

Over 300 people attended the Awards Banquet in the Crystal Ballroom at the Fairmont Empress Hotel in Victoria, British Columbia on October 13, 2011.

City of Peterborough, Ontario

Founded 150 years ago on the shores of the Otonabee River in the Kawarthas area of southern Ontario, the City of Peterborough has emerged as a national leader in heritage conservation.

Peterborough is somewhat unique in that it remains an independent urban centre, relatively free from the development pressures other towns and cities in Canada have faced over the past decade. This independence has enabled the city to protect its heritage and history, and given it the opportunity to embark on many major initiatives in heritage conservation.



It was the loss of historic buildings in the post-WWII decade of 'progress' that galvanized a heritage movement in Peterborough, placing it at the forefront of municipalities that treasure and protect their heritage. For more than 40 years, the municipality has demonstrated a profound political commitment to its heritage resources, enacting by-laws and enabling legislation wherever possible to create a range of preservation tools.

In 1975, Peterborough was only the second city in the province to take advantage of powers conferred under the newly created *Ontario Heritage Act* to appoint a Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC), a natural extension of the Peterborough Historical Society's Old Buildings Committee. Thirty-six years later the City boasts 109 heritage designated properties, from the Sisters of St. Joseph convent to simple labourer's cottages. There is currently a waiting list of homeowners seeking to have their buildings designated.

City Council has used designation to successfully halt demolition. The Cox Terrace National Historic Site is a case in point. Its designation at the eleventh hour in 1986 eventually led to an extensive restoration project that the Heritage Canada Foundation honoured with a National Achievement Award. The City also holds easements on four designated landmarks and dozens of conservation agreements are registered on title for buildings in the Heritage Property Tax Relief Program.

Peterborough has a powerful track record of providing financial incentives to stimulate preservation and rehabilitation. In 2001 the Provincial government passed legislation enabling on-going tax relief for heritage property owners, ranging from 10 percent to 40

percent of property taxes levied. The City embraced the opportunity with the creation of the Heritage Property Tax Relief Program (HPTRP), offering the full 40 percent to residential owners and 20 percent to commercial owners. The Program has stimulated investment in the conversion of heritage buildings in the city's historic core and studies have found that inclusion in the HPTRP resulted in increased building permit revenues and assessed property value increases for the City.

The Heritage Preservation Office (HPO) was established soon afterward and permanent staff hired to promote heritage awareness in the city and administer programs related to conservation.

Over the years City Council has made heritage a focus of corporate planning initiatives. These include the Municipal Cultural Plan, Sustainable Peterborough, the Central Area Master Plan, the Little Lake Master Plan and the Official Plan update. The City has also acquired a number of heritage properties to ensure their protection, including the ornate Morrow Building (1879) in 1995 and the landmark Market Hall and Clock Tower (1890) in 1999.



Cox Terrace National Historic Site

The commitment to heritage resources goes beyond historic buildings and the HPO. In 2010 \$50,000 was invested in the restoration of the nationally significant Cenotaph by Walter Allward, and \$200,000 in renovations to the Peterborough Museum and Archives' programming and exhibit spaces. The Engineering Division has overseen the restoration of several bridges: the ornamental 1888 Pagoda

Footbridge, the Beaux Arts Inverlea Bridge and the internationally recognized Hunter Street Bridge, now undergoing a \$14 million restoration. This year, Peterborough is starting a multi-phased rehabilitation of the 1953 City Hall and its 1911 Carnegie Library Annex, both designated heritage buildings. In addition, the City waives development charges in the historic core for the sensitive redevelopment of existing buildings.

Peterborough is also committed to supporting heritage organizations through loans, grants and a reduction in property taxes. The Peterborough Historical Society, the Market Hall, the Hutchison House Museum, the Canadian Canoe Museum, Doors Open

Peterborough, and others, have been able to continue to invest in a wide range of programs designed to raise awareness of the wealth of cultural and historical resources in the city.

The City of Peterborough's Official Plan supports heritage conservation by mandating the creation of a Heritage Implementation Plan, encouraging the passage of designations under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and supporting the creation of conservation districts. The draft Community Improvement Plan includes a façade improvement grant program and a plan for phased property assessment increases for the revitalization of heritage buildings. A sign control bylaw regulates building signage in the historic core, prohibiting back-lit box signs and encouraging pedestrian-oriented hanging signs by waving encroachment fees.

Arts and culture have also played an important role in safeguarding Peterborough's rich history. In 1967, the Peterborough Museum and Archives was built and is now a Class 'A' collection institution. This is one of only a few community museums nationwide to hold such a distinction.

The City of Peterborough was recognized for its unwavering dedication to preserving its history in 2010 with the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Community Leadership by the Ontario Heritage Trust.

The steadfast commitment to paying off and rehabilitation of heritage buildings is no longer a question, but a given. The City of Peterborough boasts more than half a century of dedicated service to the preservation of its heritage. The momentum of this determination is only growing as the City commits great effort, energy and resources to making its heritage a primary engine for improving quality of life and building prosperity for future generations.

The City of Peterborough was nominated by resident and heritage supporter, Martha Ann Kidd, in partnership with the Peterborough Historical Society.

Backgrounder: The Prince of Wales Prize

In keeping with His Royal Highness' commitment to architecture, the environment, and inner-city renewal, The Prince of Wales agreed to lend his title to the creation in 1999 of a prize to be awarded annually to the government of a municipality which has demonstrated its strong and sustained commitment to the conservation of its historic places. The local government must have a record of supporting heritage preservation through such means as regulation, policies, funding and exemplary stewardship. The nomination must provide evidence that heritage properties in the given municipality have improved over a period of time. Previous recipients of the Prince of Wales Prize

include Markham, Ontario (2000), Victoria, British Columbia (2001), Saint John, New Brunswick (2002), Québec, Quebec (2003), Perth, Ontario (2004), Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (2005), Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia and St. John's, Newfoundland (2007), Aurora, Ontario (2008), Edmonton, Alberta (2009) and Oakville, Ontario (2010).

The award consists of a metal plaque and a scroll, as well as a flag or pennant to be flown outside the winning municipality's headquarters and/or placed on permanent display. The Prince of Wales Prize logo must be displayed on the homepage of the municipality's website.