

\$1.5M Dalnavert addition underway

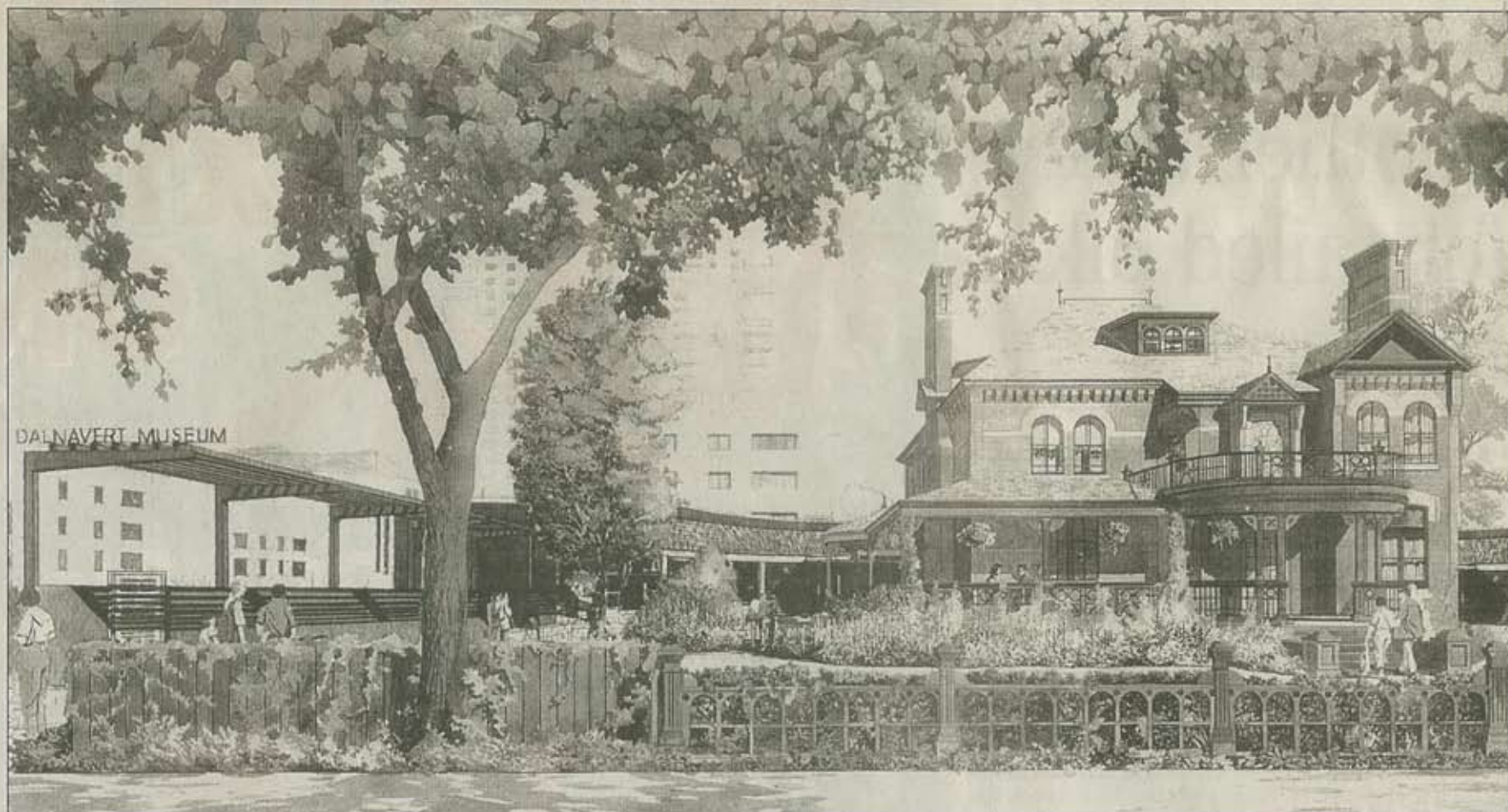
*New visitors centre
set to open in fall*

By Paul Egan

CONSTRUCTION is underway on a \$1.5-million visitors centre at the downtown Dalnavert Museum.

It won't be nearly as imposing as the Victorian home that houses the museum on Carlton Street, but Manitoba Historical Society officials say they are designing the visitors centre with the same cutting-edge spirit that went into Dalnavert itself.

When Dalnavert was built by Sir John Hugh Macdonald, the son of Canada's first prime minister, it came with all the latest features — for 1895. The home,



DALNAVERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

New visitors centre at the Dalnavert Museum, shown in this artist's rendering, will house a gift shop, historical society offices and programming space.

which is designated a national historic site, had electricity, a telephone, indoor plumbing and a sophisticated intercom system for summoning the servants.

The 5,000-square-foot visitors centre, which is to open this fall and contain a gift shop, historical society offices and programming space, will have some of the latest "green" features, said Gordon Goldsborough, the society's first vice-president.

They include interior board material made from compressed wheat, energy-efficient lighting, toilets that use little or no water, and use of the earth's energy for heating and cooling.

The society has also made maximum use of an adjacent 1940s-era home it

knocked down to make way for the visitors centre. Floor joists, hardwood floors, exterior bricks and other features have all been saved and are being incorporated into the new building, designed by Winnipeg architect Wins Bridgman.

Draw attention

The visitors centre, built low to the ground, will arc around the rear of Dalnavert and be connected by a walkway to its first floor.

While important for the space it provides for programming and other activities, "its primary function is really to

draw attention to Dalnavert and set it apart," Goldsborough said.

Steven Place, president of the historical society, said the visitors centre is one of the ways the society is celebrating its 125th anniversary this June.

Updates on the construction and other society events are available on the society's new website, www.mhs.mb.ca.

Dalnavert, considered one of Western Canada's best examples of Queen Anne Revival architecture, is closed during construction of the visitors centre.