Heritage: A Creative Process

Toronto, Canada has experienced dramatic physical, cultural, demographic, and governance changes since its incorporation as the Town of York in 1793. This presentation will discuss preliminary findings into the forces and influences that have been shaping the heritage of Toronto. In particular, the physical layout of the city, its street grid, and its forms of governance will be considered as overarching shapers of Toronto’s heritage. A heritage perspective/understanding offers citizens an additional approach to the formation of their city’s heritage.
Heritage will be considered as consisting of all that exists in the present, a present that is constantly changing, unfolding and adapting. This is intended to work in conjunction with the views that:

“heritage is not a ‘thing’ or a historical or political movement, but refers to a set of attitudes to, and relationships with, the past (Walsh 1992; et al).

and that

“heritage is formed in the present (Tunbridge and Asworth 1996; et al).

Understandings of tangible and intangible heritages will be taken from UNESCO’s definitions, while also being considered within the following context:

“... (intangible) practices are thoroughly embedded in a set of physical relationships with objects, places and other people, and in this sense, to speak of intangible heritage as somehow separate from the ‘material’ (tangible) world is inaccurate. (Harrison 2013.)

Heritage will also be recognized as existing and being experienced at various scales ranging from that of individuals, social groups, to urban, regional, national, and global scales. Individuals and groups can migrate between scales depending on the facet(s) of their heritage being considered.

A heritage perspective on Toronto will support a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the city, an understanding that recognizes the city’s past and is more fully informed to design its future.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Jurij Leshchyshyn has a focus on teaching and academic administration. He has been involved in curriculum development, coordinating first year studios and participating in design studios across all years. He has taught courses involving building science, systems, site planning, and graphics, and has supervised undergraduate and graduate student theses. Most recently he has fulfilled the role of Interim Chair of the Architectural Science Department.

Prior to joining Ryerson in 1989, Jurij Leshchyshyn worked for several architectural firms in Toronto on projects that included institutional, religious, custom-residential, and industrial-commercial buildings, as well as renovations to existing residential and industrial properties. Of note was his role as site architect for a major project that included an office and a twin-tower condominium complex.

His interest in the affects of underlying forces that influence architecture and the built environment lead to an investigation of architecture and public policy. His paper "Architecture and Public Policy", published in The International Journal of the Constructed Environment 1 (4): 165-174, 2012, received the journal’s International Award for Excellence. Presentations titled Architecture and Public Policy, and Architecture, Public Policy and the Constructed Environment, were made at the 1st and 3rd International Conferences on the Constructed Environment, respectively.