



Niagara Falls, Ontario:

When a monumental hydro-electric generating station constructed between 1903 and 1913 just upstream from the roaring waters of Niagara Falls was closed in 1974 due to obsolescence, the future of the impressive neo-classical building became a concern for Ontario Hydro. In 1983, Hydro commissioned The Thom Partnership Architects & Planners (predecessor to The Colborne Architectural Group) to sketch out development scenarios for revitalizing the heritage structure.

Several options for new commercial and public uses were considered including transformation of the building into a 225 room hotel, a 30,000 sq. ft. convention facility and a Niagara basin environmental study centre. The favoured approach however was the 'Garden Pavilion' which saw the major building facades and colonnade retained with the badly deteriorated river wall and portions of the roof structure demolished. The centre block was entirely reconstructed as a multi-storey Hydro Museum and Public Information Centre with major glazed escalator lobby overlooking the river. Eleven original turbine seats were left in place, becoming sculptural elements in new outdoor public gardens with river promenade, 300 seat theatre and 200 seat restaurant. Garden Pavilion cost estimate, not including heritage restoration, \$5.5M, 1984.