

Masonry Restoration to HCF Headquarters

Built in 1905, the original five limestone front steps leading to the entrance of HCF's headquarters at 5 Blackburn Avenue in Ottawa were in varying stages of deterioration. Years of salt and moisture penetration had caused the stones to darken in appearance and horizontal fissures to have opened along the bedding planes. Only the top step remained in its original one piece. In addition, several of the stones in the two abutment walls had shifted badly; others were cracked; while one had deteriorated beyond repair.

Because the property is designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, HCF applied to the City of Ottawa for a matching restoration grant of up to \$5,000 to carry out the job.

Keystone Masonry undertook the restoration and replacement work. The hard modern masonry cement mortar was removed and replaced with a softer heritage lime mortar to help transfer the moisture out of the cavities of the abutment walls. The shifted stones were humoured back into position and those with severe cracking were repaired using stainless steel pins set in epoxy. The one severely deteriorated limestone block was replaced with a new one, hand finished to match the originals.

The steps themselves were dismantled and replaced with five new quarried limestone slabs, cut and hand finished to replicate the original bush-hammered appearance of the steps. The end result is a welcome improvement both visually and in terms of safety!



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