



*Patron: His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General of Canada*

*Président d'honneur : Son Excellence le très honorable David Johnston
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Gouverneur général du Canada*

April 27, 2015

Mayor Dan Mathieson
City of Stratford
P.O. Box 818
1 Wellington Street
Stratford ON N5A 6W1

Subject: Proposed Demolition of 90 percent of the Cooper Site (GTR Shops)

Your Worship,

As the national voice for the conservation of built heritage in Canada, Heritage Canada The National Trust is following with great concern the proposed demolition of 90 percent of the Cooper Site (also known as the GTR Shops), which will be discussed at tonight's meeting of Stratford City Council. The National Trust included this exceptional example of industrial heritage in Canada on our Top Ten Endangered Places List last year.

We understand that the meeting agenda includes a motion to reject the offer of Riversedge Developments to purchase the Cooper Site for a nominal fee. However one unacceptable proposal does not represent sufficient due diligence in exploring alternatives for the site. We urge you to now proceed with a full RFP to open the door to property developers who have a proven track record in redeveloping historic sites. To approve demolition of 90 percent at this stage would be premature, and a lost opportunity to develop a truly unique, flagship project for the city.

The recent work of other Canadian cities will provide inspiration for the City of Stratford in its deliberations over the future of the Cooper Site. On August 19, 2013, Edmonton City Council decided to invest \$3 million in stabilizing and maintaining a vacant yet heritage industrial site of their own – the historic Rosedale Power Plant – for up to 10 years while opportunities for redevelopment are explored.

Here are just a few examples of major Canadian industrial sites that, despite challenging beginnings, have made a successful transition to high-profile new uses:

- Historic Clay District (Medicine Hat, AB) – Transformation of abandoned brick/ceramic factories into a thriving community hub combining arts, archaeology and social innovation.

- CPR Angus Shops (Montreal, QC) – Transformation of an urban brownfield site into a residential and commercial redevelopment that incorporates heritage buildings.
- Artscape Wychwood Barns (Toronto, ON) – Transformation of a century-old former streetcar repair facility into a community cultural hub complete with artist live/work spaces.
- Gooderham and Worts Distillery (Toronto, ON) – Transformation of a derelict distillery complex into an iconic residential and commercial city destination.

While there are currently no provincial or federal grant programs dedicated to heritage conservation, there are a number of federal and provincial infrastructure and business development programs that could assist with the adaptation and reuse of the Cooper Site:

- Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program just announced in Federal Budget 2015
- FedDev Ontario – Southern Ontario Development Program
- Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure's Community Infrastructure Fund

The Cooper Site represents an irreplaceable opportunity to create a legacy for Stratford with a signature redevelopment project, just as the Stratford festival did over 60 years ago.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Bull
Executive Director

cc. Bonnie Henderson, Councillor, City of Stratford
Brad Beatty, Councillor, City of Stratford
Danielle Ingram, Councillor, City of Stratford
Frank Mark, Councillor, City of Stratford
George Brown, Councillor, City of Stratford
Graham Bunting, Councillor, City of Stratford
Kathy Vassilakos, Councillor, City of Stratford
Kerry McManus, Councillor, City of Stratford
Martin Ritsma, Councillor, City of Stratford
Tom Clifford, Councillor, City of Stratford
Joan Thompson, City clerk, City of Stratford
David Gaffney, Heritage Stratford
Richard Longley, President, Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
Rick Huband, President, ACO Stratford-PerthCounty Branch