

## Branch Reports

### PORT HOPE

Through the never-ending energy and dedication of our Branch members, 2001 has been another successful year for Port Hope ACO activities.

The biannual Garden Tour on July 7, organized by Heather MacKinnon and her committee, was a resounding success despite competition from many other garden tours in this part of the province. Exceptionally fine weather graced the annual House Tour on September 29. A new feature of the tour this year was a series of lectures at the Capitol Theatre on collecting antiques, architecture and restoration. This year's House Tour was a sell-out and beautifully executed, thanks to Betty-Ann Knutson and her committee. Due to the hard work of our volunteers and the generosity of the home and garden owners, these two events raised over \$36,000 to be used for Branch projects.

The ACO Port Hope has committed \$50,000 over three years to support the restoration and expansion of the Port Hope Public Library. Currently the executive is considering a major contribution to heritage aspects of the Capitol Theatre development (phase 2). We continue to make contributions to projects such as the Wesleyville Cultural Landscape feasibility study, the VIA station and individual restoration projects through our Heritage Fund.

The Branch held a barbeque at the lakefront home of Peter and Jane Rungay in June and is planning our Christmas get-together at Penstowe, the home of Betty-Ann and Larry Knutson on November 29, 2001. Our members enjoyed an evening with Daphne Svenningson in the Greek Islands and



House on Lakeshore Road near Port Hope.  
photo: Daphne Svenningson



Port Hope garden, one of eight in this year's garden tour.  
photo: Daphne Svenningson

Crete on October 18. All these fellowship events give our members the opportunity to enjoy discussions of architecture, our advocacy role in the community and, of course, each other's company.

A new member, Suzanne Camm, has created a series of architectural medallions featuring Port Hope buildings, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the ACO.

In late spring 2002, the Branch will repeat "Open Doors Port Hope and Hope." We are planning to work with the Cobourg ACO Branch and the Ontario Heritage Foundation to promote this event across Ontario.

Three home-owners have taken advantage of a new program of consultation on restoration offered by Peter and Jane Rungay. Peter is also collecting family photos of the exterior of buildings in the Port Hope area to assist in restoration research.

As a follow-up to Street Smarts, we advocated a municipal committee on incentives for heritage restoration;

however, due to lack of representation from some invited groups the committee has not yet met. The Branch executive is developing a position on preserving the Lakeshore Road cultural landscape in the face of major west-end development plans.

We're very fortunate in Port Hope to have a strong and concerned LACAC, which is dedicated to maintaining our architectural heritage. Their work is not always pleasant, as recent controversy over signs in the Walton Street Heritage Conservation District has revealed. Both the members of LACAC and the ACO are to be commended on their strong positions on behalf of our heritage.

Sue Stickley

### COBOURG

The Cobourg branch of the ACO was founded with the idea of saving Whitehall, the oldest, finest and most historic of Cobourg houses. Sadly, the Whitehall watch may be turning into a deathwatch. ACO has received notice that the owners of Whitehall have picked up the demolition permit that was approved a year ago and appear closer to demolition. They are unavailable for comment. Our president, Peter Smith, has asked for a promise of timely notice, but so far there is no indication that we will get this.

ACO continues to be stymied by the extremely high asking price for the property (over \$500,000) and the uncertainty relating to the plans of a succession of potential buyers who have come forward only to fall back. Some would make us a gift of the house in order to clear the land for commercial building. Others encourage the hope that they might leave the house where it is and find their own use for it. Loblaws has not absolutely refused to consider engaging with Whitehall if they should happen to go ahead with building a store on adjacent



The home of eagle.ca. 26 Chapel Street, Cobourg  
photo: Tom Copeland

land; but this seems to be contingent upon Walmart also going ahead.

Better news of the old house at 26 Chapel Street, the home of eagle.ca, an internet provider. Two members of the board of Cobourg branch toured this building hoping that eagle.ca was typical of certain new high tech businesses that are finding it possible to operate out of old buildings, avoiding demolition and mutilation. We found what we hoped for and a good deal more. Tom Copeland, the owner of the business and the house, is an accomplished conservationist who seems to have had all the right intentions for this Victorian manse turned medical clinic turned internet offices and powerhouse. A room (once the kitchen) packed with flickering modems generates enough heat to raise a practical question whether it might not be used to heat the house. Outside that door, however, the rooms and hallways have been smoothly restored with a nice attention to detail and care to retain the feeling that the building is a fine old house. Earlier tenants had been a group of doctors who had cut up several of the larger rooms into small examination rooms. Fortunately, trim had been left and the original room shapes were easy to make out. They are now restored to their original dimensions and in use as comfortable offices. There is of course no attempt to conceal the fact that former parlours and bedrooms have had their functions



Dobbie House, Cambridge  
photo: Laurie Thatcher

changed, and computers are everywhere. But the point stands out that this very modern business fits very well into this old house, and that the house has benefited from this newest turn in its history. Whitehall needs such a break.

A hopeful development downtown is the renovation of a decayed Victorian commercial building being undertaken by local businessman Bill Patchett. The project is now pretty well complete; retail and restaurant spaces are available and condominium apartments are for sale. This is a worthy experiment in downtown renewal and deserves to succeed and be imitated by other owners of similar properties.

Finally, downtown Cobourg's historic district may soon be decorated with as many as eight murals on historic themes. Reaction ranges from dismay (on the part of those who feel that this is not what "real" heritage places do) to "very nice."

Bill Halewood

### HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE

#### Anniversary tours

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of Heritage Cambridge was the focus

of our organization in June. Our board wanted to do something special for our members, not as a fundraiser, but rather a thank you for their support. Arrangements were made for two very special tours occurring on two separate weekends in June.

The first tour was the historic Dobbie Mansion, one of the earliest houses built in West Galt. The house and adjacent property are slated for restoration and development sympathetic to the original stone design from 1857. This was a win-win for both the Dobbie family and our organization. They wanted to promote their development; we wanted to give our members a chance to see a house frozen in time. Nothing has been touched since 1925 just before the Depression hit. And even then, the only changes were wallpaper. The kitchen contains the commercial appliances from 1925, still in use today. Over 500 people came through and a press conference was held to make some special announcements.

The first of these was the receipt of a \$30,000 endowment grant for the Sheave Tower. Heritage Cambridge made an application under the provincial Heritage Challenge Fund only 36 hours before the fund was closed down! Much to our delight and surprise, we were awarded all of the money we requested, and our local MPP, Gerry Martinuk, was on hand to symbolically hand us the cheque. The

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