



HCF's 2011 Top Ten Most Endangered Places List

The Heritage Canada Foundation released its seventh annual Top Ten Most Endangered Places List on September 1, 2011.

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.

Bank of Montreal Building -- 10089, Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB – ICONIC MODERN BANK TOWER FACES LIQUIDATION

An intractable owner seeks to raze one of Edmonton's finest modern heritage office buildings, at the city's most prominent downtown intersection, to create a parkade, two-storey podium and subway entrance.

Why it matters

Prominently located at Edmonton's most important intersection, the Bank of Montreal is a superior example of Modern architecture and a landmark that helped define the city as a modern urban centre. Built in 1963, the 10-storey building features clean lines from a combination of horizontal and vertical banding, metal-cased windows, a flat roof and high-quality building materials such as green-glazed brick and salmon-coloured Morton Gneiss panels. The building represents the first partnership between one of Edmonton's most successful architectural firms, Rule Wynn Rule, and Oxford, which went on to develop much of the city's downtown, including McCauley Plaza and Edmonton Centre.



Photo: Tim Golem

Why it's endangered

The Bank of Montreal building has passed through three owners in the last decade. Lack of main floor occupancy and regular cleaning and maintenance has obscured the building's architectural merits for city residents. When BMO vacated the building in 1986, it continued to operate as offices until 2003 when Worthington Properties evicted tenants in anticipation of converting it to condominiums, but ran into unrelated cash flow problems. In 2007 a new owner, Dundee REIT, planned a tall tower for the site, but sold the building in the same year.



Photo: Tim Golem

The Bank of Montreal building's current owners, American-based General Electric Capital Real Estate, want to tear down the structure—along with the neighbouring historic 1950s Odeon Theatre—and replace them with a two-storey podium and underground parkade as part of a makeover of an adjacent office tower. They have cited issues with the roof, a burst pipe and mould that make rehabilitation impossible, but this has not been substantiated by an independent assessment.

GE Capital Real Estate applied for a demolition permit in early May 2011. The Edmonton Historical Board (EHB), a City Council advisory committee, learned of the threat to the building in late May and quickly commissioned a statement of significance, which detailed the structure's pivotal role in the rebuilding of Edmonton's downtown in the 1960s and 1970s. The EHB pointed out the City's pro-active work in recent years in raising awareness about the value of modern heritage by adding nearly 100 pre-1960 modern buildings to Edmonton's Heritage Inventory.

Ironically, the Bank of Montreal's age, 48 years, worked against it. It was ineligible for inclusion on the City's heritage inventory—and consequently for heritage designation and restoration grants—because heritage bylaws stipulate that buildings under consideration must be at least 50-years old. A demolition permit was issued on June 15. No plans have been reported about recycling materials from the building, making this an environmental as well as a heritage waste.

Where it stands

From May to early July, a Facebook group *BMO 63* quickly gathered hundreds of pro-preservation supporters and there was lively, high-profile debate about the fate of the building in local newspapers. On July 13th the City's executive committee voted down an attempt to postpone the pending demolition of the building. If the City had decided to declare the Bank of Montreal a protected heritage building against the wishes of GE Capital Real Estate, provincial heritage legislation would have required the city to compensate the owners for the full market value of the site, a move which could have potentially bankrupted the city's heritage conservation budget.

In the past few weeks hoardings have gone up around the building and demolition could begin at any moment.

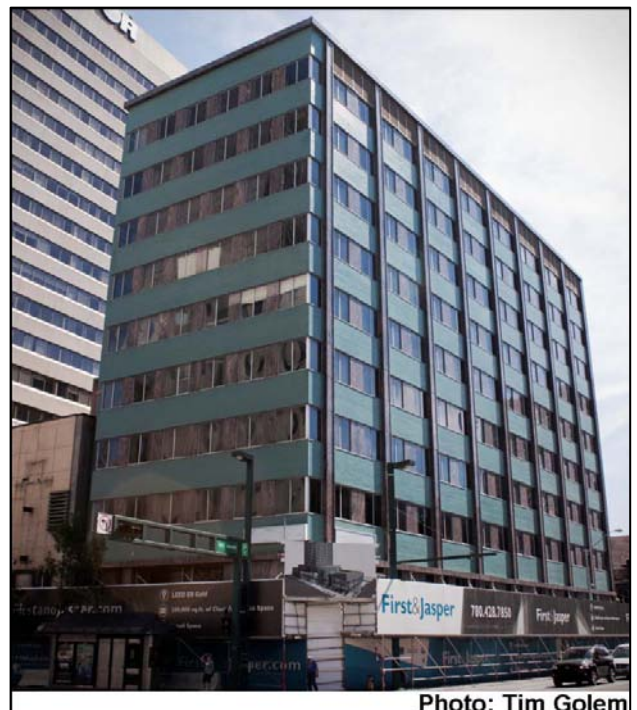


Photo: Tim Golem

Moose Jaw Civic Centre - 1251 Main Street North, Moose Jaw, SK S6H 3J8 – AWARD-WINNING MODERN HOCKEY ARENA FACES CRUSHING BODYCHECK

Moose Jaw's iconic modernist hockey arena, the Civic Centre, is being systematically gutted by the City and faces demolition if the private sector does not come forward with a compelling new use.



Photo: Larry Easton

Why it matters

Built in 1959, the dramatically designed Moose Jaw Civic Centre, a 3,150 seat multi-purpose arena affectionately nicknamed “The Crushed Can,” won the Massey Medal for architecture, a precursor to Canada’s Governor General’s Medals in Architecture. Designed by Saskatchewan architect Joseph Pettick (1924-2010) and Vancouver structural engineers J.L. Miller, the innovative cable roof structure

which gave the building its unique shape was seen as a breakthrough in structure, aesthetics, cost management, and energy conservation. For 25 years the Civic Centre was home to the major junior hockey team, the Moose Jaw Warriors.

Why it’s endangered

Despite being one of Canada’s few award winning modern era civic buildings and a Saskatchewan architectural icon, the Civic Centre has not been designated under the *Saskatchewan Heritage Property Act*. In the early 2000s, the Civic Centre was criticized for being too small and not up to the standards for the Moose Jaw Warriors hockey team. After a 2006 municipal referendum approved construction of a new arena, architect Joseph Pettick appeared before City Council to argue for renovation and expansion of the Civic Centre rather than new construction as the fiscally prudent option. Nevertheless construction began in 2009 on a downtown Multiplex (now known as Mosaic Place) which includes a new 4,367-seat hockey arena. Slated to open in August 2011, Mosaic Place will be the new home to the Moose Jaw Warriors leaving the Civic Centre without a purpose. The City is set to completely abandon the Civic Centre in September 2011.



Photo: Moose Jaw Warriors

Where things stand

There is strong support from the Saskatchewan architectural community for the preservation of the building but support from hockey fans in Moose Jaw has been slow to materialize. Currently, the City is systematically gutting the building: the ice making plant has been moved to Mosaic Place and the hockey rink boards and

seating removed. A public Request For Proposals for reuse of the property will be released in September. If no adequate proposals come forward, the Civic Centre will likely be demolished.

Brighton Public School – 24 Elizabeth Street, Brighton, Ont.—TRYING TO TEACH A PRESERVATION MESSAGE

A solid historic school that anchors the entrance to the downtown, the building is a heritage asset that is ripe for conversion to a new use. But with a school board determined to demolish it and a town council reluctant to intervene, the building’s future is at risk.



Photo: Colin Jagoe

foot wide corridor, large stairs and high ceilings.

The building’s symmetrical design and elegant composition were maintained with the addition of a one-storey west wing in 1964 and a single-storey east wing in 1971.

According to the *Architectural Conservancy of Ontario Preservation Works! Brighton School Study*, prepared by architect Phillip H. Carter in April 2010, the building has been well maintained and remains solid with no signs of structural vulnerability. The 1964 addition is reported as being in similarly good condition with excellent space—including an auditorium—for a range of community activities.

If saved, it would stand as a visible reminder of the community’s heritage, the important role of education in its history, and the need to reuse and recycle local resources to sustain a liveable environment.

Why it’s endangered

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board intends to build a new school to the east of the existing one that will incorporate the 1971 addition. Upon completion, the board intends to demolish the 1915 building and the 1964 west wing. As is the case with many older schools in Ontario, it is not suited to the funding formulas developed by the Province and, according to the board, cannot be economically renovated to suit a modern school.

Two town councils have voted down requests from the East Northumberland Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) for expressions of support for the building’s conservation, stating concern that provincial funding for the new school could be jeopardized.

Where things stand

The *Brighton School Study* lists a number of recommendations, including conversion of the 1915 school and possibly the 1964 addition to new uses. It would be economically viable and bring economic activity to the downtown area. In addition, it concludes that the school board does not require all nine acres of the site for school uses, and that severing a section to allow for the historic school's redevelopment would not impede plans for new construction. It further recommends that the building be designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

At a July council meeting, an East Northumberland ACO representative and award-winning builder presented a viable proposal that would see the main floor of the historic school used as a library, with the other floors adapted for community space, a youth centre, Chamber of Commerce and archives, and the west wing converted into a seniors centre.

Council discussions on the feasibility of encouraging talks between the school and library boards are pending.

Cockshutt Office and Timekeeper's Building, 66 Mohawk St., Brantford, Ontario – TIME IS RUNNING OUT ON DESIGNATED BUILDINGS

One of the last physical reminders of Brantford's great industrial past may get swept away in the clean-up of a 52-acre brownfield site if a deal between the City and developer can't be reached.

Why it matters

These two historic buildings are part of a once thriving 52-acre site that was originally home to several significant industries including the Cockshutt Plow Company, Verity Plow Company (an affiliate of Massey-Ferguson), the Adams Wagon Company, Brantford Coach and Body (affiliates of Cockshutt), and Sternson Chemicals. It was the industrial hub of Brantford.



Photo: Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre



Photo: ACO

Built in 1903 by the Cockshutt Plow Company, the Office and Timekeeper's buildings are representative of Brantford's late 19th century industrial architecture. Founded as the Brantford Plow Works by James G. Cockshutt in 1877, the company evolved into the most complete plow and tractor manufacturer in North America. The Cockshutt family made a valuable contribution to the farm implement industry around the world, and helped to

shape the development of Brantford through most of the 20th century.

The Office building displays a high degree of craftsmanship in its ornamental brickwork. In particular, a distinctive semi-circular pattern of bricks below the roofline that contains a stone inscription of the company name. A red brick façade was added to the Timekeeper's building in 1912 to match the Office building. For the most part, their original brick exteriors have stayed intact.

Both the timekeeper's building and the larger adjoining former Cockshutt office building were designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 2002.

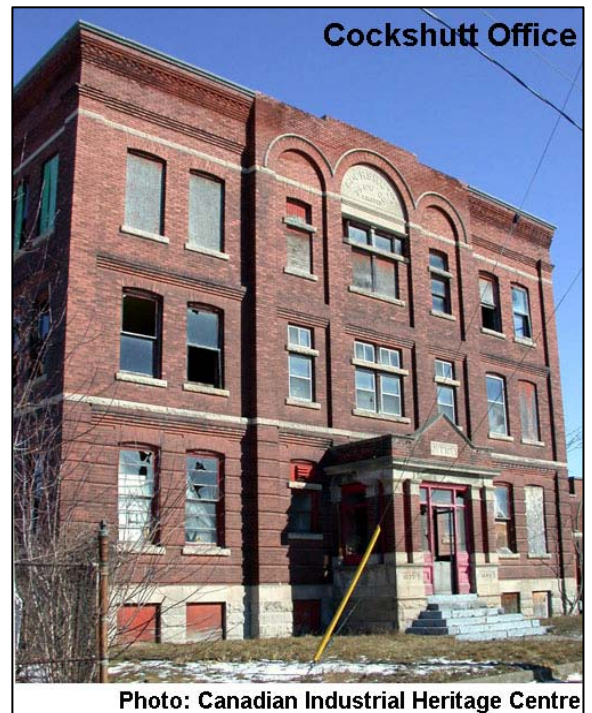
Why it's endangered

The buildings have been empty and abandoned for several years. There is interior water damage from several openings in the roof. A three-storey addition at the rear of the Office building, formerly used as a warehouse, has been partially demolished.

The City of Brantford has owned the buildings since 2005. It attempted to de-designate and demolish them in 2007 and has since done little if anything to protect them. In the fall of 2010, there was a small fire set by arsonists in a shed adjoining the building. There have been several cases of arson in other factory buildings on the larger site.

The City has been in negotiations with a developer to remediate and redevelop the site with various types of housing, and with the intention of adaptively reusing the Cockshutt buildings. After 19 months of negotiations, no deal had been reached.

It was recommended in 2009 that the City mothball the buildings and build a temporary roof to seal the opening, but nothing was done.



Where things stand

A resolution was reached in late June of 2011 directing City staff to take the first steps in cleaning up the brownfield. The resolution received unanimous approval. It directs staff to draw up a request for proposals for structural repairs to the Cockshutt Office and Timekeepers building, as well as three others nearby; the demolition of most other buildings on the site; soil remediation; and the acquisition of a record of site condition allowing the cleaned-up land to be used for residential and parkland development.

Many members of City council are hopeful the buildings will be preserved and the site will be cleaned up, but the longer they remain vacant, the more vulnerable they are to vandalism and arson. The resolution is a step in

the right direction towards preserving this historically significant site, but the end result may be several years away.

The Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre hopes to one day re-use the buildings as a heritage centre to preserve and celebrate Canada's industrial history.

The Guild Inn – 201 Guildwood Parkway, Toronto, Ont.—DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT



Photo: Jeremy Burgin

Home to the only Depression-era artists' colony in Canada, this unique site is in imminent danger of demolition by neglect by the very municipality that designated it. It is caught up in complicated negotiations involving multiple levels of authority.

Why it matters

The Guild Inn was built as a private residence in 1914 in the Arts and Crafts style. The house and surrounding 88 acres of gardens and woodlands were purchased by Rosa Breithaupt Hewetson in 1932. She and husband Spencer Clark—a socially conscious couple—then founded the Guild of All

Arts, a co-operative arts and crafts community. They converted stables and garages into studio and workshop space for artists and artisans to live and work in.

The extensive gardens and grounds were transformed by the Clark's personal building conservation program. Salvaged architectural fragments from demolished buildings in and around Toronto were erected to create a sculpture garden. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority bought the property for use as a public park in 1978 and the art and sculpture on display became a unique attraction to an exceptional setting atop the Scarborough Bluffs overlooking Lake Ontario.

The City of Toronto's Culture Division assumed responsibility for the sculpture and architectural fragments in 1996, with the Parks and Recreation Division looking after the Guild Inn and the parkland. The Guild Inn and Studio Building were designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 1999.



Photo: Courtesy of Guildwood Village Community Association

Why it's endangered

The building has been closed and boarded up since 2001 and is in an advanced state of deterioration due to risks posed by interior water damage, broken windows, mould and vandalism. Since 2008, the 96-room hotel addition built in 1965 has been demolished, and the Studio Building lost to fire.

The City of Toronto has been attempting, unsuccessfully, to redevelop the site for a number of years. In 2005, the City endorsed a hotel/spa redevelopment plan that called for the de-designation and demolition of the Guild Inn, on condition that certain elements of the interior be incorporated into the new design. It also recommended the development of an interpretation strategy and that a conservation plan and heritage easement agreement be entered into. But the project never came to fruition.



Photo: City of Toronto

Where things stand

Since 2005, the building has suffered further deterioration. Copper pipes were stolen, resulting in major basement flooding. Recent roof repairs do not undo extensive interior damage from water infiltration.

In 2008, the City entered into a partnership with Centennial College, which is looking to invest \$30 million in the site – an investment that would include rehabilitating the Guild Inn for use as its Cultural Heritage Institute, and a conference centre and restaurant to train students enrolled in its

School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culture. The college recently released changes to its original proposal involving replacing a planned hotel with a 100-unit low-rise senior's condominium residence. According to Centennial College a feasibility study completed this winter revealed there was little prospect of finding a willing hotelier. The college estimates the condo component could help finance the \$6 million in projected restoration costs to the Inn.

Centennial College wants to purchase the 6.3-acre footprint of the original hotel site on behalf of the builder for ease of development, rather than enter into a sub-lease. This will require the approval of the City of Toronto, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources. The initial feedback from community groups has been in opposition to any condos on the site.

Complicating the situation is \$4.2 million in city funds for cultural precincts around the boarded up Inn, which include gardens, a trail system, lookouts, visitor's centre and more. The funds will have to be approved again next year due to delays.

Historic District of Sillery – Quebec, Quebec

FUTURE OF HISTORIC DISTRICT UNCERTAIN DESPITE 1964 PROVINCIAL DESIGNATION

As early as 1964, the province of Quebec made the visionary choice to protect an extraordinary cultural landscape characterized by large traditional estates with expansive greenspace. Now, with condominium

developers circling, advocates are pressing officials to uphold the law and ensure appropriate development of the Historic District of Sillery.

Why it matters

The Historic District covers a linear 3.5 kilometre wide territory along the St. Lawrence River dominated by adjacent grand estates integrated into a picturesque natural environment. The area bears witness to successive occupation (the French Regime; 19th century lumber barons; and later religious communities and institutions) and has been called a cradle of the Quebec nation. Today, property lines survive from all three periods of occupation, and buildings, woodlands, viewsapes and greenspaces continue to reflect the scale and character of the original great estates.



Photo: Pierre Lahoud

When development threatened the integrity of the area in the 1950s, Quebec's Ministry of Culture responded by creating the Historic District of Sillery in 1964—a visionary act designed to prevent the grand estates from sub-

division and inappropriate development. Collectively, the grand estates offer enormous potential for recreation, education, tourism and carefully planned new development.

Why it's endangered

In recent years, rumours of impending developments have caused increasing alarm. In Fall 2010, historic district designation notwithstanding, the City and the Minister of Culture allowed the subdivision of the Saint-Patrick Cemetery property (part of the Historic District's Woodfield Estate)



Photo: Pierre Lahoud

where it is feared a luxury condominium development may destroy trees dating from the French regime. Several other estates within the district are in question, as religious communities consider their options. The Mayor of Quebec has signalled his willingness to allow further subdivision and sale.

Volunteers from the natural and cultural heritage sectors have joined forces in preparation to re-fight a battle won in 1964, when similar pressures were terminated by legal protection. All agree the site warrants a high level of scrutiny and care to ensure that any changes respect historic views, landforms and character.

Where things stand

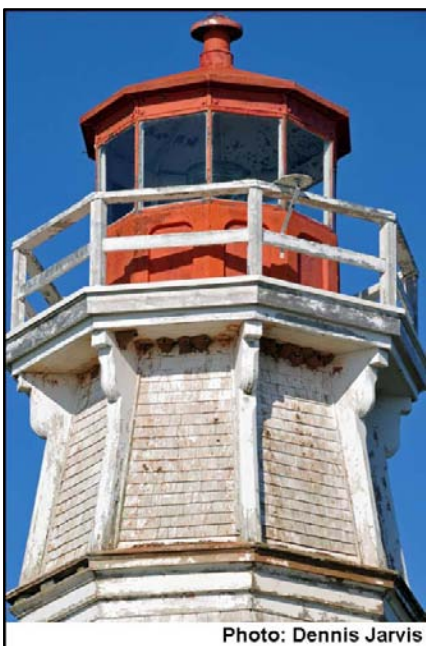
Advocates for a conservation-minded development strategy have done much to raise public awareness, and have requested a moratorium on further development or subdivision until concerns have been addressed and a sustainable plan is in place. There is support for a recent Management Plan published by the Ministry of Culture, and a desire to see provincial protection enforced. All parties anxiously await a *Plan Particulier d'Urbanisme*—a detailed urban plan specific to the area in question—being developed by the City of Quebec, and promised this fall.

Cape Jourimain Lighthouse, Jourimain Island, Bayfield, New Brunswick—A FEDERALLY “RECOGNIZED” HERITAGE LIGHTHOUSE ABANDONED TO THE ELEMENTS

Declared surplus in 2010 by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and abandoned to the harsh elements of the Northumberland Strait, the clock is ticking as local groups attempt to raise funds to save this iconic lighthouse.

Why it matters

Built in 1870, Cape Jourimain lighthouse sits on the northern tip of the Jourimain Islands in the Northumberland Strait with a full view of the Confederation Bridge, making it one of the most photographed lighthouses in Canada. Located on the grounds of the Cape Jourimain Nature Centre, the federally-owned historic structure guided ships through the Strait for 120 years.



Cape Jourimain Lighthouse was automated in 1970, and then was decommissioned in 1997 with the opening of the [Confederation Bridge](#). The wooden, octagonal lighthouse with decorative cornices and ornate trim was designated a Recognized Heritage Building by the federal government in 1991.

Why it's endangered

Shoreline erosion is a serious threat to the building. The lighthouse has been moved several times before, but further erosion has been escalating over the past five years.

While the lighthouse appears to be structurally sound, maintenance has not been kept up by DFO: exterior paint is peeling, the shingles need repairing and signs of mould are present in the interior. Some remediation of the site



has taken place, but much has been left until larger decisions about its future are made. In May 2010, DFO declared almost all of its active and inactive lighthouses—including Cape Jourimain—as “surplus” to its needs. It is unlikely DFO will invest in its preservation.

Where things stand

Following the provisions of the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act, the Cape Jourimain Nature Centre applied to take over ownership of the lighthouse and to move it 50-60 feet back from the eroding shoreline. A structural engineering firm is assessing what damage could result from moving it. The road that leads to the island was built over 100 years ago and needs to be upgraded before heavy machinery can travel on it. The Nature Centre thinks the most sensible plan is to re-paint, re-shingle and clean up the site, then move the building back from the shore. Those wanting to keep it from slipping into the ocean, want to see it saved as a reminder of the area’s marine heritage for years to come. The centre is calling for donations to its Lighthouse Rescue Fund—either by giving time, expertise or materials to affect the necessary repairs and maintenance.

As a result of DFO’s disposal of its lighthouses, local groups and communities are under pressure to assume the financial responsibility for maintenance and protection of almost all of Canada’s iconic lighthouses. There is currently no federal funding set aside to assist communities with the stewardship of these structures.



Photo: Dennis Jarvis

Mount Allison Memorial Library – Mount Allison University Campus, 152 Main Street, Sackville, N.B.—AT RISK FROM ACADEMIC INDIFFERENCE

Mount Allison University’s Board of Regents has approved the demolition of its historic Memorial Library building for a new arts facility. A notice of Intention to Designate was suddenly withdrawn by the provincial Minister after hearings of objection, despite the strong recommendation of his Commemorations Committee.

Why it matters

Described as “the most beautiful building on campus,” the Memorial Library building at Mount Allison University was designed by Andrew Randall Cobb, one of Canada’s great institutional architects, as a monument to those students and Alumni who gave their lives during the First World War. Constructed in 1927, the capital cost was largely donated through public funds raised between 1919 and 1926. The Tudor-styled red sandstone



Photo: Robert Eaton

building with its square-pitched roof and gable ends set a standard for future campus buildings. For 80 years, first as the library and later as part of the student centre, it was the social heart of the campus. Recently, the federal government registered the building as a military memorial on the National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials, signalling its national significance and making it eligible for up to \$25,000 in funds through the cenotaph/monument restoration program managed by Veterans Affairs Canada.

Why it's endangered

Last fall, the university's Board of Regents approved the demolition of the Memorial Library building to make way for a new Fine Arts and Performance Centre.

The university has reported that the cost to maintain the building was excessive and that the \$30 million estimate for the new arts facility would increase by \$5 million if the Memorial Library building was renovated and reused as part of the modern arts centre.



This decision runs contrary to Mount Allison's Master Plan of 2002, which recommends retaining the Memorial Library building and incorporating it into a space for the arts. Attempts to review a consultant's structural assessment, which concluded that the structure is not in good condition, have been denied.

Where things stand

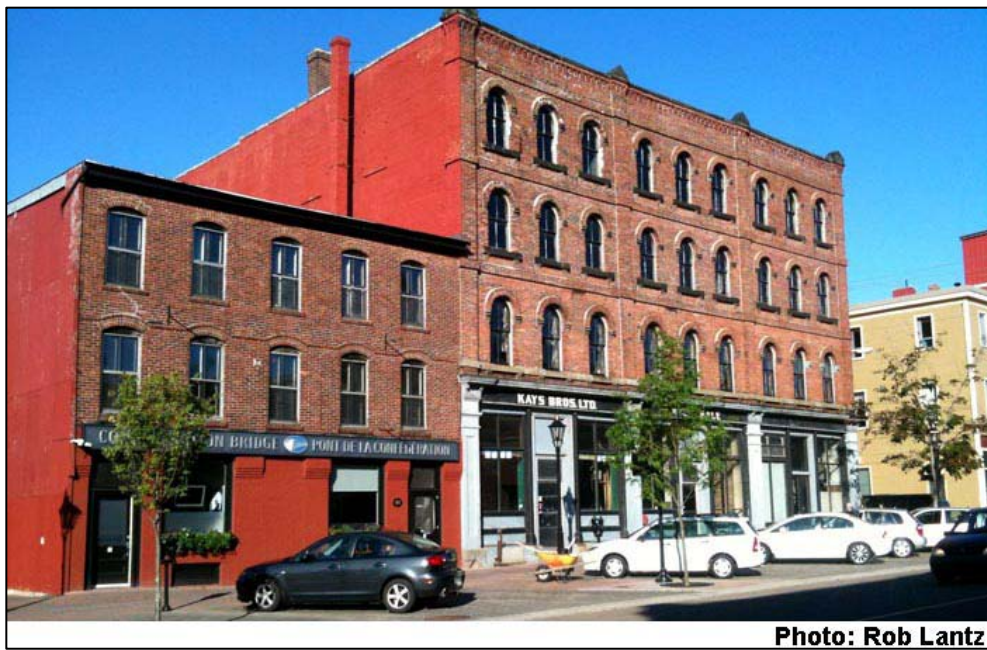
At present the Memorial Library is vacant. The Save the Memorial Library Committee and the Tantramar Heritage Trust have been very active in raising awareness of the plight of the building. An online petition quickly garnered close to 1,500 signatures. On May 25, Trevor Holder, New Brunswick's Minister of Wellness, Culture and Sport, accepted the recommendation of the provincial Commemorations Committee and filed a Notice of Intention to Designate it as a Provincial Heritage Place. By August 10, after hearings of objection, the Minister did an about-face and announced his decision to withdraw the Notice of Intention, stating that "it has been determined not to be at a provincial level of significance."

Kays Brothers Building / Welsh and Owen Building, 45 Queen Street Charlottetown, PEI – DOWNTOWN GEM THREATENED WITH DEMOLITION

The verdict on the future of the historic Kays Bros. Building in Charlottetown's old commercial area awaits the outcome of an engineering report. Delisting and demolishing it for a new hotel would leave a large hole in this important historic streetscape.

Why it matters

Constructed in 1872 for prominent politicians, merchants and shipbuilders Lemuel Owen and William Welsh, the Italianate Commercial-style building on Queen Street (later known as the Kayes Bros. Building) played an important role in the commercial history of Charlottetown. The large, four-storey structure with decorative brickwork, round-arched windows and row of three storefronts with large plate glass, wooden piers, and signband, it is one of the most impressive along the historic streetscape.



Over the years it was home to prominent newspapers and important local retail and commercial activities, but it is best known for its wholesale grocery businesses (J.T. Peardon's, R.E. Mutch and Company and later the Kayes Brothers). It suffered three fires that have damaged the interior, but left the exterior walls intact.

In 1962, the Kayes Brothers purchased the building where they ran their wholesale company until 2009. The opening of Confederation Bridge, which made it easier for customers to shop out of province, was cited as the primary reason for its closure. It was purchased by the Charlottetown Area Development Corporation (CADC) that year for \$750,000 and has been vacant ever since.



The building is included as a *Designated Heritage Resource* as per Appendix A in the City of Charlottetown Zoning and Development Bylaw.

Why it's endangered

A new owner, island businessman Danny Murphy, wants to develop a \$15-million hotel on the site that would require the delisting and demolition of the historic building. His engineering report, that states the building is structurally unsound, contradicts a report by J.M. Griffin Engineering Inc. prepared a year ago for P.E.I. developer Tim Banks. Based on that report, Banks had planned a hotel redevelopment that would incorporate part of the historic building.

Where things stand

Tim Banks is encouraging CADC and the provincial government to provide funding to Murphy to help restore the building as part of a hotel, instead of demolishing it.

The municipal Heritage Board has recommended that City Council not approve the demolition at this point and uphold its designated status. Murphy withdrew his demolition application before the vote in council could take place. The final decision has been delayed until an independent engineer assesses the building's structural integrity.

Murphy has not made any progress on his proposal since he withdrew it several weeks ago, but in a media interview made it clear he will be moving forward with the project.

In the meantime, questions have arisen about how a listed heritage property was allowed to deteriorate to the extent that it has.

Fisherman's Row Houses, Port Union, Newfoundland and Labrador — ABSENTEE OWNERS THREATEN TO TURN HERITAGE HOUSES INTO DISTANT MEMORY

Integral to Port Union National Historic Site, the Fisherman's Row Houses remain a physical manifestation of the Fisherman's Protective Union's legacy. Neglected for years by their absentee owners, they are succumbing to the elements of outport Newfoundland and Labrador. Wanting to conserve their heritage value, local heritage advocates also see the structures as providing much needed affordable housing for the area.

Why they matter

Located on the shores of Trinity Bay, Port Union is a small community built in a flurry of construction starting in 1916. It is the only "union-built town" in North America. William Ford Coaker and the members of the Fishermen's Protective Union (FPU) settled the town with the aim of developing a new type of commercial and economic footing for Newfoundland's fishermen by reducing their dependency on the St John's merchant controlled credit system

The row houses were constructed by the FPU to provide affordable housing for the workers/members who moved to Port Union to work in the Union business.



Row housing in outport Newfoundland and Labrador is quite rare. The FPU's concern to provide decent accommodations for its workers is reflected in the duplex row housing throughout the community. These wood frame homes are vernacular in appearance with a functional design: two central doors, each flanked by a window, and four windows on the second storey with small porches at the rear. There was community wide electricity and running water, which were services only seen in St. John's at the time.

Port Union was designated as a national historic site in 1998 and a provincial heritage district in 2007.

Why they're endangered

The Sir William F. Coaker Foundation has made a tremendous effort to restore several properties in Port Union, but the Foundation does not own these row houses. The absentee owner, the Aaron and Ella Bailey Trust, is controlled by two people living in London, Ontario. Lack of maintenance and repair work over the years has left the story and legacy of the union members who made the town are now in jeopardy.



Photo: Randy Gillespie

Where things stand

The houses are in terrible shape, especially since Hurricane Igor hammered the island in September of 2010. Many of the houses are sagging and in need of immediate stabilization. The entire side of one house is bowed outwards and ready to collapse. The Coaker Foundation has shown great interest in restoring the houses and using them as affordable housing, which is in short supply. Members of the community would like to see the houses' architectural integrity restored as they are an integral part of the area's unique and rich history. Ongoing negotiations with the absentee owners have yet to result in a solution that could lead to the houses' preservation.



Photo: Sir William Ford Coaker Foundation Inc.