



Donna Londry
Newsletter Editor

August 2023 Summer Newsletter

The ACO was incorporated in 1933 for the preservation of the best examples of architecture in the province and for the preservation of its places of natural beauty.

August 2023 Newsletter

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Demolition by Neglect

There are many ways to preserve and restore historically significant architecture without creating a ‘white elephant’. I define ‘white elephant’ for this note as a building that is economically unfeasible. Economic unfeasibility results in eventual deterioration and destruction.

Most old buildings have underutilized space that could generate revenue with some imagination and repurposing. Preservation of architectural features comes with costs that need to be compensated for by granting of zoning and development charge forgiveness or deferment.

It is crucial that the positive impacts of repurposing the building are highlighted and understood by the community before they become concerned with the inconvenience of construction and the inevitable increase in the traffic that the change will bring.

Unfortunately, there are few such developments as the almost inevitable conflict between developer and the community usually creates a loggerhead tying up the project for years or decades. This often results in the building falling into demolition by neglect.

Contributed by: Michal Hasek – Deputy Chair
Professional Land Economist (Retired), FRI,
Broker of Record, Michal Hasek Real Estate Ltd.
(Est. 1966)

Advocation for Downtown Cobourg

It's wonderful to hear passion and enthusiasm for downtown Cobourg's heritage architecture and the valuable conversations with both visitors and residents. Heritage architecture is indeed a significant asset that contributes to the overall character and charm of a community. Our descriptions of the different building styles and their historical significance provide a rich context for understanding the town's architectural heritage.

Our approach of connecting heritage conservation with economic benefits is insightful. People might not always realize how preserving historic buildings can positively impact property values, create local job opportunities, and contribute to the overall economic growth and sustainability of the area. By sharing these insights, you're helping to build a stronger case for the importance of heritage conservation beyond just aesthetic value.

It's also important to consider that beyond architectural beauty, downtown areas like Cobourg often play a vital role in fostering a sense of community, promoting local businesses, and creating a unique identity that can attract both residents and tourists. Our conversations seem to touch on these aspects as well, highlighting the special atmosphere that these heritage buildings collectively create.

As we all continue these conversations, we might also want to explore additional topics like the history and stories associated with specific buildings, the efforts the community is making to preserve and maintain these structures, and any ongoing initiatives related to heritage conservation and community engagement. Each conversation adds to the awareness and appreciation of the town's heritage, and collectively, they contribute to building a shared commitment to its preservation.

Remember, raising awareness and appreciation is a gradual process, and our dedication to having these conversations is making a positive impact on how people perceive and value downtown Cobourg.

For more information see resource links on the following page.

Contributed by: Don Macintosh

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Downtown Cobourg and Other Resources:

- Advocacy for Downtown's Heritage Architecture: Its conservation, restoration, rejuvenation and repurposing.
<https://www.cobourg.ca/en/business-and-development/Downtown-Heritage.aspx>
<https://www.heritage-matters.ca/articles/revitalizing-communities-the-power-of-conservation>
- Does Adaptive Reuse Pay? A Study of the Business of Building Renovation in Ontario, Canada
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237543201_Does_Adaptive_Reuse_Pay_A_Study_of_the_Business_of_Building_Renovation_in_Ontario_Canada
- Downtown Revitalization Strategies
<https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/5094?show=full>
- Heritage Values, Creative and Socio-Economic Uses
<https://creativech-toolkit.salzburgresearch.at/heritage-values-creative-and-socio-economic-uses/>
- Historic Places are Valuable Community Assets
<https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/standards-normes.aspx>
- In it Together: Bringing Back Canada's Main Streets
<https://canurb.org/publications/in-it-together-bringing-back-canadas-main-streets/>
- Small Downtown Revitalization
https://www.queensu.ca/geographyandplanning/sites/dgpwww/files/uploaded_files/SURP/Theses%20and%20Reports/Executive%20Summary%20-%20Small%20Town%20Downtown%20Revitalization%20-%20D%27Aoust%20-%20June%202016.pdf
- Something Old is Something New – The Role of Heritage Preservation in Economic Development
<https://openjournals.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/pced/article/view/4002/4957>
- Utilizing Community Heritage Assets for Community Development
<https://www.google.ca/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CAIQw7AJahcKEw15dvtpc6AAxUAAAAAHQAAAAQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fheritagenl.ca%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2020%2F04%2FUtilizing-Community-Heritage-Assets.pdf&psig=AOvVaw22S8x9OLRA9sZAaSRCGB1U&ust=1691626480840760&opi=89978449>

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Barnum House Annual Strawberry Social of 2023 Report

On a glorious June day, the splendid grounds of the Barnum house welcomed guests under a clear, sunlit sky, defying the earlier rain predictions. The fortunate turn of weather was a true blessing. Our event drew an impressive turnout, surpassing our expectations. While we had originally anticipated around 60 attendees, the final count reached upwards of 80, showcasing the immense interest and enthusiasm of our community. Regrettably, our delightful strawberry shortcakes proved so popular that they vanished long before we had anticipated. However, our guests were not left wanting as a delightful array of teas and lemonade awaited them.

With an eye toward next year, we're determined to make the experience even more memorable. We're aiming to accommodate 90 to 100 attendees in June, assuring that everyone gets to savor our famous strawberry shortcakes.

Guided tours of the historic Barnum house, expertly led by Des Conacher, were a highlight of the day. For many attendees who had long seen the "closed" sign, stepping inside and exploring the house was a cherished experience they had awaited for years. The gratitude for Des and the dedicated volunteers who shared their time and talents knows no bounds.

As we reflect on the success of this year's event, we're brimming with ideas and anticipation for next year's strawberry tea. We extend heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the triumph of the day. Your valuable suggestions and encouragement for the future have spurred us on to plan an even better event.

We're eagerly looking forward to welcoming you back next June. **We extend an invitation to join our planning committee and be part of the excitement. Planning is just as rewarding as attending!**

Historic Barnum House Trunk Sale Report

The car trunk sale at Barnum House on Saturday, May 27th, 2023, saw a fantastic turnout and was met with enthusiasm by all who attended. The event offered a plethora of enticing deals and fascinating items, creating an atmosphere of excitement and discovery. Coffee and donuts, thoughtfully provided by Rob Hunter and his legendary camp stove, added an extra touch of warmth and comfort to the occasion.

Remarkably, the event required minimal labor, proving to be a seamless and efficient way to generate revenue. As the inaugural car trunk sale at Barnum House, it marked a resounding success, leaving attendees with fond memories and sparking anticipation for its return next year. Valuable feedback from participants has already surfaced, shedding light on ways to enhance the event and make it even more remarkable.

The process of setting up and dismantling the event was remarkably straightforward, underscoring its accessibility and ease of execution. Beyond its practical success, the event exuded a sense of enjoyment and camaraderie, making it a genuinely pleasurable experience for all involved.

Looking ahead, the momentum from this year's success fuels our eagerness to host another exceptional car trunk sale. The foundation laid this year will undoubtedly pave the way for an even more impressive event in the future. We are grateful for the support, the participation, and the sense of community that made this event a standout affair.

Both events reported with sincere appreciation from Catherine and Bob Hunter

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Heritage at Risk

If ever there was a time to be politically involved, the time is now. Many of us are very aware of the myriad of environmental risks we face including to the Greenbelt, agricultural lands, wetlands, and forests to name but a few. Less of us are aware that our very Heritage and history are also very seriously at risk due to the recent passing of Bill 23 and the proposal to change the Provincial Policy Statement and the Place to Grow Policy.

Under the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) amendments made in 2005 by the Liberal government, municipalities were given the right to “List” properties of heritage significance. This meant that Heritage planners did not have to spend countless hours going through the work of “designating” properties for protection under the Heritage Act. These properties were “Listed” as an alternative on a municipal register. Should an owner request demolition for one of these properties, the municipality had 60 days to grant that request or to designate the property. Under the Building Code, demolition is practically speaking a right in that there is a waiting period of only 15 days. Since 2005, the Cobourg Council has listed 213 properties. Here is a link to that list. <https://www.cobourg.ca/en/my-cobourg/Heritage-Register.aspx>

Section F: Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest - Not Designated

What did Bill 23 do to listed properties? Bill 23 came into effect January 1st, 2023. As of January 1, 2025, these properties lose their protection. There is now a two-year limit to how long properties may stay on the register. Now, the municipality has the choice to designate under Part IV or Part V of the Act, a daunting task given the number. Most municipalities of Cobourg’s size can only manage designating 2 or 3 properties per year at most.



Listed Property on King Street West (Ontario Regency Cottage)

This home pictured is currently for sale and will lose its heritage protection by January 1, 2025 unless designated before then.

The Legislation also does not allow a municipality to relist a property for 5 years once delisted. It could be designated under Part IV or Part V of the OHA.

Currently before Cabinet of the Ontario Government is a change to the Provincial Policy Statement.

ACO’s comments on the registry are included below for your information.

“ACO regards with alarm the restriction of the application of this marquee provincial policy to “protected heritage property”, effectively cutting out the vast majority of cultural heritage resources in the province. The new policy amounts to saying that only heritage property that is already protected has to be protected. In other words “listed” properties are not included in this definition.

Instead of the current PPS 2020 policy 2.6.1, which encompasses all the properties in Ontario that would meet the criteria for designation in Ontario Regulation 9/06, whether they have been previously evaluated or not, the new policy would direct provincial and municipal planning authorities to conserve only formally designated property, archaeological sites and a few add-ons.”

This is a link to ACO’s complete comments. <https://ero.ontario.ca/comment/91726>. If you have questions, please email me at my personal email dianemchin@gmail.com or my ACO email president@acountario.ca.

Contributed by Diane Chin – ACO Ontario President

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Downtown Cobourg is Parking a Misplaced Priority?

For many decades municipal parking requirements paved the way for the deterioration of community downtowns and at the same time help to create sprawling, car-necessitating suburbs.

Likely many would be surprised to learn there are four car parking spots for every car in existence. Also, it's curious how more three car garages are built in each year than single bedroom apartments.

There are instances upon instances where in trying to preserve a community's unique character and the economic vitality of their downtowns many architecturally significant buildings were and continue to be razed for parking.

Stantec the Edmonton based global design and engineering giant reports urban sprawl can lead to municipal government bankruptcy. What Stantec's research for the city of Halifax showed wonderfully illustrated by graphics produced by the urban design group Urban 3, is that relatively crowded walkable downtown parts of a city produce huge amounts of tax revenue whereas suburban low-density areas result in net tax cost.

Further, in the city of Guelph, the only Canadian municipality to be analyzed by Urban 3, the city's senior urban designer David de Groot said the analysis came as a revelation. What it showed was that even the poorest areas of the urban centre provided vastly more municipal revenue than the sprawling fringes where the city had been spending its development resources. De Groot added "*For its long-term sustainability adding more people to the downtown was a critical direction for the city.*" Earlier this year the Ontario city of London councillor Skyler Frank said, "*Times have been changed we don't need as much parking and we have the climate crisis to consider it can be used for housing in the core Frank added we want more people walking and living downtown.*"

Contributed by Don McIntosh

More Density Please

Protecting heritage is one thing. Ensuring functional obsolescence is another. The town of Cobourg has a new building architecturally designed, mechanically futuristic and a delight for its occupants.

In spite of the objections of many in the town for various reasons nude reasons the Cobourg Accessible Environmentally Efficient Downtown Apartment Rental building (CAEEDAR) at 325 University West has been completed and is largely occupied.

Satisfied tenants seemed to be anachronism to many property owners who feel their taxes should protect them from renters. Bright beautiful apartments with virtually no carbon footprint had bought the 21st century to Cobourg. The future lies in increase downtown density which is the only way to preserve the historically significant architecture of our beautiful town.

More people ~ generate more taxes ~ generate more business. Cobourg is looking forward for a change in the future includes tenants, higher density and carbon neutrality.

Contributed by an ACO C& EN Member

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Minister's Zoning Order (MZOs)

My perspective - Dona Macintosh

MZOs have been an instrument of the Ontario Government for decades. However, it was not often used by previous governments. The current government describes MZOs as a key part of its plan to increase Ontario's housing-supply and at the same time create jobs. The Government purports MZOs have accelerated the creation of:

- Over 58,000 new homes, including over 600 supportive housing units
- Over 68,000 new jobs
- Over 4,100 new long-term care beds

MPP Sandy Shaw's - the NDP's environment critic - office newsletter reported "The Ford government has signed 44 MZOs just since 2019. That's about double the number of MZOs Ontario had used in the entire 15 years prior. NOP research revealed that the majority of MZOs benefitted loyal Ford donors - and sometimes donations were even made to Ford the week their MZO was granted."

MZOs are meant for situations of extraordinary urgency. They override a local authority's regular planning processes to approve a particular development without expert analysis, public input, or any chance of appeal. With a stroke of the pen, the minister of municipal affairs and housing can rezone a piece of land. Specifically, Ontario's minister of municipal affairs and housing can grant MZOs to allow quicker development approvals by bypassing typical local planning processes, including public meetings and appeals.

MPP Sandy Shaw, is very concerned saying, "The Ford government is using MZOs to destroy historic buildings." Later MPP Shaw reported, "With the stroke of a pen, a developer can go in and start building on land, whether it's historically important or it's on wetlands- ... it is a really heavy-handed tool for the government to be using when it comes to how we plan to build our cities."

Concerns have been expressed MZOs could set dangerous precedents for the future of urban planning and heritage preservation in particular. Shannon Kyles, a member of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario opined, "Being pro-conservation does not mean being anti-development," Ms. Kyles added, "Yes, there's going to be development, and development could be a very good thing for a lot of people," and "We have no interest in stopping development. But if there are things worth saving, let's identify them and then save them."

ACO's Chief Operating Officer is of the opinion it doesn't have to be an either/or situation - existing structures can be adapted for new purposes. In a recent ACO presentation, he stated that investments in heritage buildings trigger more economic growth and jobs than do new builds, while also creating affordable housing and conserving resources. "When you walk down the street, the way the streetscape itself speaks to you about a neighbourhood is quite important," he says. "I think we're losing that in Ontario, particularly in Toronto, and particularly in some of the midsize cities."

Unfortunately, MZOs are a trump card that lets the province immediately bypass local planning rules to expedite whatever it wants built. While MZOs may be subject to a judicial review, they can not be appealed or rescinded, unless the province agrees.

Note: For more information, please refer to Emma McIntosh's article in the January 23, 2023 edition of The Narwhal. <https://thenarwhal.ca/ministers-zoning-order-ontario-explainer/>

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"You can't rely on bringing people downtown. You have to put them there."

Jane Jacobs

Jane Jacob's words are subtle, succinct and specific. Her quote underscores the successful multi-pillar of the organization, promotion, designation and economic vitality approach for generating interest and investment for the revitalization of a community's downtown.

The positive impacts of downtown revitalization on local economies are well documented. Investment in revitalization creates jobs, increases property values helps stabilize a municipality's tax base as well as attracts residents and visitors. Downtown revitalization should be positioned as a cornerstone for Cobourg's economic development initiatives.

In addition to the four revitalization pillars there is also an important fifth pillar - people! John Stewart maintains, "If Main Street has taught us anything, it's that the human the social dimension is essential for downtown revitalization."

Successful downtowns require a diverse residential base within the downtown (or within close walking distance) in order to support and drive a downtown's commercial and retail sectors.

A Masters' thesis for the University of Waterloo's School of Planning asserts, "It appears that Ontario's mid-sized cities prescribe to the theory that downtowns cannot truly function and become centres with strong retail markets, and activity hubs with synergistic uses without housing."

Likely, Jane Jacobs would concur.

Increasingly people are wanting to return to Ontario's heritage-centric downtowns because they can be desirable places to live and visit. A 2017 Hills Strategies' study which Measured the Economic Impacts of Heritage reported the direct economic impacts of the heritage sector in Ontario was \$26.7 billion!

By promoting and conserving downtown, Cobourg's rich architectural heritage and streetscapes in its four downtown heritage conservation districts must be realized as important investments in our community.

Contributed by: Don Macintosh

Preservation Harmony

We are heritage homeowners who have engaged in numerous discussions, deeply exploring the challenges and rewards that come hand in hand with being the stewards of our heritage home. We share a mutual conviction in the profound significance of preserving this architectural treasure — a task that unfolds as a harmonious blend of sensitivity and innovation. Each alteration we've undertaken has mirrored a dance, one that reveres the history while embracing our current lifestyle needs.

In this journey of preservation harmony, we view heritage buildings not as mere static artifacts, but as living entities that adapt, serve, and continue to inspire. With thoughtful resource management, we've strived to ensure our home embodies energy efficiency, safety and modern functionality without compromising its historical essence.

As proud custodians of our heritage home, our aspiration is to nurture a dwelling that thrives within the tapestry of contemporary existence. Through our efforts, we hope to ensure that our home becomes a testament to the delicate balance between honoring the past and embracing the present—a legacy that resonates through the chapters of time.

Contributed by: Donna Londry

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Summer Camp Tour of Barnum House - Tuesday, July 18 2023

It's fascinating that the campers were particularly intrigued by the day-to-day activities of the Barnum family. Exploring Mr. Barnum's office and learning about the owl was a topic of focus. Likewise, Mrs. Barnum's room, where she entertained her lady friends, provided insight into the social customs and lifestyle of the time. The upstairs bedroom's furnishings and the downstairs kitchen, with its fireplace, bake oven, and even the maid's tiny bedroom, offered a glimpse into the daily routines and living conditions of the past.

It's wonderful to see that opportunities like these are being provided to today's youth, allowing them to engage with Canada's history in a tangible and immersive manner. Our thanks to Des Conacher, who shared his knowledge and passion, which certainly played a significant role in making the experience memorable and impactful.

Overall, the visit to Barnum House was a fantastic learning experience that combined history, exploration, and a touch of imagination. It's heartening to know that our efforts in offering tours helps to ensure that young people have the chance to connect with the past and appreciate the rich heritage of their community.

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A business card for Legacy Vintage, featuring a dark, textured background. The logo on the left consists of the word "LEGACY" in white, a large gold "LV" monogram with horizontal bars above and below, and the word "VINTAGE" in white below. To the right, the text "LEGACY VINTAGE" is written in a large, white, serif font, underlined. Below this, "BUILDING MATERIALS & ANTIQUES" is written in a smaller, white, serif font. Further down, the name "Nathaniel Kraak" is in a bold, white, serif font, followed by "VP Operations" in a white, italicized serif font. The email address "legacyvintagebuilding@gmail.com" is in a white, serif font. The address "540 Division St, Cobourg, ON K9A 3S4, Canada" is in a white, serif font. The phone number "T: +1 905-373-0796" and the website "www.legacyvintage.ca" are also in a white, serif font.

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