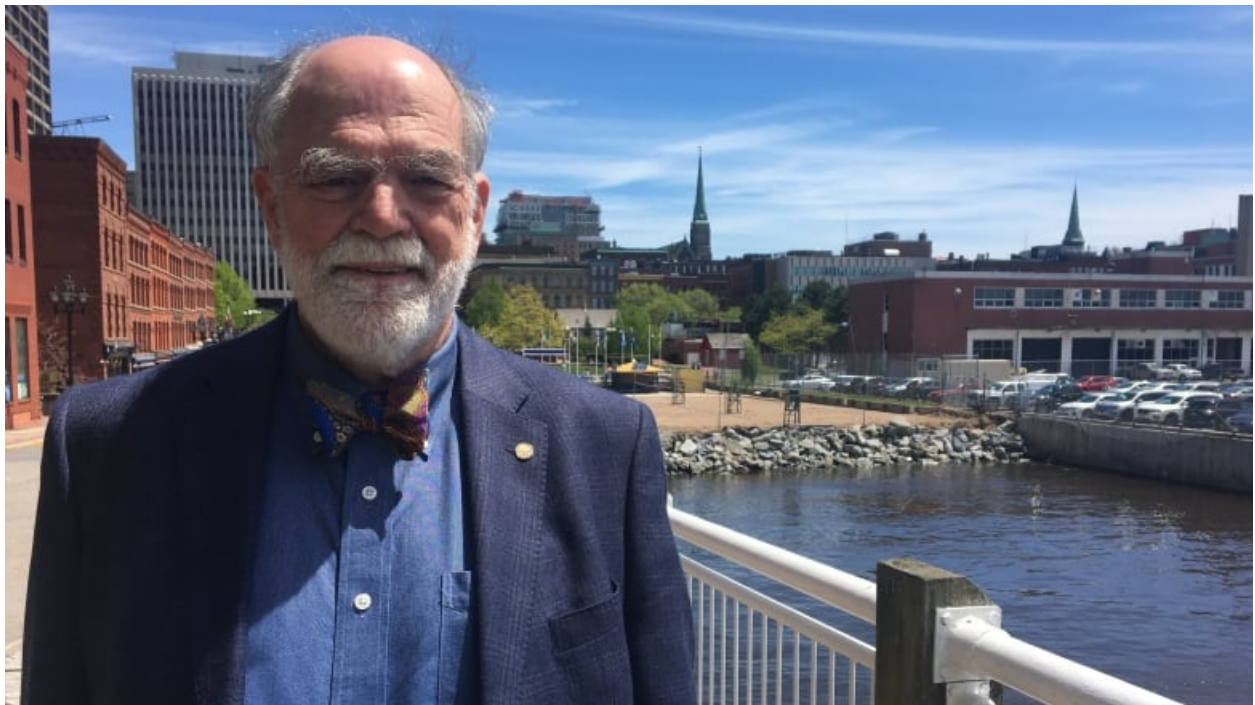


Hundreds of architects in Saint John for national festival

2018 Festival of Architecture welcomes architects from across the nation to learn and tackle pressing issues

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President of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Michael Cox said he arrived early in the week to take in the city's buildings before his intense schedule kept him indoors. (Matthew Bingley/CBC)

Hundreds of architects from across the country have arrived in Saint John to attend an annual festival aimed at discussing the state of their industry, and pushing it forward.

The Royal Architecture Institute of Canada holds a festival in a different city each year.

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- [Hip makeover for century-old Saint John storefront](#)

Along with holding its annual general meeting, attendees can attend talk, attend workshops to further their education, and take in the regions' own architectural feats.

"There's a lot of business to be done," said RAIC president Michael Cox. To be sure he wasn't trapped in a meeting room for the entire trip, Cox said he arrived a couple of days earlier to take in the city.



RAIC president Michael Cox said he's impressed by the heritage restoration work that's been done in Saint John. (Discover Saint John/Submitted by Architects' Association of New Brunswick)

Including some of the more recent efforts to revitalize heritage buildings.

"The work that's been done, I've found, is tremendously respectful of the history without trying to copy the history," he said.

Timely discussions

Among the issues in the industry, gender representation is still a major one, Cox said.

"Demographic representation has improved dramatically," said Cox.

"But we're still a long way from even beginning to imagine any sense of equality in that part in terms of gender balance in the profession."

An event held on Thursday night that coincides with the festival will aim to tackle just that.



Monica Adair and several other women are using the festival as a springboard to talk about gender equality in the industry in Atlantic Canada. (Matthew Bingley/CBC)

"Women of The Round Table – Charting Our Own Course" will feature a discussion to try and improve gender equity in the Atlantic Canadian industry.

"We want to be able to grow those numbers and also we want to know what an architecture field would look like with more women, with more senior leadership" said Monica Adair, who helped organize the event.

The co-owner of Acre Architects said there are only 18 registered women architects in the province. Part of encouraging a change in the industry, she said, requires seeing women at the table.



President of the Architects' Association of New Brunswick Don Sterritt said a key talk at the festival will tackle design with respect to climate change. (Matthew Bingley/CBC)

"We are in charge of designing cities and rural environments and people's places," said Adair "how can we do that if we don't have the representation of the voices of the people who we're designing for?"

Another scheduled talk is also quite timely, following the province's record flooding. On Saturday, the president of the Architects Association of New Brunswick Don Sterritt said the focus will shift to resiliency in design.

Specifically, how architects can be a part of designing buildings to withstand the effects of climate change.

"Architects can offer and be a contributing part of the solutions and the ways of addressing those issues" he said.