

First Shevchenko Talks Event

The Shevchenko Museum in Toronto can only be envied for its new problem: what to do with all the beautiful spaces in its new 1604 Bloor Street West location. On December 9, part of the solution was revealed, when the first of the Shevchenko Talks series was held in the upper gallery of the building.

The first speaker in the ambitious series was architect Christopher McCormack, the

man who designed the impressive structure which will surely become a Toronto landmark.

In his remarks to an audience of over 25 rapt listeners, Mr. McCormack started by referring to three other projects, explaining the need to combine a project's purposes, community culture, environment, and existing elements into a harmonious package for optimal effect. He

then turned to the Shevchenko Museum.

Drawing on the audiovisual capabilities built into the room, he displayed graphics to contrast the appearance of the museum at its former location with its current look, as well as the transformation of the former AUUC Cultural Centre into the Shevchenko Museum.

Mr. McCormack took his audience through the project's process, from the earliest contacts, to feasibility studies, to approvals, to reducing the building to its shell, to the rebuilding and, finally, to the fine tuning as occupation of the building reveals other preferences.

He spoke of the challenges of working with an existing shell. These included differences between existing documentation and the physical realities of the structure, the need to reinforce the floor to hold significantly more people, unexpected asbestos, and other matters requiring adjustments to the plan.



Over 25 people attended the first Shevchenko Talks event on December 9 at the Shevchenko Museum at its new location in Toronto.



Christopher McCormack, the architect who designed the new Toronto location of the Shevchenko Museum, presented the first of the Shevchenko Talks series.

He also spoke about some interesting facts uncovered during the renovation. For example, it came to light that the building had grown in several stages. Originally it had been a single-family one-level detached home. Then it was extended. Even later, a second floor was added. The final addition was an extension at the back to accommodate an elevator. Each addition added a new set of puzzles to be solved during the renovation.

In the course of his exposition, Mr. McCormack spoke about the work of the Renovation Committee, with representatives of the Shevchenko



Welcoming visitors and introducing the speaker was Museum Director Lyudmyla Pogoryelova. She also closed the event with thanks to all, and an invitation to socialize and enjoy the refreshments.

Museum, Prodigy Construction and McCormack Architects. He also spoke about the coordination of the work of many trades and suppliers.

Mr. McCormack did not fail in his comments to speak about Taras Shevchenko, showing an image of the Shevchenko family home and mentioning the Bard's intention, toward the end of his life and never realized, to build a home in Ukraine.

The Shevchenko Museum will be closed on January 9. In every other month in 2020, on the 9th because Taras Shevchenko was born on March 9, other personalities will be featured in the Shevchenko Talks series.

Since its opening, the Shevchenko Museum has had increasing use by various groups and individuals of its varied and flexible spaces. In addition, the Museum is planning several temporary art displays, and other events.

— Wilfred Szczesny