

# Council approves heritage permit for Town Hall Centre addition plan

The proposed two-story addition to the Acton Town Hall Centre on Willow Street is sympathetic to the heritage significance of the building, and warrants a heritage permit from the Town to allow construction, including barrier-free washrooms, an elevator, and a Citizens Hall.

Prior to approving the heritage permit at Council on Monday, Heritage Acton Chair Ron Birrell updated councillors on work to-date at the heritage building which has turned a "dormant asset" into a centre used by a diverse group including line dancers, thespians, partiers

and politicians. He noted the Absolutely Acton Speaker Series kicks off with Lord Johnny Acton at the Town Hall Centre on September 18.

As the planning applications for the addition work their way through the Town's planning process, Heritage Acton is working on an ambitious \$120,000 fundraising goal with a "One Brick at a Time" campaign. For \$100 to \$10,000, original bricks from part of the building that earlier was torn down, can be purchased, engraved and installed in an interior wall as a lasting tribute.

With \$50,000 from the

Rotary Club of Acton, a \$150,000 Trillium Foundation Grant, \$40,000 from the Town – money initially earmarked for demolition of the building – and a backer with deep pockets, Birrell said they are in "good shape" as he urged councillors to buy a brick, and thanked them for their support.

A staff report recommending approval of the heritage permit application said the Town Hall was built, for \$6,000, in 1882 and served as a community hub until 1974, when Acton was amalgamated into Halton Hills. In 1977, the building was designated under the On-



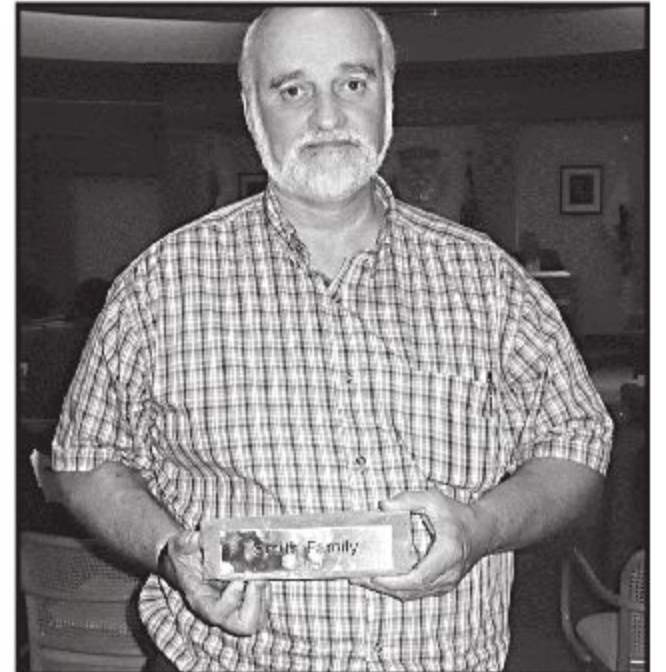
tario Heritage Act, but by 1982, it was in "considerable disrepair" and the Town recommend removal of the heritage designation to proceed with demolition. It was redesignated in 1989, and merged with the Town Hall in 1996.

A citizen group, now known as Heritage Acton, mounted a successful campaign to save the building and purchased from the Town for \$1. It accepted a \$60,000 grant to help restore the building, in exchange for a heritage easement that requires approval by the Ontario Heritage Trust before any exterior changes can be made.

Georgetown Councillor

Moya Johnson said Heritage Halton Hills gladly supports the plan for an "amazing addition" that fits right into the heritage building requirements. Georgetown Councillor Anne Lawlor said it was

"thrilling" to see such a significant addition and investment in the heritage building, adding Heritage Acton deserves congratulations for being "very lean" and "very enterprising."



**BRICK BY BRICK:** Heritage Acton Chair Ron Birrell holds one of the commemorative bricks being "sold" in the One Brick at a Time campaign to help raise money for an addition that will make the Acton Town Hall Centre fully accessible

– Frances Niblock photo

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The Registration Form is available at [www.leathertownfestival.ca](http://www.leathertownfestival.ca)

**david burland**  
sales representative

Dependable  
Real Estate  
Services

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