



museum curators and world-renowned architect Arthur Erikson wanted to convey to visitors. With an eye to historic Indian culture, the building was set in a treed area and stretched out parallel to the nearby shoreline of a small lake, reflecting the traditional setting of an Indian village. Floor-to-ceiling windows draw in the landscape and offer views of the distant Pacific Ocean and of the setting sun. The structure of the building — a post and beam construction — recalls an important feature of West Coast Indian architecture.

**Building in context:** St. Jacques' spire at the heart of the University of Quebec at Montreal.

One might ask, what is unique about Canadian architecture? What makes it Canadian? It is simply this: building in context is the nub of current architectural debate around the world; building in Canadian context is what makes the buildings uniquely Canadian.

Photo: Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

## The Canadian Centre for Architecture: A Cultural Resource for the World

Early in 1989, the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in Montreal will open its doors to 100 permanent staff and up to 10 scholars. The public will be welcome to walk in the sculpture park that backs the centre, visit its exhibitions, and purchase books on architecture in the bookstore. They will also learn from the centre's home itself: the painstakingly restored Shaughnessy House and the new \$37-million building that wraps around the historic home.

The centre's mission is to research, learn, preserve and expand the knowledge of architecture. Architects will come to Montreal to examine a \$50-million collection of 120 000 books, photographs, 45 000 photos and daguerreotypes, 25 000 drawings and prints, and an archive of architects' materials.

Until the inception of the centre, many of these important books and unique papers were not available to scholars

and architects. Now, they will be preserved in the climate-controlled, below-ground levels of the centre, protected by the full range of curatorial techniques used in museums and art galleries.

Architects deal simultaneously with the subtleties of aesthetics, the practicalities of construction, and the management of commissions. They produce buildings that are among the most imperishable artifacts of civilization. The public uses, lives in and looks at buildings; architects, however, need to study their final structure and also the workings of the minds that conceived and realized them. The Canadian Centre for Architecture offers scholars and architects a rich lode of this essential information.

The CCA's collection includes Ernest Cormier's watercolour of the Université de Montréal.

