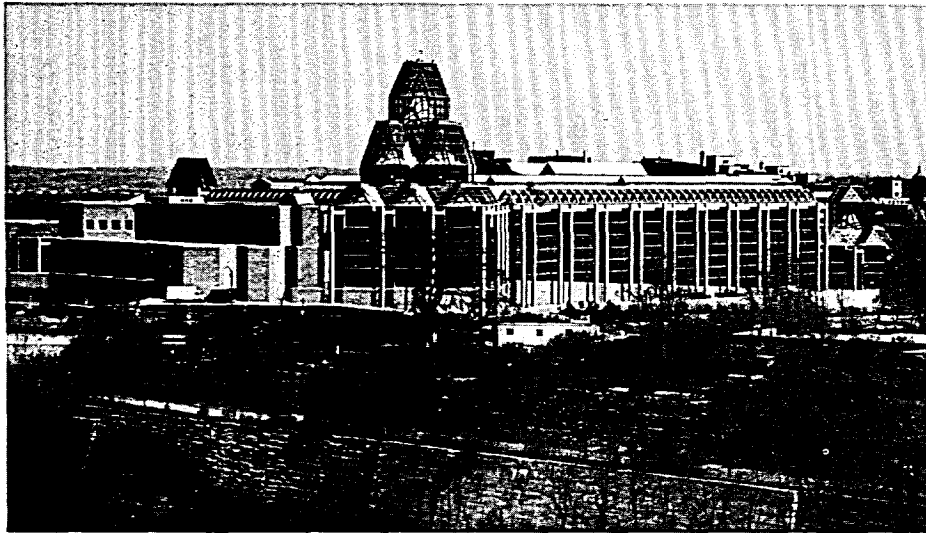


□ NEW NATIONAL GALLERY OPENS □



As an example of some of the best in contemporary Canadian architecture and building technology, the National Gallery of Canada celebrates its geographical surroundings while respecting its architectural neighbours. Moshe Safdie's design responds to the needs of the site, the building's purposes, and his understanding of how visitors and staff will move about and work in it. In the architect's own words, the gallery is to be "... a gigantic lighthouse planted in the heart of the city ... a generous and welcoming invitation."

Pedestrians enter the building through a pavilion opposite the Notre Dame Basilica. Bus tours enter through a lower level that brings visitors directly beneath a glass partition, separating them from a dramatic, thundering fountain above. Visitors are then drawn along a ramped Colonnade to the Great Hall, a gathering point from which patrons enter the galleries.

The Great Hall affords a spectacular view of the Ottawa River, the Gatineau Hills, the Parliament Buildings, and the city skyline. Here, one cannot help but pause to reflect on the very essence of Canada itself. A huge glass atrium with three tiers, the Great Hall is protected overhead by motorized, flower-like sails

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On May 21, 1988, after months of anticipation and growing excitement, the new National Gallery of Canada opened its doors to the public. Throughout the month of May, the Gallery was the site of gala dinners and special events for dignitaries and members of the Canadian arts community, as well as sneak previews for Ottawa taxi drivers, shopkeepers, and other selected members of the public.

Opening day, itself, was a day of great celebration, as thousands of Canadians flocked to the Gallery to marvel at its breathtaking architecture, and to take a first look at its newly displayed treasure of fine works of art.

Since its inception in 1880, the National Gallery has occupied five locations, none of which were designed to properly house works of art. The most recent of these, the Lorne Building, on Elgin Street, was originally intended to be an office building. Attempts to establish a permanent location for the Gallery were unsuccessful until the creation of the Canada Museums Construction Corporation in 1982.

In early 1983, the federal government announced its choice of site for

the new Gallery, at the corner of Sussex Drive and St. Patrick Street, overlooking the Ottawa River. The world renowned Moshe Safdie was chosen as architect, and after ten months of planning and consultation with National Gallery curators and the National Capital Commission Advisory Committee on Design, Safdie unveiled his impressive design. The official groundbreaking ceremonies took place in December 1983, and over the next four and-a-half years, the citizens of Ottawa watched with delight as the superstructure of this inspired creation began to take shape.

