

## **Saskatoon's Gathercole Building Demolished**

Any hope of preserving the Gathercole Building was lost on June 21, when demolition by the City of Saskatoon began. All that remained of the former Saskatoon Technical Collegiate—designed by famed Saskatoon architect Frank P. Martin—was a cloud of concrete powder, crushed bricks and 73 years of history (see *Endangered Places, Heritage*, Spring 2004).

The Gathercole Initiative Group (GIG) had tried various routes to save the building, including its rehabilitation for use as a combination market and arts centre. Its latest effort was to try to force a city-wide referendum, but not enough signatures were gathered for the action to proceed.

City Council, led by Mayor Don Atchison, chose to let the private sector redevelop the site by tearing down the building and using the ensuing property taxes to fund surrounding amenities. "Those people who wanted to save the building, I certainly understand where they're coming from," said Mr. Atchison, "I just think what Council has gone ahead with is the better plan." But opponents maintained it was the Mayor who was out of step with the times.

Lenore Swystun, a former councillor and member of GIG, disagreed, saying "we need to learn from other cities that sold off riverbank areas and lakeshores. This is a public asset that could be a legacy for our city." She found it ironic that the Gathercole building had originally been constructed so that its use could be adapted over time.

Before the June demolition began, 16,500 patterned bricks were salvaged for future city projects, as well as cabinets, doors and other fixtures for Habitat For Humanity. The demolition was completed in August, and the prime riverfront land put up for sale.

*Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Sask., 06/22/04; CBC Regional News Online:*

[http://sask.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=gathercole040224 and filename=gathercole040223;](http://sask.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=gathercole040224&filename=gathercole040223)

*Macleans online:*

[http://www.macleans.ca/topstories/canada/article.jsp?content=20040119\\_73567\\_73567.](http://www.macleans.ca/topstories/canada/article.jsp?content=20040119_73567_73567)