

Editor's Note

Arguably, the three greatest impediments to the rehabilitation of heritage buildings faced by developers are finding financing, obtaining insurance and complying with building codes designed to deal solely with new construction. In light of this reality, mainstream developers still tend to regard heritage property negatively, and the historic elements of the building itself inevitably become the reasons cited for its demise. Blame the victim!

Increasingly, however, we are seeing creative entrepreneurs who are willing to go the extra mile to obtain a unique end-product that can deliver extraordinary economic and cultural returns on investment. In recognition of these efforts, last fall, we bestowed our first ever HCF Corporate Prize on the Woodcliffe Corporation of Toronto for their restoration and rehabilitation of the former North Toronto CPR Station, now the flagship outlet of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario. The story of that project is our first feature, beginning on page 4.

Unfortunately, until owners of heritage property can benefit from the kinds of financial incentives that amendments to the federal tax regime could offer, impediments to its rehabilitation will prevail. The risk aversion factor associated with the insurance industry is a case in point. Over the past two to three years, increasing numbers of homeowners have come up against an industry that was suddenly reluctant to insure historic properties. In response to the questions raised in past issues of this magazine and at our annual conference last year, the Insurance Bureau of Canada has submitted an article (see page 25) on how the industry is now working to make it easier to obtain insurance for your heritage property. If you would like to comment on the article or other insurance-related issues, please send us an e-mail (cquinn@heritagecanada.org).

Our second feature takes an inclusive look at our heritage of faith—HCF's theme for Heritage Day 2005. There is a multiplicity of sacred and spiritual places in Canada, be they buildings, other structures or landscapes, that speak to our religious heritage. As the article points out, these heritage elements create a sense of place within our towns, cities and rural communities that makes their conservation meaningful from a cultural perspective as well. This engaging article begins on page 10.

This issue of Heritage includes a readership survey designed to help us get to know our readers better and for you to tell us what you think. I hope you can take a few minutes to fill it in and return it to us in the envelope provided or by fax (613-237-5987). If you prefer the Internet, the questionnaire is also available online (www.heritagecanada.org). For information on the draw for prizes, flip to the centre of the magazine! I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Carolyn Quinn