

Now in his 31st year of practice, the head of an office of 40 operates out of a simple, gray, two-storey shoe box of a building on the fringe of the financial core of the country, essentially a no-nonsense place to work, neither more nor less. Parkin stresses tenets of responsibility, living within the budget and times and fitting into the environment. "Buildings can still have panache and style, but at the same time, panache and style without grace and subtlety and environmental ambiance are failures."

He can find a ready example of bad style in the overwhelming use of concrete that raised its mottled head in the 1960s and found expression in Toronto's Robarts Library (Fort Book) and an RCMP building. "Thank goodness I was never a part of that," says Parkin. "That's a question of architects working out of context with people."

Such architectural abominations were also rejected by Allan Duffus, a Halifax architect who was instrumental in preserving that city's historic port.

Over the years the waterfront had fallen into decay. It had become an unsightly collection of run-down, sagging warehouses and paint-peeling buildings. But when the city proposed a system of roads designed to get more traffic to the downtown shopping centres, a plan that would have effectively wiped out that area, Duffus, along with the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and Parks Canada, objected, and they rallied forces to defend the port. Duffus objected, not only as a resident who felt that the harbor represented a part of his upbringing, but certainly as an architect concerned with preserving a bit of the past, a link with the future. Architects are especially sensitive to this since such buildings are the best teaching guides available.

No one had really appreciated what they had there along Water, Granville and Hollis streets, and considering the extent of the decay, few could