
ACO COBOURG & EAST NORTHUMBERLAND NEWSLETTER



MASTHEAD, CONTRIBUTORS, AND EXECUTIVE

Editor:

Alice McMurtry

Contributors:

Brian Malcolm
Robert Mikel
Donald Macintosh

ACO Executive 2022:

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Message from the Editor:

Spring has sprung after a cold winter!

I hope that you enjoy the pieces presented in this edition of the newsletter. Brian Malcolm, Robert Mikel, and Donald Macintosh have all contributed on a diverse choice of topics from heritage tourism to the history of Brookside.

As always, if you are interested in contributing to the newsletter, please write to me at the email address below.

Alice McMurtry
Newsletter Editor, ACO Cobourg and
East Northumberland Branch.
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OPEN CALL FOR ACO COBOURG & EAST NORTHUMBERLAND MEMBERSHIP LEAD

The ACO Cobourg & East Northumberland is in search of a new Membership Chair

The Membership Chair will:

- oversee the administration of our branch's membership roster
- provide a monthly report for Board meetings
- prepare mailing lists

Requirements:

- basic computer skills (Word and Excel)
- ability to work independently

Please contact the ACO Board Chair, Donald Macintosh at caolnamara@yahoo.com if you are interested in this opportunity.

ACO COBOURG & EAST NORTHUMBERLAND'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, May 16th at 7:00 pm on Zoom

Enjoy a talk by guest speaker Peter Lockyear of *History Lives Here Inc.*

More details forthcoming

Interested in contributing to the ACO Cobourg & East Northumberland Newsletter?

Write to alice.a.mcmurtry@gmail.com

Articles between 250 to 1000 words are ideal.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR WENDY MCQUEEN**Saturday, May 7, 2022****Mill Restaurant and Golf Club
900 Ontario St. Cobourg, ON****1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

Please email Doug Mahler at dougmahler0@gmail.com by April 28th if you wish to attend. If you wish to speak about Wendy or participate in some other way, please let him know.

JANE'S WALKS COBOURG

Save the date!

Saturday, May 7th

10:00 AM: Journalist Denny Manchee leads a walk "From Rifles to a Religious Retreat – the History and Current Delights of the Monk's Cove Neighbourhood".

1:00 PM: Author & local historian Robert Mikel leads a walk on the history and possible futures of the Brookside property.

***For more information please visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/Janes-Walk-Cobourg-111176533791814/>***

***Check out Cobourg's
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Text & photos by Brian Malcolm

Our rehab is stalled. As we ponder the remaining projects that are outside of our budget, we reflect on rehab decisions to date and hope we have made wise investments. Resale value is one measure. I spoke recently with a realtor to test our thoughts about it, and about which “to-dos” to do.

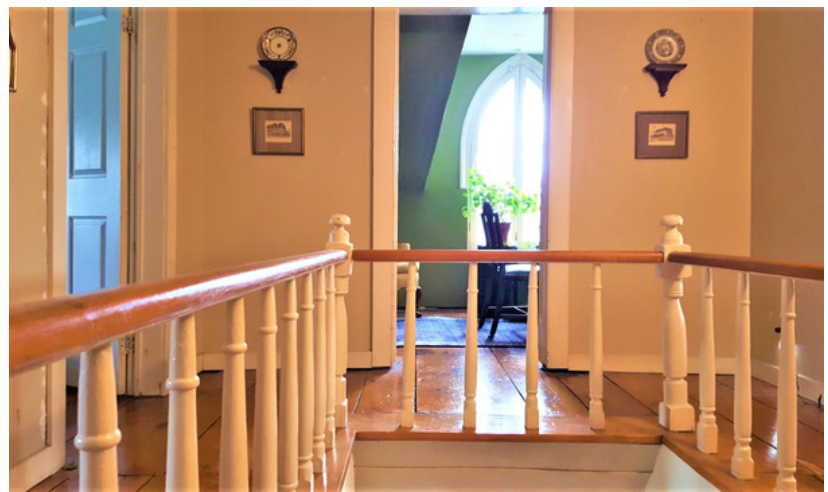
It seems heritage home buyers still exist as a small part of the overall buyer pool. They too clamour and compete for properties that meet practical requirements and stir their emotions – especially the feeling, charm, or atmosphere that only heritage elements can bring. Original floors, trim, doors, and hardware are the features that resonate most. Buyers react with disappointment over too much modernization, although newer or updated kitchens and baths rate highly.

These buyers know (or should know) that heritage homes require a fair degree of give and take, and commitment of care over time. Imperfection can be part of the charm, but significant defects mean automatic deductions in listing price. These buyers do not expect finished basements or plan to renovate them, but wet ones are still a problem. Other than our original windows—where some buyers will love them, as we do, others would immediately replace them—our rehab seems to tick the right boxes. We have addressed the most serious problems and potential time bombs.

We are confident to remove one project from our list, namely replacement of the gallery railing around the upper stairwell. Its hand-turned spindles, short height, and wide spacing may just make it authentic and desirable (and not a death trap at all!). Goodbye to a new master bathroom which, while good for resale, is too ambitious for us.

That leaves our “to-do” list as follows: uncover and refurbish original flooring in the mudroom; replace the unappealing doors on the second floor, add or fill in baseboards to match originals throughout; replace four ceilings (what do those stucco swirls and fibre tiles mask, anyway?); and update the powder room.

Whenever we finish, it seems our rehab will be a good investment for us and may also be for the community. As new development continues in and around Grafton, it seems more important than ever to safeguard the historic centre of the hamlet and retain our old buildings to ensure a sense of place.



Gallery railing

By: Don Macintosh

Heritage tourism in its most basic form is visiting and revisiting places to experience authentic historic sites, their architecture, and artifacts.

Architectural conservancy should be a cornerstone of Cobourg's municipal policies. Cobourg's unique heritage assets need to be a source of investment for community revitalization and economic development. With such landmarks as Victoria Hall, unique streetscapes, and other community assets like Victoria Park Beach, Cobourg's cultural heritage is well worth preserving.

We can learn from the American Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The council has encouraged national travel and tourism policies that promote the international marketing of America's historic sites as tourism destinations.

Heritage tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry. It is widely believed that heritage tourism can successfully help preserve resources while boosting local economies by generating jobs, new businesses, and tax dollars.

The tourism industry is the second-leading industry in the nation, creating an increase in jobs, businesses, and property values. Well-developed tourism programs improve the quality of life and instill pride in communities throughout the world.


The Ontario Heritage Trust, established in 1967, is the province's heritage agency. Their responsibility is to identify, preserve, protect, and promote built, cultural and natural heritage across the province.

We can see a direct correlation between heritage tourism and economic growth. The 2019 report of the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) found that heritage tourism activities contributed approximately \$28.1 billion to local economies. Pre-COVID heritage tourism collectively contributed \$15.6 billion to Ontario communities via indirect economic benefits. In total, tourism, culture, and heritage sector activities generated \$43.7 billion in economic activity in 2019, representing 4.9 per cent of Ontario's GDP. The FAO also found that just one million in tourism spending supports 8.7 jobs.

A high percentage of domestic and international travelers participate in heritage experiences. If heritage tourism destinations provide dynamic, inclusive experiences for the public, visitors are apt to stay longer, spend more, and travel more often.

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Text and photos by Robert Mikel

Cottesmore Hall

Rowe was originally associated with the Consolidated Steel and Wire Company, which became part of the United States Steel Corporation in 1901. Rowe sold his interests in the company to form the Pittsburgh Steel Company. He commissioned architects Rutan and Russell of Pittsburgh, the same firm that built his Pittsburgh residence, to design his Cobourg summer residence. He demolished the old house but kept its name. Although Rowe died in 1919, the family continued to own the house until 1950 when the government expropriated it to become part of training school.

The Cottesmore Hall grounds were designed by Canada's foremost landscape architect of the time, Frederick G. Todd. Todd worked for the father of American landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmstead, before moving to Montreal where he set up Canada's first resident landscape architecture practice.



Historic photo of Strathmore

The Brookside property is the last major parcel of land within the town of Cobourg not scheduled for private development. It is a magnificent property. Handsomely landscaped, the approximately 32-acre property contains three important heritage buildings and a heritage waterway (Brook Road Creek). Former reformatory buildings, including a commercial kitchen, gym, classrooms, shop rooms, sleeping quarters, and bathrooms still stand on the site.

History of the Site

Although the site looks like it has always been a continuous landscape, the property's history is far more varied. The area was a hive of early settler activity. The Ash family, who had received their crown grant for the land, began to sell off lots. During the 19th century, several families, including the Winches and Wrights, raised cattle and crops. Part of Evor and Annie Leonard's extensive orchard existed along the north end of the property. Mark Fisher, whose wife was an Ash, owned part of the property. Henry Boulter operated a tannery along Brook Road Creek at King.

There were several residences on the property as well. The first Cottesmore Hall located at the south-west corner of King Street and Cottesmore Avenue was believed to have been built by William Weller. Later it was owned by James Cockburn, Cobourg's Father of Confederation, and his brother Robert. The Reverend Vincent Howard and his spouse Sophie, a granddaughter of the infamous Benedict Arnold, lived in the house for the last quarter of the 19th century. In 1905 Wallace Hurtt Rowe of Pittsburgh bought Cottesmore.

Text and photos by Robert Mikel

Strathmore

Another important residence on the site was the first Strathmore property. It was built around 1876 by Roderick Pringle. Pringle purchased the property from George M. Clark. He built the house, and then promptly sold the property back to Clark. A prominent lawyer and one of Cobourg's largest landowners, Clark was later a solicitor for the Canadian Pacific Railway. His wife Eliza was the daughter of William Weller.

The Clark family sold the house to Charles Donnelly of Pittsburgh in 1904. Donnelly commissioned Kingston architects Power and Sons to design the "new" Strathmore. Donnelly made a fortune in railroads, coal, and real estate. At the time of his death, he was considered the second most prosperous landowner in Pittsburgh.

The house was later sold to Stephen Haas of Toronto. Haas and his brother-in-law sold window blinds. After Stephen Haas died in 1943, the family rented the house to the Ontario Training School. the province in 1950.

Brookside Dentition Centre was known as the Ontario Training School for Girls when it first opened its doors in the late 1930s. Around 1950, the girls were moved to a Guelph centre and it became a reformatory for young boys. The reformatory was comprised of four former summer houses: Cedar Hedge; the Franklin Abbott House; Bagnell Hall; the Willis McCook house; Cottesmore Hall, and Strathmore.

During the 1950s, the school's name was changed to Brookside. In 1971, the current buildings were constructed and a few years later, without warning, three of the houses were demolished. The Franklin Abbott house and the Willis McCook house were sold. Brookside became a detention centre in 1985 and was renamed Brookside Youth Dentition Centre. The site was closed in 2021.



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Text and photos by Robert Mikel

Cottesmore Stables and Coach House

While Cottesmore Hall itself was demolished, its stables survived. Cottesmore was designed by a leading and progressive mid-western architectural firm, Rutan and Russell. Frank Rutan practiced in the firm of eminent American architect H. H. Richardson.

Like the main house, the stable is a handsome stuccoed structure. It was designed in the Arts and Crafts style. The two gables mimic those that once existed on the main house. The U-shaped building was designed around a courtyard. The exterior of the stable was quite plain and was considered modern. Newly developed fire-resistant materials were used throughout the structure. While some alterations have been made the house remains largely unchanged. The building is a fine example of an Arts and Crafts building and may be the only example of this architectural firm's work in Canada.

Winch Cottage

Nestled in the middle of the property stands the Winch Cottage, built by the Richard Winch in the last quarter of the 19th century. It is a simple brick vernacular house used as a farm manager's home. It was remodelled by the province around 1960 as the residence for the head of the institution. The Winch Cottage is the only surviving 19th century structure on the property.



Cottesmore stables and coach house c. 1910

Strathmore

Strathmore is an impressive example of an Edwardian Classical Beaux Arts residence. It typifies the style with a relaxed attitude towards formal composition, solid massing, and ornate details that appear to have plasticity. With the window surrounds, cornice and front door, the emphasis is horizontal, even with the prominent portico and its squat columns. This was one of the many Edwardian buildings designed by the Power and Son architects in Kingston. The house remains a eye-catching feature of King Street East.

Future

Brookside offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Cobourg to create a dynamic heritage "campus" with the potential for broader public uses like parkland and mixed-use housing. Ultimately, the site of Brookside could become an inclusive space for Cobourg's residents.

Many different ideas have been put forward for the best use of these facilities. Cultural heritage; education; retail; housing; the arts; and nature conservation have all been floated as potential themes for the space.

An innovative approach to Brookside's development has the potential to transform Cobourg in the same way the development of the harbourfront and Victoria Hall encouraged heritage tourism. Brookside could become a vibrant hub for Cobourg's arts and culture scene.



Winch Cottage c. 1904