



Architectural Conservancy Ontario
Cobourg and East Northumberland

NEWSLETTER

April 2025



Strathmore (Brookside School), built circa 1904 and pictured here in 2014, has served over the years as a training school and private summer residence. Closed in 2021 by the provincial government, today the historic building's future is uncertain.

HERITAGE CONCERNS

Brookside changes hands again

Since October 30, 2024, the local Architectural Conservancy of Ontario–Cobourg and East Northumberland (**ACOCEN**), with crucial strong support from the community, has campaigned to save the important and unique heritage elements of Brookside, the former Ontario Detention Centre. Unfortunately, the Town missed this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to purchase the property.

Brookside, located at 390 King St. East, comprises over thirty acres of land and many buildings. It was sold by the Ontario Government to Terraco Developments in November 2024. Since then, awareness of the importance and need to save it has increased and gained support. We have been in discussions with the province, the Town and the owners. An ACO-

CEN member requested the property be designated under **Part IV** of the Ontario Heritage Act. A supportive Council referred the matter to staff to report back to them. With the provincial election and the staff report in development, there has been a slight lull in the campaign. However, we have been informed that the staff report to Council will come forward soon.

In the meantime, Terraco Developments have sold the property to **York Developments**, who recently developed the site surrounding and including the architecturally significant **Middlesex County Court House** in London, Ontario. That development has not been without **controversy**. Further information on the **new owners** has been posted on **Cobourg News Blog**.
(cont'd)

Brookside *(cont'd)*

Importance of Brookside

Brookside is a magnificent 30-plus acre property, with three architecturally and historically important heritage structures – and a heritage Brook Rd. Creek. The property's park-like landscape in itself is significant.

Like Victoria Hall, Cobourg Harbour and Victoria Park, it is an iconic piece of Cobourg that defines Cobourg's unique identity. These are important physical representations of the town's history. It cannot be replaced, but it can easily be destroyed. Just look across King St. E. to Sidbrook as an appalling example of the wilful destruction of our heritage.

Historical background

While today Brookside is one cohesive property, it wasn't always so. The site was originally made up of several different properties, assembled into two parcels by two American families. Each of them created grand summer estates, Cottesmore Hall and Strathmore.

In its early years, the site contained a tannery, crop and cattle farming, large apple orchards and several houses. One of which was the first Cottesmore Hall, home to stagecoach operator William Weller, and later the Rev. Vincent Howard, whose wife Sophia was a descendant of Benedict Arnold.

Strathmore, 1904-1905

Power and Sons architects, Kingston

The first Strathmore was built by Judge George M. Clark, one-time solicitor of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Pittsburgh industrialist **Charles Donnelly** and family came to Cobourg about 1902. A few years later he bought Strathmore and built a large **Beaux-Arts** style summer house that incorporated the earlier house. It is said the dining room of the Donnelly house was the site of Clark's house. The Beaux-Arts was a French-inspired architectural movement that sought to reinterpret classical traditions to create a modern classical style suitable for the 20th century.

Strathmore is an attractive example of the Beaux-Arts style with a relaxed attitude towards formal composition, solid massing and ornate details. With the window surrounds, cornice and front door, the emphasis is horizontal, even with prominent features including its portico and chubby columns. Many note the details of Beaux-Arts. Also on the property were stables and garages as well a tea-house designed in a Swiss Chalet style. About the same time the firm designed Senator George Oliver's estate north of town, Dungannon Farm.



Strathmore, fenced-in since 2024

To many, Beaux-Arts details often look molded rather than crisply carved. Examples of High Beaux-Arts buildings are the Paris Opera House and the Breakers at Newport, Rhode Island.

Donnelly, who died in 1906, was said to have spent only one summer at Strathmore.

Stephen Haas and family bought the house in 1918. Stephen and Kate (Hees) Haas were Torontonians. Haas, together with his brother-in-law Harris Hees, owned the George H. Hees and Sons blind manufacturing company. Harris Hees also had a summer house in Cobourg. Stephen's son Max Haas sold the house to the Ontario Government. Together with several other summer houses, the property briefly became the Ontario Training School for girls, then for boys. It eventually became the Brookside Detention Centre.

Most of the original interior survives, with its gracious staircase, elaborate ceiling decoration and finely carved woodwork. Upstairs doors are two-inch thick mahogany.

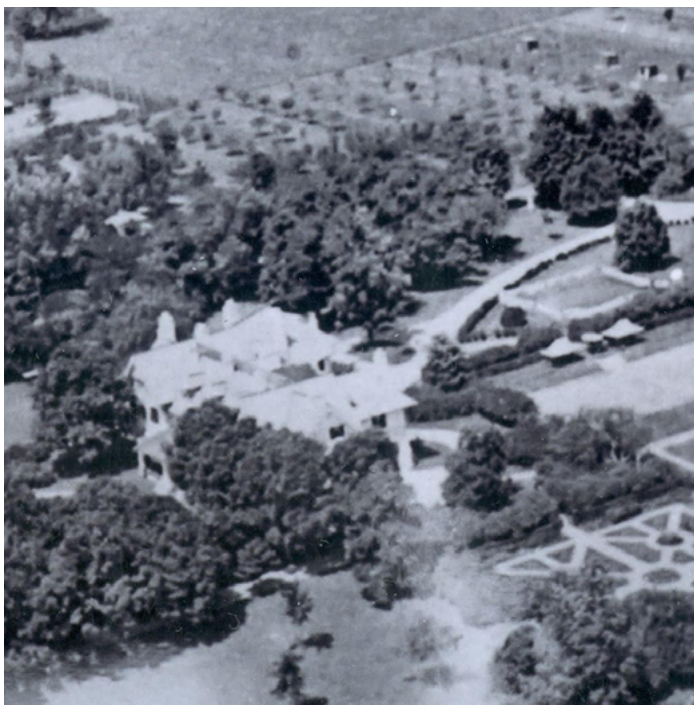
About 10 years ago, the Ontario Government spent over a million dollars to restore the **exterior**.

Cottesmore Hall Stables, 1906

Rutan and Russell architects, Pittsburgh

Cottesmore Stables was once Part of the Rowe estate, Cottesmore Hall built by industrialist Wallace H. Rowe of Pittsburgh. The main house in the Arts and Crafts style was demolished in 1974.

(cont'd)



Cottesmore Hall and environs, circa 1919

The surviving stables are an architectural gem. In the design of the stables, Rutan and Russell architects mixed the Arts and Crafts with classical and **Spanish Colonial** styles to create a very handsome and unusual building. It too was built with fire proof materials. The double gables and the stylized buttresses are Arts and Craft; the courtyard and round arched gable on the right side of the façade hint at Spanish Colonial, while the large Palladian windows are definitely Classical. This is almost certainly the only surviving building of this important architectural firm in Canada.

The original was designed by Canada's foremost landscape architect at the time, **Frederick Todd**, who worked for **Fredrick Law Olmsted**. The house was demolished in 1974, but fortunately its handsome stable has survived.



Rowe Coach House, 1910

Winch Cottage, c.1880

A farm manager's cottage later known as Silver Stream Cottage is a simple brick vernacular cottage built by Richard Winch. Enlarged and renovated, it was used as the residence of Brookside's administrator.

Brook Road Creek

Bisecting the property is one of Cobourg's most important ecological creek systems, Brook Rd. Creek. Brookside is the most open and accessible park on the creek within Cobourg, and is not just important historically, but environmentally.

“Through education and advocacy, the ACO encourages the conservation and reuse of structures, districts and landscapes of architectural, historic and cultural significance, to inspire and benefit Ontarians.”

Mission statement, Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

Concerns over King Street West re-construction

If you're concerned about the character and charm of Cobourg, fighting climate change, and efficient spending, then the proposed **re-construction** of King St. W. could be cause for concern.

The cause for concern is the proposal to replace the 1.5m (almost 5 ft.) wide sidewalk with a 2.5m (over 8 ft.) wide concrete multi-use path on the south side of King St. W. This will provide an off-road travel area for both cyclists and pedestrians, separated from vehicular traffic. But that will add over 3 ft. width to the sidewalk.

King St. W. is one of the most historic and charming parts of Cobourg. The street is already wide and appears to be four lanes, with an existing bicycle lane contained within those four lanes.



King St. West, Cobourg

What will be the impact on this part of King St. W. if the south sidewalk is widened to over 8 ft? The wide sidewalk will probably necessitate the removal of the boulevard. The effect could be that the road will look even **wider**, making it appear like five lanes. It will further disconnect north and south sides which could weaken the community or residential feel of the street, and likely mar its architectural charm and heritage character. Wider streets or wider-appearing streets also encourage faster traffic and speeding, not lessen it.

The wider sidewalk will require more cement, furthering carbon emissions, a significant cause of climate change. Is a wider sidewalk necessary when a bike lane already exists that could be enhanced by a redesign to physically separate the bike lane from traffic lanes?

One of the reasons given for a wider sidewalk is to separate pedestrian and cyclists from vehicular traffic. But pedestrians are already separated from vehicular traffic – there is an existing bike lane which appears to fit nicely into the wide street without affecting traffic flow. It appears the reason for the new sidewalk is to give vehicles exclusive right to the street.

“This proposal puts the bikes and pedestrians together.” Not always a happy or safe combination.

From a street widening **study**: “In the Australian city of Brisbane, bikes and motorized scooters are required to use sidewalks so as to not slow car traffic. The upshot of this regulation is that ‘pedestrians’ feel less safe, bike- and scooter-riders are not well-served, and ultimately, the social life of the city is diminished.”

Studies show that vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians should be physically separated where possible. If a painted line is the separation of pedestrians and cyclists in this new sidewalk, is that enough? Will there be four lines on the sidewalk – two to separate east and west bound pedestrians and two to separate east and west bound cyclists? On King St. W. it is particularly problematic where all the lanes converge at the Factory Creek bridge.

Thirty people died on Toronto's roads in 2024 – 12 pedestrians, 8 motorists, 6 cyclists and 4 motorcyclists. These are just the reported incidents. Careful consideration of the separation of vehicles is needed. It will be interesting to see what the Town proposal is for the reconstruction.

Does the amount of vehicular traffic driving along King St. W. warrant such an intervention, and at what cost? Will cyclists actually use this new sidewalk?

Would the Strong Mayors Act affect Heritage Preservation? The Town of Cobourg has now been awarded powers under the Strong Mayors Act

The Town of Cobourg has now been awarded powers under the **Strong Mayors Act**. These powers come into force on May 1. The Mayor will have far more powers than any previous Mayor has ever had. The Act was created to speed up approvals for housing development as part of Premier Ford's pledge to build 1.5 million homes in a decade. Somewhat surprisingly, it gives the Mayor power to make legislation with the support of only one third of Council. Strong mayoral powers have been called "a gross violation of democratic principles." And one of the most undemocratic pieces of legislation passed by the Ontario legislature.

Many large cities across the world have some variations of the Strong Mayors Act that work. But unlike most of those cities, Ontario's Strong Mayor legislation has been described as vague. Studies have determined that the Act is open to broad **interpretations** on how and what it can be used for. Most surprisingly, it gives governing executives the power to make legislation with the support of only one third of Council, the only place in any western democracy to do so.

Other significant powers and duties under the Strong Mayor's Act allow mayors to:

- appoint the municipality's Chief Administrative Officer;
- hire and fire certain municipal department heads and establish and reorganize departments;
- create committees of Council, assign their functions and appoint the chairs and vice-chairs of committees of Council;
- propose the municipal budget, which would be subject to Council amendments and a mayoral veto and Council override process; *and*
- bring forward matters for Council consideration if the Mayor is of the opinion that consideration of the matter could potentially advance a provincial priority.

What does this have to do with cultural heritage and its preservation. Plenty! There has been some questioning in the past of the need to have a planning department or heritage planner. Strong mayoral powers may allow the elimination of a heritage planner or a whole planning department, based on how it's interpreted. These powers, which come into force on May 1, can seriously affect ongoing development proposals including Brookside and 117 Durham St., the old CDCI West playing field. Some citizens in Ontario municipalities such as **Caledon** are fighting back on "pre-zoning."



Victoria Hall, designated as both a National Historic Site and an Ontario heritage property, is home to Town of Cobourg offices and the Town Council meeting chamber.

Curling Rink demolished

Cobourg's historic Curling Rink at 22 Queen St. has been demolished to make way for a large condominium project.

Curling was one of the earliest sports played in Cobourg, with rinks on town creeks and the harbour as early as the 1860s, perhaps even earlier. Later there were several enclosed rinks such as Lightbourne's at the foot of Second St., Ley's on University St. E., and a rink built as part of the Sparling and Reeson garage on King St. W.

The Queen St. rink opened in 1919. At the time the Cobourg Curling Club had merged with the Waverley Curling Club. A utilitarian building, it was a long narrow structure with a gable roof end fronting the street. It contained four sheets of ice for curling. The rink was mothballed during WWII but reopened when the war ended. It hosted the Curling Club until 1952.

At that time the old Cobourg Golf Club at Division and Elgin Streets merged with the Curling Club. An addition to house the rink was built onto the golf club. Its exterior walls still exist, part of a car dealership.

The Queen St. building was taken over by Lakeshore Auto Mechanics until sold to developers. The front portion of the building could have been incorporated into development plans – this would have kept a portion of the historic building and made for a far more interesting streetscape. However, this was not to be.

The current proposal features a rather monolithic building which will run about 289 ft. along King St. and 169 ft. along McGill St. So now, except for the Post Office building, there isn't a single heritage building left on this stretch of Queen St.



Former Cobourg Curling Rink, 22 Queen St.

Does Cobourg need a Planning Department or Heritage Planner?

You bet it does. There have been some off-the-cuff comments suggesting that Cobourg doesn't need a Heritage Planner, not even a Planning Department. Developers would take over most of the responsibilities of the Planning Department. With legislation already in place giving developers much more control over the planning process, and with the Strong Mayors Act coming into effect in Cobourg on May 1, 2025, there is concern that a version that seems inconceivable could happen – such as much eroding of the town's planning responsibilities.

Through existing legislation, developers could build what is in their interests – generally the most marketable housing that would give them the greatest return on their investment, giving municipalities the housing they need.

It has been suggested that developers could do much of the planning and groundwork around their specific project that Planning Departments do. The development proposal would come to Council for a 'yeah' or 'nay.'

This would exacerbate developers' tendencies to focus on their own developments without concern for infrastructure, mixed-use housing and urban design aspects – how it fits sympathetically into the community, creating a more liveable and sustainable place to call 'home.'

This is why local governments were given the responsibility for planning and development processes. Without a strong plan with all attendant processes and planning for development of infrastructure, it becomes almost impossible for strong municipal coordination overseeing multiple developments.

It may seem obvious why a Planning Department is essential, but to quote from other sources:

“Good planning is guided by public interest, and results in well-planned and enjoyable communities that have the amenities people need. These communities contribute to wellbeing, and to long-term societal goals like housing affordability, increasing economic activity, and fighting climate change,” and

“Planning reduces uncertainty and indicates what everyone is expected to accomplish. People are more likely to work toward a goal they know and understand. Plans set performance standards. Planning defines desired outcomes as well as mileposts to define progress.”

Heritage Planner

Like Urban Planners and Building Code inspectors, a Town Heritage Planner has an important role within the town. A Heritage Planner focusses on the identification, documentation and protection of properties with historic value in our community. In the case of Cobourg it helps ensure what makes Cobourg a unique, charming and authentic historic town as new growth occurs. Heritage Preservation has been proven to generate economic development especially through tourism, raised property values, job creation, affordable housing and environmental benefits, as well as helping foster civic pride and identity.

“No town in Ontario of the same size contains so many beautiful residences as does Cobourg.”

Toronto Globe, 1894



Glebe lawn, 195 Queen St., visited during the Cobourg 2024 House Tour

Cobourg House Tour was a splendid success

A perfect June day with bright blue skies and comfortable temperatures set the stage for an extremely successful 2024 Cobourg house tour. Organized by the ACO-CEN Branch, it was our first tour since the Covid pandemic.

Well over 400 people toured the 11 attractive properties open for viewing. There were a variety of building types, and periods ranged in date from about 1834 to 2021, including seven heritage houses, a 1970 mid-century modern, and a contemporary energy efficient ('passive') house. Owners were on hand at each site as well as volunteers to answer questions.

St. Peter's had its three historic buildings open – the rectory, the church itself, just having undergone a multi-million dollar restoration, and the mortuary chapel in the parish's cemetery at Elgin and Ontario Streets. St. Peter's offered delicious box lunches for sale with seating in the great hall and on the lawn, where a jazz band entertained. Proceeds went towards restoration of the rectory.

The handsome mortuary chapel surprisingly garnered quite a bit of interest. People seemed fascinated about its origin and use. One visitor was so keen on the building that they donated a substantial sum to help with its restoration.

This great day would not have happened were it not for the generous homeowners who opened their homes, and to the scores of hard-working volunteers who organized, staffed and made sure everything went off without a hitch.

Great kudos go out to the house-tour planning committee, headed by Esther Robson and members Elizabeth Betancourt, Leslie Fink, Suzanne Gerwick, Robert Mikel and Doug Syrota.

This house tour raised about \$8,000 after expenses.



St. Peter's mortuary chapel

The ACO Bus Tour rolls again!

Those lucky enough to register for this sold-out tour are off to Prince Edward County (PEC) on April 30. The County seems to be just bursting with creative energy regarding great heritage architecture and its restoration.

First stop will be the Gryphon Cottage, a Regency building (1834) which was threatened with demolition and transferred from Ancaster to Consecon by architecture professor Shannon Kyles. To one side of the property Kyles recently transferred an old carriage house, also being restored, which we will also visit.

Then we'll visit the White Chapel, 'a gem among gems' as Tom Cruickshank describes it, a starkly simplistic frame building typical of the earliest Methodist churches in Upper Canada, little changed since its erection in 1809.

Lunch is scheduled at Picton's handsome United Church – and the organizer of our delicious-sounding buffet just happens to be Debra Marshall, Vice-President of ACO's new Branch in PEC! So we can be sure of a friendly welcome!

A number of young innovators in PEC have carried out some fantastic transformations of old buildings. One such is Jake Curl and we'll visit what was once the old Legion building, which he has now transformed into the stunning Cape Hotel.

Next, the husband and wife team, Liz Driver, President of ACO's new PEC Branch, and her husband, Edwin Rowse, the distinguished architectural historian, co-founder of Edwin Rowse Architects and driving inspiration behind such projects as Toronto's Distillery District and Ottawa's Booth Street redevelopment, will tour us around the Crystal Palace. Constructed in 1887, it was once one of many North American replicas of the great 1851 Crystal Palace in London, but is now the only one of its kind remaining on the continent.

Last stop will be the restored farm and barn of Chris Braney, in Hillier. Chris, viticulturist and orchardist, produces both wine and cider in his Cold Creek Vineyard, and who in addition to a tour, is laying on a cider-tasting for us.

This will be a great opportunity to meet up with fellow ACO members. It's not too far, not too long, and clearly very rich in interest.

'Cobourg's Yesteryears' is a fascinating Facebook community platform featuring Cobourg's history and architecture.

It captures many reminiscences, includes vintage photographs, and is a great place to learn about Cobourg and connect with the site's large membership base:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/395744833503/>

Famous Canadian-American poet was born in Cobourg

American poet laureate Josephine Boylan was born in Cobourg on August 19, 1908, to Dr. Joseph Boylan and Octavia Winder Skinner Boylan.

The Boylans were a “prominent and honoured” Cincinnati family who summered in Cobourg for almost 20 years, beginning in the early 1890s to about 1910. Joseph Boylan, whose father was a prominent merchant and landowner, married Agnes Hewson, whose father was also a prominent merchant and landowner. The family was considered quite cultured and traveled extensively to Europe. Boylan studied medicine in Germany where he received the “corps” or dueling scar on his cheek. He later rose to become a foremost ear, nose and throat specialist. After he retired he spent his summers in Cobourg and his winters in Europe.

After spending several seasons at the ‘Arlington,’ the Boylans rented ‘Cameron Cottage’ on King St. E., a coveted spot located between the ‘Arlington’ and ‘Columbian’ (later the ‘Chateau’). After the death of his first wife, Boylan married

Octavia Winder Skinner, in Cobourg. Twenty years his younger, she was from Raleigh, North Carolina. She had summered in Cobourg for several seasons before she and Boylan married in 1907. She was from a distinguished and aristocratic southern family. She probably came to Cobourg to distance herself from a family scandal. Her husband, J. Ludlow Skinner, was shot dead in the street by Ernest Haywood, who was having an affair with Octavia’s sister Gertrude Winder Tucker. Evidence suggested that they had married, but Haywood denied it. Amid a nationwide scandal, Haywood, who was also from a prominent North Carolina family, was acquitted of the murder. Further fueling the storm.

In 1908 while summering in Cobourg, Octavia gave birth to Josephine Boylan. She was premature and weighed only two pounds. The doctors didn’t hold out much hope, but Octavia was determined the baby should live. After several months in Cobourg, Josephine was taken for treatment in New York. The Boylans continued to summer in Cobourg for several more years.

Josephine Boylan went on to become one of America’s greatest 20th century poets.



This King St. E. rental property, Cameron Cottage, was demolished many years ago and its former site is now part of Victoria Park

Altadena heritage houses destroyed in recent Los Angeles fires were built by former Cobourg residents

Horrific Los Angeles fires have destroyed almost all of the picturesque town of Altadena, including many heritage properties. East Mariposa St., long known as “millionaires’ row,” was decimated. Among them were two important heritage houses built by siblings who were raised in Cobourg.

George and Virginia Chambliss were children of **Colonel William** and Sallie Shoenberger Chambliss, Americans who moved to Cobourg when Chambliss was put in charge of the Cobourg, Peterborough and Marmora Railway and Mining company. This company was largely owned by Chambliss’ father-in-law, **George K. Shoenberger**. The Chambliss’s first lived in “Albion Cottage.” After that house was destroyed, he built a grand Victorian House that he named Dinwiddie Hall. Here in Cobourg, George and Virginia were born and raised.

After their parents died, they lived with their grandfather George K. Shoenberger in Cincinnati and his third wife Ella, daughter of Dr. John Beatty of Cobourg.

Virginia married Désire Girouard of Montréal in 1894. His step-mother was **Edith Beatty Girouard**, another daughter of Dr. Beatty’s. Désire was a lawyer and they first lived in Montréal where their child George was born. But Désire’s health failed, forcing them to seek a warmer clime. Eventually in 1899 they ended up in Altadena.

George Chambliss married Harriet Earle in 1900. She was a young widow with a son, Harry. Although George never held a job as we know it, he became a learned and respected ornithologist. He founded the Chambliss Ornithologist Library, which contained many rare and valuable books on the subject. That library still exists, in Chicago, part of the American Ornithological Society. Ill health also brought George to Altadena. Both siblings must have coordinated their moves to Altadena – they bought properties next to each other.

George built 466 E. Mariposa St. in 1900 while Virginia built 444 E. Mariposa St. the same year, shortly after her husband’s death. While her house was being built, she lived with the Chambliss family. Both houses were designed by Locke and Munsell, a prominent Los Angeles architectural firm.

George’s house was the grander of the two, costing almost \$6,000.00. The two-storey house shows the transition between the late Victorian style to the Arts and Crafts style, containing elements of each in its design. It was Victorian in layout and décor but **Arts and Crafts** in its interior and exterior finishes, including the stair, chimney, wainscot paneling and bookcases.



Chambliss house interior, Altadena, California



Virginia Chambliss Girouard, born in Cobourg

On the exterior of the house the shingle siding and gables are indicative of the style.

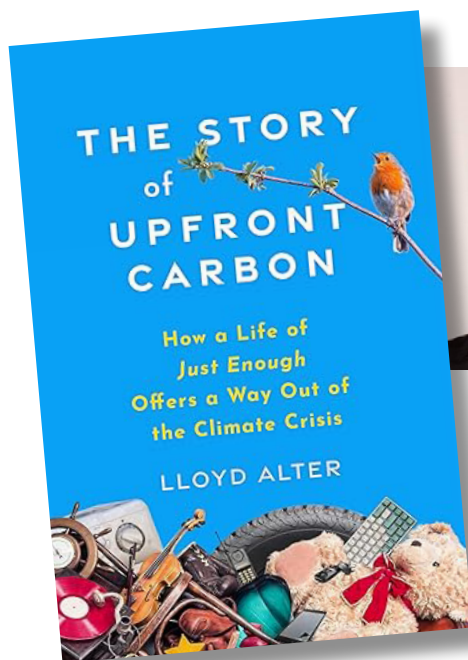
George did not live in it for long as he died three years later. His widow sold the house and moved back east.

Virginia’s house was a more modest bungalow costing almost \$3,500.00. It too was shingle-sided, with cobblestone chimneys and leaded glass casement windows. Interior Arts and Crafts details were similar to her brother’s, except the wainscotting was eight feet tall and the living room had a highly decorated coved ceiling. It was described as a house “which as whole, possesses much merit in the frank combination of the useful and artistic.”

Virginia died in 1922. Her son George continued to live in the house until his death in 1966.

How carbon emissions are wreaking havoc on our world

Lloyd Alter, prominent architect, **writer**, blogger and passionate advocate for heritage preservation and fighting climate change, gave a fascinating and informative talk on how carbon is wreaking havoc on our world at the Cobourg and East Northumberland ACO Branch's 2024 Annual General Meeting.



Lloyd Alter

Alter said there's a carbon cost for everything we do, and he identified ways in which we can make big reductions. International scientific consensus is that we have less than a decade to drastically slash our collective carbon emissions to keep global heating to 1.5C, averting catastrophe. This means that many of us have to cut our individual carbon footprints by over 80%.

In his 2021 book *Living the 1.5 Degree Lifestyle*, he described how he attempted to limit his own carbon emissions in line within 1.5 degrees of global warming. New habits included eating more vegetarian meals, and using his e-bike instead of his car as much as possible. He said the trickiest part for him has been air travel – he's taken fewer flights since.

In his talk he discussed the content of his latest book, *The Story of Upfront Carbon: How a Life of Just Enough Offers a Way Out of the Climate Crisis*, where he links carbon emissions to everything we purchase as consumers.

"If you buy a car," he says, "you're buying 14 tonnes of upfront carbon emissions, the emissions of making that car. Everything you buy has these issues and people talk about efficiency, efficiency, efficiency. But efficiency is pointless without sufficiency."

Campaign for ACO Cobourg and East Northumberland Branch

As we move on following Covid lockdowns, the new Board is looking to further rejuvenate the Branch with our "Kick-Start" ACO-CEN campaign. This will help establish strategic priorities for the ACO and hopefully generate public interest and enthusiasm for our cultural heritage; the process will strongly advocate protection of that heritage; and it will provide educational and entertaining programming for members and the general public. Priorities to be considered include:

Branch development

Strategic options include ACO Cobourg separating from East Northumberland; or separating with the inclusion of Hamilton and Haldimand Townships; or continuing with the current model while considering inclusion of areas outside Cobourg.

Heritage awards

Nomination procedures for awards should be developed, along with building plaques to promote awards recipients. At an annual event, winners would receive a framed certificate.

Community engagement

Following input and direction from members, an ongoing series of talks and walking tours could be initiated; and a traveling exhibition celebrating Cobourg architecture and the importance of what it means to be designated a heritage district.

Create material related to local heritage, such as a pamphlet on heritage preservation importance, what it means to be listed, etc. And a series of pamphlets and online info featuring architecture in Cobourg, Colborne, Brighton, and Haldimand and Hamilton Townships.

A home office

A place is needed for meetings, for storage of ACO files and other items; perhaps large enough to hold exhibitions, and to meet with the public and hold seminars.

Membership drive

A priority will be attracting new members, especially young Cobourg residents, with a combination of events and activities, print and online newsletters, new walking tours, and relevant events for families with children.

Advocacy

Members should advocate Cobourg's architectural heritage at relevant Council meetings, through media relations, including radio interviews, and with local Members of Parliament.



410 Division St., Cobourg

A 'shout-out' to owner
**Carrie Low of
410 Division Street**

One of the best and most thorough restorations for many years is the one recently completed at 410 Division St. The Queen Anne style house, built in 1902 by builder John Henderson, is one of the most elaborate and highly decorated in Cobourg.

A 'shout-out' to owner
**Tag Property Management of
144 King Street West**

An unexpected but welcome restoration of the second and third floors of the old Battell house built in 1878 in the grand **Second Empire Style**. A front extension with a mid-century modern façade was added, unfortunately destroying the historic ground floor façade.



144 King St. W., Cobourg



664 Ontario St. N., Cobourg

A 'shout-out' to owners of
664 Ontario Street N.

Gutted by **fire** in 2022, this attractive **Arts and Crafts** house seemed destined for destruction. But the present owners have brought the house back to its original look and charm. The historic form and window arrangements, the verandah, gable and roof, as well as other elements, have been fully restored.

A 'shout-out' to owners
John Morton and Anne C. McCaughey of
217 Green Street

A very promising restoration is taking place at 217 Green St. The original structure of stone was built about 1840 by Thomas Webster, a butcher who later moved to Grafton. Its present appearance is the work of Toronto architect Mackenzie Waters.



217 Green St., Cobourg



66 Swayne St., Cobourg

66 Swayne Street, c.1855

An early industrial building constructed during the 1850s, probably by Mathew Hobart, a furniture maker. His residence still stands just north of the site at 273 College St. This was his furniture factory. For the next eighty years it was a large-scale bakery before becoming Web's Garage.

Although the façade was altered, most of the building remains intact and sound. There are no plans for the site. The owner wants a cleared site to sell. Council approved the demolition.

For heritage buildings, the longer they remain standing better is the chance of a sympathetic owner buying it. There are heritage measures which state that a heritage building cannot be demolished before a new development is approved. Council has the last say in the matter.



90 Albert St., Cobourg

Development at SE corner of George and Buck Streets

The vacant site on George St., best remembered as Denton's Florists, exists within a heritage district and therefore development should conform to the area's heritage district. What has been proposed for this site is not promising. It has been to Council several times and rejected, yet has come back for considerations with little alterations. As yet, nothing has moved forward for some time.

It is important though to keep watch and be ready to act should the development application move forward. What is built on this site will greatly affect the surrounding area, especially George St., Buck St. and King St. West.

90 Albert Street (and 94 Albert Street)

Some may see nothing substantial in this cottage but it is a very old house that could actually date to the 1830s. On the same property to the rear, there is another early residential dwelling.

The architectural integrity of Albert has been weakened, especially since **93 Albert St.** was destroyed by fire several years ago. 90 Albert St. still retains its original wood clapboard, wood and eave windows. And it could be rehabilitated to its original appearance. It retains many early interior details including a handsome newel post which helps date the dwelling. Such a remodel would help enhance and strengthen the heritage character of Albert St. 94 Albert St. has just been sold. It too is a very early cottage but with new windows and siding. Now the two properties together make an attractive development site.

377 William Street

Long a vacant site, this property appears to be prepared for development. William St. is the major entrance into Cobourg, and this part of the street is largely made up of heritage or potential heritage properties. What is built here can strengthen the heritage character of Wil-

liam St. This does not mean the building has to be a "faux-Heritage" building, nor does it preclude a well-designed Modern building. But we believe it should be in keeping with the size, scale, form and materials of surrounding buildings, creating a visual relationship with William St.

Public Notice

DRAFT PLAN OF SUBDIVISION APPLICATION

Applicant
Joshani Homes, c/o R.W. Bruynson Inc.

Site Location
377 William Street, Cobourg

Proposal
A Draft Plan of Subdivision for the development of ten townhouse lots and four semi-detached lots on this site has been submitted to the Town of Cobourg.

- Ten (10) townhouse lots
- Four (4) semi-detached lots
- Common condominium laneway

Up to 2 stories Residential

540 King Street E.

James Beatty was a prominent farmer and horse breeder who in 1876 built his fine picturesque villa, described as a mixture of Medieval and Gothic. For generationally conservative Cobourg it was unrestrained in its design and ornamental decoration. Beatty also built the magnificent brick barn to the northeast of the house. This barn is exceptionally rare, possibly the only one of its kind in the province. The barn was built over several years.

Signs are posted on the site for a proposed development application. We hope and encourage the Town to ensure these two architecturally and historically important buildings remain part of the development.



Beatty barn, 540 King St. E., Cobourg



James Beatty's residence, built 1876, 540 King St. E., Cobourg

UPCOMING EVENTS

Victoria Hall Volunteers present:

An evening with R.H. Thomson

- **Friday, May 2** at 7:30 pm, Victoria Hall, Cobourg
- The acclaimed actor, author and creator of *The World Remembers – Le Monde se Souvient*, will be talking about *By the Ghost Light: Wars, Memory, and Families*. In this book he looks at his family's history while providing a powerful examination of how we understand war and its aftermath.
- Tickets are \$30, available at Acanthus Interiors, Reader's Nook, Furby House Books, and Victoria Hall box office by phone (905) 372-2210.

ACO-CEN Annual General Meeting

- **Wednesday, May 21** at 7 pm, Victoria Hall, Cobourg. Refreshments will be available.

Cobourg's Architecture and History Lecture Series presents:

'Cobourg – Newport of the North'

- **Monday, May 26**, at 7 pm, Victoria Hall, Cobourg
- Historian and author Rob Mikel presents a talk on Cobourg's history as a famous summer resort.
- Tickets available at Victoria Hall box office, by phone (905) 372-2210, at the door, or by e-transfer: info@acocen.ca.



The Cobourg and East Northumberland newsletter is published regularly for distribution to members.

APRIL 2025 ACO-CEN NEWSLETTER

Primary contributor: Rob Mikel

Editing / Design: Michael Maynard

Proofreading: Dilys Robertson

For membership information or to discuss contribution of articles or photographs to the newsletter, please contact: info@acocen.ca.

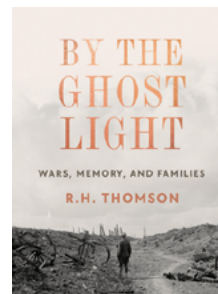


Victoria Hall Volunteers present

An Evening with R.H. Thomson



Actor, Author, and Creator of
The World Remembers –
Le Monde se souvient



talking about his book

**BY THE
GHOST
LIGHT**
WARS, MEMORY,
AND FAMILIES

on Friday, May 2, 2025, at 7.30 pm
at Victoria Hall, Cobourg

Tickets, \$30, available at Acanthus Interiors,
Readers' Nook, Furby House Books, and
the Victoria Hall Box Office | 905-372-2210

www.vhvcobourg.ca