

The Heritage Canada Foundation Launches Its Top 10 Most Endangered Places List!

This is the first of what we intend to be an annual Top 10 List of endangered places in Canada. The list was compiled from those stories and news items that we have been following and reporting on throughout the year. This selection represents only some of the conservation challenges facing hundreds of communities in Canada. Thank you to the many people we consulted during the compilation of this list.

St. Joachim Church, Lakeshore, Ontario

After four long years and one significant legal victory, the members of Save Our Sanctuaries (SOS), a mostly francophone group headed by David Tremblay, have lost neither their commitment nor their fight to save the 121-year-old St. Joachim Church, one of the last remaining sentinels of French-Canadian life in Essex County in Southwestern Ontario.

Fearful that their francophone constitutional rights would be violated with the proposed demolition by the Catholic Diocese of London, SOS took their case to an Ontario Divisional Court panel in May 2003.

In a landmark victory, the ruling put an indefinite hold on the demolition of St. Joachim and ordered that the Town of Lakeshore reconsider SOS's application to designate the property under the Ontario Heritage Act. (It was ruled that the Town had violated the Act when it passed a resolution in March 2002 requiring the owner's consent before a consideration for designation could take place.)

In August of last year, SOS offered to buy the church, proposing that a community co-operative be formed to purchase it and the nearby rectory for \$120,000. In the end, the Town refused and the Diocese continues to argue for the demolition. Hopefully, the second request for designation will be considered after the new heritage committee is formed.

Roundhouse, E&N Railway, Victoria, British Columbia

The 10-stall roundhouse on the Esquimalt to Nanaimo (E&N) Railway dates from 1912, is municipally designated and, with several other red brick, timber truss structures and a turntable, is part of a large industrial site situated in Victoria. (The line was extended in 1887.) The CPR acquired the E&N in 1905, but is using only part of the roundhouse for its operations. Despite pressure from the City to effect repairs, a leaking roof now threatens to cause serious structural damage.

With the weight of the Local Government Act behind it and the support of the Ministry of the Attorney General, the City took its case against the CPR to the B.C. Supreme Court last September. The CPR responded that, as a federally chartered railway, it could not have its operations curbed by means of a municipal maintenance standards statute. The City countered, noting that the portion of the roundhouse being damaged is not involved in present rail operations. Before a final ruling could be made, both parties agreed to settle out of court. Under the agreement, the CPR will spend about \$100,000 on temporary roof repairs to last at least 18 months. This could buy both parties the time needed to find a more permanent solution.

Port Dalhousie, St. Catharines, Ontario



It was headline news when members of the francophone community rallied to save St. Joachim Church.

Only months after it was formally designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, Port Dalhousie's heritage conservation district is being threatened by a development project that would violate the City of St. Catharines' Official Plan, the Port Dalhousie Secondary Plan and the Guidelines for Conservation and Change. If adopted, this project will forever alter the commercial district of this historic harbourfront village along the Welland Canal. A newly formed group, SOS (Save Our Seaport), is now fighting to protect the district many of its members helped to establish.

Last summer, the Port Dalhousie Vitalization Corporation (PVDC) submitted an application to amend the Official Plan and zoning bylaw. It proposes the construction of a 20-storey glass and steel tower and a four-storey block that will result in the demolition of several 19th-century heritage properties owned by the development firm and the relocation of Ontario's smallest jail, built in 1854. Local, regional and national heritage organizations are strongly urging City Council to reject the current application and request that PDVC submit a revised application that respects and preserves the individual heritage buildings of this intact 19th-century canal village streetscape.

5 Place Ville-Marie, Montréal, Quebec

Part of an outstanding example of modern heritage in Quebec and an urban landmark in Montréal, 5 Place Ville-Marie—an 18-storey tower that is part of what was the largest and most complex office development in the world when it was erected in 1962—could undergo a glass wall facelift that will replace its exterior concrete cladding.

Representatives of Heritage Montréal and Docomomo Quebec, a non-profit organization devoted to conserving good examples of modern architecture, are advocating for the repair of the cracks that have appeared in several of the concrete ribs rather than replacing the entire façade in glass. The design of the complex allowed for the sleek aluminium 45-storey tower at the centre of the plaza to rise up from its heavier concrete surroundings—a design that would be seriously compromised by the proposed re-cladding scheme.

A bylaw passed on November 2, 2004, will require the borough's approval before changes to façades or expansions can be made to ten "significant structures" built between 1945 and 1975, including Place Ville-Marie.

Tivoli Theatre, Hamilton, Ontario

As several of Hamilton's heritage buildings stand vacant, conservationists are hoping the preservation of the remains of the city's historic Tivoli Theatre may turn public support and attention towards restoration and adaptive reuse.

Built in stages between 1875 and 1924, the Tivoli complex originally housed a carriage factory, and then a small storefront nickelodeon in 1907. It opened in 1924 as a combination vaudeville and movie house. In 1995, it became a venue for live stage shows. On June 29, a portion of the once-majestic, Second Empire-style theatre's south wall and roof collapsed, forcing engineers to respond to its structural instability. The City took over the property to secure it and, in doing so, removed a number of elements including the third floor, the front wall, the cupola and light bulb-encrusted Tivoli marquee.

The Sniderman family, as owners of the building, have applied for a permit to demolish everything that remains, including the 750-seat



Protestors—young and old—gathered last July to fight the demolition of yet another historic landmark in Hamilton's downtown core.
[PHOTO: Hamilton Spectator]

theatre auditorium, which has provincial heritage status. Hamilton's Heritage Committee is still hoping to preserve the auditorium. The Committee is also considering asking the Snidermans to sell the theatre to the City at a minimal cost. A fundraising campaign could then be created to pay for repairs and restoration work.

Woodward's Department Store,
Vancouver, British Columbia

Empty for several years and regarded as the key to revitalizing Vancouver's troubled Eastside, the City purchased the Woodward's Department Store (1903-1908) from the provincial government in 2003 and immediately sought submissions for its redevelopment. Although a designated heritage building, the Request for Proposals did not contain specific requirements for its retention, stating only that proposals should "[take] advantage of heritage opportunities" while providing a minimum of 100 social housing units. By mid-2004, three finalists had been chosen.

From a heritage perspective, the Concert/Holborn proposal, which was publicly endorsed by Heritage Vancouver, most respected the historic fabric and character of the building and was most sensitive to rise neighbourhood. After public adopted the Westbank Projects retention of the architectural the historic Hastings Street point tower that will dominate the Woodward's symbolic "W" as the

finalize its deal with Westbank until public more time to influence the this historically significant



Since it closed in 1993, the block-long building has remained vacant.
[PHOTO: Courtesy of the heritage society of british columbia]



The Woodward's Department Store on Hastings Street as it appeared in 1905.
[PHOTO: Courtesy of the walker/eveleigh family]

the integrity of the low- to mid-consultation, however, the City proposal, which calls for minimal features, the "deconstruction" of frontage and the addition of a streetscape and eclipse new de facto landmark. The City is not expected to the summer, which gives the final redevelopment design of landmark.

Immigration Hall,

Edmonton, Alberta

Edmonton's Immigration Hall sits abandoned and decaying. Located at 10534 100th Street, the handsome brick building could well be a smaller version of Pier 21, now a national historic site, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Constructed in 1930 to replace the original 1890s wood-framed Hall, it was designed by Dominion Architect T. W. Fuller and solidly built of brick and reinforced concrete. Just three Immigration Halls constructed after the First World War are still standing in Canada. It is thought that only the now-defunct Winnipeg Immigration Hall (1906-07) was built on a larger scale and of comparable solid construction.

The building began operation in 1931 during the Great Depression. Its real test came at the end of the Second World War, when the discovery of oil near Leduc triggered yet another wave of immigration to Alberta. In 1954, a new addition was added to the west of the building.

The building is now owned by a numbered company based in Calgary, and has been on the market for months. It languishes, a target for vandalism and graffiti, a chapter in Edmonton's past limping to what could be a sad conclusion of extinction.

**South House, Rothesay Netherwood School,
New Brunswick**

The 135-year-old South House is not only the oldest building on the campus of Rothesay Netherwood School but also one of the oldest surviving heritage buildings in the town of Rothesay, N.B., itself. (Its sister building, North House, was demolished in 2001.) Resplendent in white gingerbread trim, the cream-coloured converted mansion with Gothic windows, used as an administration building for some years, now represents one of the most important pieces of the school's and the province's history.

The school's Board of Governors had voted in favour of demolition in order to make room for a new administration building. Several community groups and members of the alumni have risen in defence of the building, including the Town of Rothesay's Area Heritage Preservation Review Board and The Rothesay Area Heritage Trust. Every effort has gone into having the Board reconsider their decision. Many members of the alumni have pledged their support—financial and otherwise—to help restore and maintain this significant heritage building.



Part of South House and grounds as seen on the campus of Rothesay Netherwood School.
[PHOTO: Valerie Streeter]

**The Wright-Scott House,
Gatineau, Quebec**

Built in 1852 for Philemon Wright, the founder of Hull, this historic stone residence is one of the last in the City of Gatineau (Hull sector) to include its original surroundings. Members of the Wright family who resided there include Nancy Louisa Wright and her husband John Scott, the first Mayor of Ottawa. The current owner is planning to build 20 new houses on the grounds. The reasons for designation listed by the former City of Hull include the exceptional quality of the house's natural environment. Local residents and heritage organizations rallied against the proposed development, which threatens this unique cultural landscape. Several historic buildings in the area, including la ferme Columbia and the Château Monsarrat, have lost their original settings to development.

Although the city's Urban Advisory Committee originally approved the development, the City recently

decided to put the project on hold to allow for further study. The new urban development plan is supposed to favour the preservation and enhancement of significant landscapes in both natural and urban settings. Based on this commitment, the Conseil des monuments et sites du Québec (CMSQ) has called upon the City of Gatineau to protect the heritage integrity of the site by prohibiting any future development.

Harding House,
Regina, Saskatchewan

Designated under the provincial Heritage Property Act in 1980, Harding House is one of five Collegiate Gothic-style heritage buildings located on a 20-acre tract of prime urban land formerly owned by the Anglican Archdiocese of Qu'Appelle. It sits apart from the four-building enclave on the site. All are of red brick, built between 1912 and 1926 and, with one exception, all are leased.

The site is currently owned by the Saskatchewan government and has been for sale for more than two years at an estimated price of \$3 million. A major U.S. provider of senior citizens care facilities is negotiating a plan for the development of the entire property. To date, the plan does not appear to include the retention of Harding House.

As of late December, the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation was studying the developer's proposal for the property. No decision has yet been made.

According to the Historic Places Initiative Register "...the consistency of appearance makes the complex one of the finest groupings of educational/ecclesiastical buildings in the province. Complementing the dignified nature of the buildings is the site plan."