JAPANESE BELL HOUSE

The Goh Ohn Bell House, Ontario Place, Toronto. Architect: Raymond Moriyama

Donated by the Ontario Japanese Canadian Centennial Society to the people of Ontario, this bell commemorates the 100th anniversary of the first Japanese immigrant in Canada. It is patterned after the historical bells in Japanese temples and when struck, rings with a two-syllable sound “goh ohn” literally meaning gratitude. The problem was how to enhance this sound with housing for the bell while expressing the spiritual strength of the donors.

The solution recalls traditional Japanese architecture without using traditional materials. Off-site prefabrication and rapid on-site assembly were used. The cost of casting and shipping of the bell, housing and landscaping was $40,000 (1977). The project was recently awarded an RAIC Governor General's Award. Structural engineer was Robert Halsall Associates; fabricator, Frankel Structural Steel.