



HCF's 2012 Top Ten Most Endangered Places List

The Heritage Canada Foundation released its eighth annual Top Ten Most Endangered Places List on June 27, 2012.

The selection—presented here from the West to East Coast—was compiled from the results of HCF's call for nominations as well as those stories and news items followed throughout the year.

Riverview Hospital – 2601 Lougheed Highway, Coquitlam, BC – EXTRAORDINARY GREATER VANCOUVER CULTURAL LANDSCAPE THREATENED WITH INSENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The B.C. Government is rushing the redevelopment plans on the site leaving advocates concerned for its future.



Why it matters

Established in 1904, the Riverview Hospital is a provincially-owned psychiatric facility and an extraordinary cultural landscape comprised of 244 acres and 80 buildings (including 5 massive brick wards) on a hillside overlooking the Fraser River. For most of the 20th century, Riverview was at the forefront of North American mental health theory and practice. Originally called The Hospital for the Mind and Essondale, it was developed as a community where the mentally ill could live purposeful lives in their own sanctuary. A vital part of the therapy included voluntary horticultural work, food production, and building maintenance. Housing over 4,300 patients at its peak, by 2009 only 250 active beds remained and this was reduced to about 70 by 2012.



Riverview's grand designed landscape remains highly significant with public recreational use long important for area residents. The grounds housed Western Canada's first botanical garden—an arboretum featuring over 1,800 mature trees from around the world—and incorporated natural meadows and watercourses. The value of Riverview also lies in its high-quality architecture, orchestrated for many decades with remarkable consistency in scale and materials. The entire

Riverview site is included on Municipal and Provincial heritage registries, but carries no formal protection. In 2009 an effort to declare the site a National Historic Site was blocked by the provincial government.

Why it's endangered

By the early 1990s, with the closure of Riverview programs and the selling off of land parcels, the future of Riverview had become a source of concern for Coquitlam residents who had come to treasure its park-like setting, gardens, architectural heritage, and history. In 2005, the City of Coquitlam set out its position calling for the lands to be kept in public ownership and for the protection of its botanical and architectural heritage. In July 2007, the province announced its intention to develop Riverview to



accommodate 7,000 units or more of high-rise market housing, as well as social housing and residences for the mentally ill. Negative reaction was swift. The City of Coquitlam reaffirmed its position that the land should remain publicly owned and market housing taken off the table, and a petition calling for protection of Riverview quickly garnered over 13,000 signatures. The provincial government later withdrew its proposal.

Where it stands

The B.C. Government is currently preparing its own Heritage Conservation Plan for Riverview which will guide development on the property. When this process is completed (in September 2012) redevelopment plans for the site will be finalized. Made wary by the province's previous redevelopment proposals, Riverview supporters are concerned by the Province's apparently swift decision-making timelines. In May, a series of open houses to gather heritage feedback were held on very short notice leaving many residents concerned that the process was being rushed.

Public and Coquitlam Council support for the protection of the Riverview lands remains strong with many groups—including the Riverview Horticultural Centre Society and the Riverview Hospital Historical Society—actively advocating on its behalf. Surrounding municipalities (Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam and Port Moody), the B.C. Union of Municipalities, and the B.C. Chambers of Commerce have all passed resolutions calling for the preservation of the Riverview site.

Paramount Theatre – 46147 Yale Road, Chilliwack, BC – HISTORIC CITY-OWNED THEATRE FACES DESTRUCTION DESPITE YOUTHFUL GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN

11th hour community group plans to save historic cinema, but faces scrutiny from skeptical City Council.

Why it matters

Opened in June 1949, this large movie theatre in the heart of downtown Chilliwack has become an important historic landmark, one of few remaining in the district, and a key community gathering place. Architecturally, the cinema declares its roots in the International style—characterized by vertical and horizontal lines with little ornamentation—with traces of Art Deco influences in its signage and fluted façade. Solidly built, the movie

house features laminated firewalls and is constructed of reinforced concrete and 60 tons of structural steel. It is listed on the City of Chilliwack's Heritage inventory, but it is not a designated heritage site.

Why it's endangered

After operating as a movie house continuously for over 60 years, the Paramount ceased operations in November 2010. The owner, Landmark Cinemas, gave the theatre to the city saying it was a gift to the people of Chilliwack for all their years of support. The theatre has been vacant and unheated ever since, and reportedly requires a new boiler and roof. In February 2012, a city staff report made it clear that despite an extensive year-long effort to find someone willing to redevelop the property only two unsatisfactory proposals had come forward. Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation (CEPCO) then offered to demolish the Paramount at no cost at the same time as the adjacent (and structurally interconnected) Ewert Building, which suffered from environmental contamination. On March 6, in response to a growing public outcry spearheaded by the newly formed Save the Chilliwack Paramount Theatre working group, Council voted to give community groups until June 21 to develop a new business proposal to rehabilitate and run the theatre, while reiterating there was no appetite to put City money into the project. It is estimated that \$300,000 will be needed just to open the theatre, not to mention ongoing operating funding and any upgrades.



Photo: Desmond Devnich - Downtown Chilliwack BIA



Where it stands

The Save the Chilliwack Paramount Theatre group submitted its business proposal to the City on June 21 and is currently awaiting a response from staff and council. The proposal included a plan to transform the Paramount into a single-screen, repertory-type theatre offering 600 seats for patrons to screen vintage, independent, alternative or non-mainstream films. In recent months, the campaign to save the theatre has seen a surge of interest from a broad spectrum of residents—youth, seniors, business owners, and the arts community—and garnered lots of media coverage. Offers have poured in to assess the building, donate electrical expertise, or create artistic renderings, among other in-kind services. More than 100 Chilliwack storefronts are sporting posters saying, “We support community efforts to preserve our landmark theatre.” A Save A Seat fundraising campaign has also been launched and has raised pledges of over \$10,000.

Barron Building – 610 8 Avenue SW, Calgary, AB – BIRTHPLACE OF CALGARY'S OIL INDUSTRY FACES DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT

Mired in legal wrangles and stalled development plans, this high-profile Calgary heritage building sits vacant, derelict, and on the brink.

Why it matters

The landmark Barron Building in downtown Calgary—constructed between 1949-1951—is one of its finest examples of modern architecture and has historically played a crucial role in solidifying the city’s position as the centre of Alberta’s oil industry. Clad in buff-coloured brick, Tyndall limestone, and polished black granite, the 11-storey Art Moderne office tower designed by prominent local architect Jack Cawston also houses the two-screen Uptown Theatre (the last historic movie house in the downtown core), which until recently played an important role in the city’s cultural scene. Despite Edmonton’s proximity to the 1947 Leduc oil strike, the Barron Building’s first-class office space quickly drew oil industry occupants, sparking a surge in Calgary office construction that rapidly made it the undisputed centre of the petroleum industry.



Why it’s endangered

In November 2011, the current owner—a numbered company associated with private landlord Strategic Group, which purchased the building in 2007—shut off water services after pipes burst. The last remaining tenant, the Uptown Theatre, was forced to cease operations due to lack of water and heating. The owner has filed a number of demolition applications to remove the theatre marquee and alter other heritage features of the building over the last few years, but there has been no move to rehabilitate and redevelop the building. The property is also caught up in numerous lawsuits, including one involving the theatre marquee. Despite its extraordinary heritage significance, the Barron Building does not have any heritage protection. While it is on Calgary’s Inventory of Evaluated Heritage Sites, it has never received heritage designation, as this requires the owner’s consent.

Where it stands

Today, the empty Barron Building sits as a depressing symbol of demolition by neglect: windows are broken and doors unsecured, the roof is damaged, it is not being heated and water pipes have burst, and architectural features from the penthouse have been removed. The building’s semi-derelict circumstances have further galvanized the call for a solution beyond the arts and heritage community. There has been extensive ongoing media coverage of the building’s plight and a “Save the Uptown” Facebook group has quickly gathered over 1,000 members.

École Connaught Community School – 2124 Elphinstone Street, Regina, SK – REGINA’S OLDEST SCHOOL SET FOR DEMOLITION DESPITE NEIGHBOURHOOD OUTCRY

Rehab of well-loved historic school is being scuttled by School Board and Provincial funding formula bias for new construction.

Why it matters

Built in 1912, Connaught School is Regina's oldest school building and highly significant to the city's educational history. Designed by prominent local architect J.M. Puntin, the two-storey brick school's design turned away from the ecclesiastical Gothic Revival style for a "secular" classical design, which served as a prototype for other city schools. It features wide multi-purpose hallways, high ceilings, ample large windows, broad staircases, good ventilation and extra-wide classrooms. Also on site is a round auditorium designed by architect Clifford Wiens in the 1960s. Connaught is the birthplace of Saskatchewan's community schools movement and was a pioneer in dual English-French education, established in 1975. For many years it was Canada's only dual-track community school. Today it is a viable and growing school community with 330 students and projected to reach 425 by 2018.



The school is also an important landmark in the historic Cathedral neighbourhood. It bookends the city's most significant and high profile heritage corridor. It occupies the intersection of the Cathedral Area's two main thoroughfares (13th Avenue and Elphinstone Street) and sits directly opposite Connaught Library (1930) also designed by Puntin. The school does not have a heritage designation. It has, however, been named in the

Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Cathedral Area as a significant heritage property that should be rehabilitated and restored wherever possible.

Why it's endangered

A 2010 engineering report stated that Connaught was near the limits of safe occupancy and that a plan for repair or replacement must be in place within five years. A visual engineering inspection found the structure highly compromised: there was floor heave, foundation movement, and cracks in the roof slabs,

some precipitated by the removal of architectural features like the exterior cornice. The engineering firm provided an estimate of \$6.25 million to stabilize the building. Based on this, consultant James Youk of P3Architecture provided two cost estimates: \$19 million for demolition and replacement, and \$23 million for restoration and large scale renovation to modify the interior to align with the latest pedagogical practices. Mr. Youk pointed out that the Ministry of Education will likely support the cheaper replacement option. Another complicating threat is a strict provincial funding formula that calculates square metres per student, and Connaught's generous rooms and hallways work against it. Finally, and most importantly, Regina Public Schools has publicly stated that it is solely in the business of education and that it does not see a connection between education, heritage conservation and neighbourhood planning. Board officials have also stated that heritage schools are incompatible with modern education techniques because the spaces are too inflexible.

Where it stands

In May 2012, the Regina Public School Board fast-tracked a series of consultative meetings that many participants thought seemed geared toward gaining community support for demolition. This was evidenced by a



presentation that showed only new buildings as potential examples. At a public meeting on June 19, P3 Architecture presented the results of their public consultation and it showed overwhelming community support for the option to retain and rehabilitate the school. This report has now been sent to Regina Public Schools for deliberation, which will in turn forward a dollar request to the Ministry of Education. There is the expectation that a decision to renovate or demolish will happen quickly and neighbourhood residents are very concerned. In a similar recent case regarding Scott Collegiate, another historic Regina school, the Ministry stated the province would not pay an additional \$2 million to make renovation feasible, leading to a plan to demolish the building.

Hamilton Education Centre – 100 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON – MODERNIST ARCHITECTURAL LANDMARK HEADING FOR LANDFILL

A demolition permit has been issued to Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board—a condition of its sale to McMaster University—in order to make way for the university’s new \$85 million health campus.

Why it matters

Thought to be Hamilton architect Joseph Singer’s signature work, this elegant modernist 8-storey building partly clad in white marble with elongated arched windows and library in the round is considered by many as the city’s best example of mid-century Modern architecture. Opened in 1967, the Education Centre was built as a monument to public education and is located opposite City Hall on prominent Civic Square land donated by the City as a way to convince the Board to remain downtown. Keeping the building from landfill preserves an important piece of Hamilton’s history, respects the civic component of the site, and makes ecological and environmental sense.



Photo: Joe Mielko

Why it’s endangered

On May 2, after months of debate, the City issued a demolition permit to the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), which was part of the condition of sale McMaster University imposed to allow for the unfettered development of its new health campus on the site. Although the university’s plans are welcome in the downtown, it appears that no consideration was given to developing both the ample parking lot and lands on the



Photo: Joe Mielko

Education Centre property, or on any of the acres of vacant lots in the city’s core. With McMaster declaring that the building footprint does not fit its expansion purposes—despite it being deliberately designed to allow for future expansion—no real feasibility studies have been undertaken on how the building could be integrated into the design.

Where it stands

With the demolition permit a condition of sale, McMaster has made it clear that it is not considering any preservation plans for the building. And although the Municipal Heritage Committee urged the City in 2008 to consider the heritage value of the

building in its future renewal plans for the area, council backed the university’s demolition plans when it committed \$47 million to the health campus project. On May 15, +VG Architects submitted its “HWDSB

Education Centre Architectural Record” report to the Board that includes an appendix listing the firm’s recommendation that nine “features of interest” be incorporated into the new Education Centre, to be built outside the downtown. Objectors to the building’s demolition have made it clear that they are not against the health campus development. Efforts have been focused on “Adding Without Subtracting” for reasons of fiscal, environmental as well as heritage stewardship. McMaster has informed HWDSB that the building must be vacated by August.

Ontario Place – 955 Lakeshore Blvd, Toronto, ON – MODERNIST CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AT RISK

An internationally renowned modernist urban waterfront park has been partially shuttered with no legal protection for its heritage elements, pending a major redevelopment.

Why it matters

A considerable engineering feat, Ontario Place was a futuristic architectural marvel when it opened in 1971. It was designed by one of Canada’s most notable landscape architects, Michael Hough and RAIC gold medalist, architect Eberhard Zeidler. The values of Ontario Place survive in its continued recreational use, park-like waterfront setting, the Cinesphere (a spherical triodetic dome housing Canada’s first IMAX theatre), and its monumental interconnected mast-hung pavilions with bridges and platforms suspended over the water. Together they formed a singular cultural landscape that express the avant-garde architectural ideas of the time, including diverse influences such as Archigram, the Metabolists, Pop Art and Expo 67.



Why it’s endangered

In early 2012, citing financial concerns and declining attendance, the provincial government announced the immediate partial closing of Ontario Place pending a major redevelopment to be completed by 2017. An appointed advisory panel responsible for leading the rehabilitation is taking a “paper is blank” approach where



“nothing is off the table.” Without any statutory protection, Ontario Place’s unique cultural landscape with its iconic structures and interconnected design components—that led to its listing on the Docomomo International Selection of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement—is at risk.

Where it stands

In early June, the advisory panel recommended against using the site for a new Toronto casino. The province intends to begin an international competition later this

year on future plans for Ontario Place with a focus on commercial, retail, residential, recreation and entertainment uses. Heritage Toronto and the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario have raised the alarm about the potential risks to this important cultural landscape, and the “Save Ontario Place” Facebook group has been growing daily.

Bala Falls Cultural Landscape – 1044 Bala Falls Road, Township of Muskoka Lakes, ON – GREEN ENERGY INTERSECTS WITH NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION INTERESTS

A sensitive green energy project that could destroy the landmark Bala Falls is pushing ahead without an individual Environmental Assessment.

Why it matters

Carved out of the Canadian Shield, Bala Falls is located at the west end of Lake Muskoka (approximately two hours north of Toronto) where the lake's waters spill into Moon River and eventually into Georgian Bay. Part of an important cultural landscape, the falls are a natural physical landmark that define Bala's identity and which are central to its recreational and tourism-based economy. The historically important Portage Landing on the north side of Burgess Island has been a portage point for First Nations and later for the community of Bala, tourists, YM-YWCA campers and cottagers. The landmark boat livery business, Purks Place—the only building ever located on the Portage Landing—has operated continuously since 1906. It is historically interconnected with the portage landing on the west of Burgess Island for water access to Moon River. The only other structure on Burgess Island is the Stone Church, designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.



Photo: Sean Marshall

Why it's endangered

In December 2004, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources released an RFP for the development of a hydroelectric generating station on approximately one hectare of Crown land adjacent to Bala's north dam as part of the province's green energy program. Swift River Energy Ltd (SREL) proposes to build a 4-5 megawatt run-of-river water power facility that will include:

- the excavation of an approach channel immediately above Bala's North dam;
- the installation of an intake and a concrete powerhouse structure abutting the north Bala falls;
- a tailrace channel to return water to the Moon River some 40 metres from the base of the North dam's waterfall.

Community concerns are focused on the conservation of the natural features of the falls central to Bala's identity and its natural resources (water and water flow, foraging and spawning habitat for fish and invertebrate species, and identified heritage trees) as well as its cultural features. The location of the proposed water intake means that no persons will be able to access the area of Portage Landing and Purks Place for swimming, boating or portaging. Concern is also focused on potential damage to the Stone Church related to blasting shock and vibration.



Where it stands

Concerned about inconsistent information, the mayor and a hundred citizens' request that the Environmental Scanning Process be

elevated to an individual and independent Environmental Assessment was turned down by the Ministry of the Environment. In May, that decision was upheld by the Minister, Jim Bradley. With that news, SREL abandoned a possible Option 2 plan that located the powerhouse some 100 feet south of the north Bala falls, and issued an addendum that the original option will be pursued with a deadline for comments set at June 29. A request for an extension was denied.

Église du Très-Saint-Nom-de-Jésus – 4215 rue Adam, Montreal, QC – PRAYING FOR A MIRACLE

The church's predicament underscores the pressures exerted on places of worship by declining numbers of congregants and high maintenance and restoration costs. A dedicated group of concerned citizens is struggling against an unwilling archdiocese and reluctant provincial government.

Why it matters

This massive church built in 1903-1906 was long the heart and soul of the working-class Maisonneuve-Hochelaga district of Montreal, known once as the Pittsburgh of Canada. Built with the intention of becoming a cathedral, the Roman and Byzantine inspired stone structure with copper roofing is marked by a light ornamental treatment and two imposing steeples. The church houses two Casavant Frères organs dating from 1914. The main one, restored in 1985, is one of the largest and most important pipe organs in North America. With its grand presbytery, today converted to meet community needs, the church remains a key element in the heart of an institutional urban core that has maintained its character and place in community life.



Why it's endangered

The church closed its doors to its congregation in June 2009, when the archbishop of Montreal declared that the archdiocese could no longer assume the \$100,000 in annual heating and maintenance costs or the cost of repairing the masonry. Closed and barricaded, the church has been suffering a steady decline. In September of 2010, the Montreal Fire Department declared the building a danger to public safety. Although an active group of concerned citizens, the Comité de sauvegarde, had been working with church representatives to find a solution to save the church, the archbishop short-circuited their efforts when he declared his intention to give the organs to any interested church in Quebec, as long as the estimated \$700,000 moving costs are paid. The archdiocese has also proposed demolishing the church to make way for public housing. The church's heritage classification is a level "C" and the provincial Minister of Culture has refused to provide emergency funding for the building or its world-class organ.

Where it stands

The Comité de sauvegarde is looking to raise funds to help stabilize the church and protect the organ to buy enough time to consider possible conversion projects, including its possible use as a concert hall, organ museum or children's library.

Zion Baptist Church – 27 Parade St., Yarmouth, Nova Scotia — CLOCK IS TICKING FOR IMPORTANT TOWN LANDMARK

A part of the Yarmouth community for nearly 115 years, this unique church is in need of costly structural repairs. Although City Council has denied the church's application to deregister the building under the *Municipal Heritage Property Act*—to enable its possible demolition—the legislation will only protect it for a period of three years.

Why it matters

Built in 1895-1896 for the congregation of the First Baptist Church in Yarmouth (originally located on Main Street) and designed by local architect James E Huestis, Zion Baptist Church, with its irregular multi-level massing, is an impressive example of the Queen Anne revival style. An important place of worship in Yarmouth for over a century, the church continues to be used for weekly services, bible studies, Sunday school by a congregation of 50 and as a place for community meetings. The distinctive exterior features include the asymmetrical façade with recessed entrances, large round- arched stained glass windows, landmark bell tower and large gabled roof areas. The church was registered under the *Municipal Heritage Property Act* (MHPA) in 2002.



Why it's endangered

The exterior south wall and bell tower are suffering structural damage associated with water penetration and freezing and thawing. Due to miscommunication the Trustees never formally applied for the provincial funding support they are entitled to under the Act. Although minor repairs have been done, the congregation is unable to afford the full repair costs estimated at \$300,000 or the estimated longer-term costs of \$700,000. In September, 2011, the church requested permission to demolish the building, which would require

City Council to first approve its deregistration. In a letter to Council, Pastor Brian Wallace states that although the congregation does not want to see the building torn down, deregistration would give them the freedom to do what they want.

Where it stands

In September, the application to deregister was submitted but was refused. Under the MHPA, this refusal allows for a period of three years for Council and the community to work with the Trustees to develop an alternative plan from the date of application (September 30, 2011). If nothing can be accomplished in that time, the building can be demolished. The building is abutted by the Yarmouth County Museum and it is suggested in the report that the church could be incorporated into something related to the museum, or it could be used as an anchor facility for the Collins Heritage Conservation District.



The congregation and the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) have met to discuss options for the building but nothing has been accomplished to date. In April, Council turned down HAC's recommendation that the city fund a structural engineering study to help determine a future course for the building. The community does not want to see this building leave the landscape of Yarmouth, but time is pressing to find a solution.

Canada's Lighthouses—IS IT LIGHTS OUT FOR CANADA'S LIGHTHOUSES?

Local communities left holding the financial bag as federal government unloads hundreds of "surplus" heritage lighthouses.

Why it matters

Lighthouses form an integral part of Canada's identity, culture and history. Beyond their traditional role as navigational aids, lighthouses are monuments to Canada's proud maritime heritage and important for the economic and social sustainability of the communities they are tied to. Most lighthouses are held by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, with a few held by Parks Canada Agency.

Why they're endangered

In 2008, through the efforts of Senators, Members of Parliament, heritage organizations and volunteer citizens, the *Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act* (HLP A) was passed into law promising protection to these vulnerable federal heritage sites. In May 2010, however, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) declared surplus virtually all its lighthouses, numbering close to 1,000. This action effectively emasculated the HLP A and shifted the responsibility for lighthouse protection entirely onto local communities

The Act allows lighthouses that are declared "surplus to operational requirements" to be designated under the HLP A only if a person or body submits a written commitment to buy or otherwise acquire them and protect their heritage character in the event that they are designated. This acknowledges the reality that many lighthouses are no longer serving as aids to navigation, as well as the reality that DFO has no interest in continuing to invest in these structures.



Canadians had until May 29, 2012 to nominate lighthouses that matter to them for designation under the *Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act*. In the end, 347 lighthouses were nominated for designation. However, almost all of them will require a proposal from an organization or group willing to acquire and invest in them. While many communities may be prepared to make offers to acquire or purchase their local lighthouses, not all lighthouses are easily accessible and maintainable, or surrounded by an active community. Many are

complex, remote structures that need regular investment and special equipment: for example, Race Rocks (BC), Christian Island (ON), Gannet Rock (NB), Sambro Island (NS) and Cap-des-Rosiers (QC). This leaves the fate of these lighthouses, many of them unquestionably iconic and historic, in limbo without help from outside funding.



Photo : Chris Mills

Where things stand

In its March 2011 *Report on the Implementation of the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act*, the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans recommended that the Government of Canada provide seed funding to help launch a comprehensive campaign dedicated to raising funds for the restoration and preservation of Canada's remaining historic lighthouses. HCF launched a nation-wide petition in support of this funding call in January 2012 and has since garnered thousands of signatures from across Canada. In April, HCF launched an endowed fund providing grants for the repair and conservation of lighthouses on Nova Scotia's Fundy Shore. In recent weeks, HCF met with the Fisheries Minister's senior staff to discuss the opportunity for the Department to help fund HCF's fundraising campaign to specifically support communities taking on responsibility for heritage lighthouses.