

Victoria Hall

A Second Century

The cornerstone for Victoria Hall was laid in 1856 and the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) officially opened the building on September 7, 1860.

A masterpiece of Victorian grandeur, designed by Kivas Tully, the huge hall has accommodated all municipal services, the provincial court, fraternal organizations, the Chamber of Commerce and business offices with some 10,000 square feet of space on each of the three floors and a full basement. The Opera House (Auditorium) on the second floor has provided a focus for the Hall, for the Town of Cobourg, indeed for all of Northumberland and of Durham Counties and beyond.

Time has taken its toll however, and now the wooden beams must be replaced, modern services must supercede the old. Neglect — the result of inadequate funds, and "make-do" patching must be rectified as the Hall stands proud for its second century.

The Society for the Restoration of Victoria Hall, provincially incorporated, and sponsored by the municipality, has enlisted eminent restoration architect Peter Stokes* to plan and supervise the restoration. A campaign to fund the restoration with public subscriptions is under way.

The restoration will bring back the intrinsic beauty of Victoria Hall. Visually, it will be as it was in 1860, but with modern services installed the Hall can face the next century of time with confidence.

A "People Place"

The restored Victoria Hall will become the natural centre for all community activities in the area — for the young and not so young. It belongs to the people, particularly the local people, and it is expected that a wide range of their activities will be re-instituted at the Hall. As well as housing historical museum pieces it will be available for myriad events, for theatre, for meetings, for music of all tastes, for dancing and electronic entertainments, for exhibitions, for art displays, perhaps private gatherings.

Victoria Hall will be "where it's at" in this part of Ontario, and the benevolent ghosts of the past will surely smile down on the young and old alike as they once more enjoy their Hall, the community's centre.

* Mr. Stokes' credits include: Upper Canada Village; Niagara-on-the-Lake; The Grange, Art Gallery of Ontario; Sussex Street, Ottawa; Galt City Hall.