



ARCHITECTURAL
CONSERVANCY
ONTARIO

February 24th, 2015

To: Planning and Growth Management Committee

From: Richard Longley, President, Architectural Conservancy Ontario

Re: PG2.8 Toronto Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study Prioritization

Dear Planning and Growth Management Committee,

I write to you alarmed at the pace of HCD studies in Toronto. While demand for HCDs appears to be extraordinarily high, the pace of studying them appears to be alarmingly slow. After being halted for approximately two years, to allow preparation of *Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference*, the process has been furthered delayed by the increased complexity required by those Procedures and Policies. This has resulted in an HCD logjam. Neighbourhoods, which wish to become HCDs are discouraged by delay, the energy they put into achieving nomination is fading, their research is becoming outdated and their heritage attributes are vulnerable to decay with little to prevent that from happening.

Meanwhile the pace of development in all parts of Toronto is unprecedented. Heritage neighbourhoods and heritage buildings are under siege to an extent they have not been since the 1960s. (Witness the demolition of Stollery's at 1 Bloor St West – one of the most prominent addresses in Toronto. That happened on January 26th and 27th, two weeks prior to adoption of the Historic Yonge Street Study Area Designation By-Law on February 11th).

Every Torontonians and every visitor to Toronto knows there is a passion for what remains of this city's heritage architecture and its heritage landscapes. Doors Open and Jane's walks attract thousands every year. At last year's mayoral debates, all three candidates present insisted on their belief in the many values of heritage. According to the *Toronto Star's* survey of most important issues, its readers rate conservation of heritage architecture fifth.

We also know that heritage has economic as well as historic and cultural value. Built and landscape are essential to both the Tourism and the Film and Television Industries which bring millions in revenue and hundreds of jobs to this city (witness *Economic Benefits of Architectural Conservation for the Film and Television Industries* by Stephanie Mah which is submitted with this letter.) And, thanks to its clients, the real estate industry is coming to understand what academics have known for decades: the importance of HCD status with regard to the real estate values which determine the strength of the city's tax base. All of which proves, to quote the title of a pair of studies produced by the University of Waterloo Heritage Resources Centre and ACO, that *Heritage Districts Work*:

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<https://uwaterloo.ca/heritage-resources-centre/sites/ca.heritage-resources-centre/files/uploads/files/HCDStudySUMMARYREPORT.pdf>

<https://uwaterloo.ca/heritage-resources-centre/sites/ca.heritage-resources-centre/files/uploads/files/HCD%20Study%20Final%20Report%20Summary%20Phase%202%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

The City of Toronto should be doing all it can to facilitate designation and HCD creation, yet, both are more difficult than is required by the Ontario Heritage Act. (Witness, with regard to listing and designation - and the ease with which demolition permits can be obtained for commercial buildings - the destruction of Stollerys and, with regard to HCDs, the logjam caused by the new complexity regarding the nomination and studying of HCDs and the inadequacy of funding and city staff needed to complete those studies.

Last Friday we learned of an incomprehensible recommendation on the part of the Budget Committee, that the budget of City Planning be reduced by \$0.52m to allow the cutting of 8 positions planned to enhance, among other things, HCD studies, and to reduce, at a rate of \$0.5m per year over a period of 10 years, funding for HCD studies, to a total of \$5m plus \$4.635m in debt funding. This would eliminate 4 staff positions at Heritage Preservation Services, prevent the start of any new HCD studies in 2015 and reduce to just 3 the number that can be studied in 2016

All this at a time when the city of Toronto is growing at a rate that might be the fastest in its history, when heritage is valued as never before and when heritage is under siege by new development as never before.

For all of these reasons, I urge the Planning and Growth Management Committee to do all it can to encourage and accelerate the nomination and study of HCDs in Toronto, with due attention to their prioritization, and to do all it can to ensure that the city's funding and staffing for HCDs are at least maintained, without cuts of any kind and, if possible, that funding be *increased*, knowing that that this INVESTMENT will soon be repaid.

With thanks and regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Richard Longley', is positioned above the typed name.

Richard Longley, President
Architectural Conservancy Ontario

Submitted by Richard Longley



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Economic Benefits of Architectural Conservation for the Tourism and Film and Television Industries in Ontario

by

Stephanie Mah

for

Architectural Conservancy Ontario

February 18th, 2015

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Economic Benefits of Architectural Conservation for the Tourism Industry

Tourism is a source of substantial economic benefits in Ontario and one of its most potent attractions, is architectural heritage. According to Statistics Canada, historic sites in Ontario had approximately 3,750,800 person visits in 2011, placing built heritage in the top five most popular tourist attractions in the Province. Toronto, one of the most popular tourist destinations, also uses built heritage as a pull factor. In Trip Advisor, approximately 20% of the city's attractions are architecture-related (ranging from the traditional, such as Fort York, Casa Loma and Maple Leaf Gardens to the more recent, such as Ontario Place (when it is open) and the CN Tower. Knowing this, appreciation of the value of heritage, it is clear that the conservation of it has the potential to boost the economies of communities which possess it.

Jane's Walks, launched in Toronto in 2007, in memory of urban planner Jane Jacobs, are an example of architectural tourism's gaining popularity. In 2014, there were 150 Jane's Walks in Toronto, and more in 25 other Ontario cities. Volunteers lead tours of urban neighbourhoods, focussing on their architecture, their planning and their cultural heritage. Jane's Walks are now worldwide, proof of the universal attraction and economic potential of architectural tourism.



Jane's Walk Ottawa group touring Byward Market. Photograph by Kristen Gagnon, 2014. For more images and information on the event see

<http://spacing.ca/ottawa/2014/05/06/byward-markets-historical-urban-fabric-courtyards-janes-walk/>



Doors Open is another extremely popular “architourism” event. 49 centres in Ontario participated in 2014 - up from just one the year Doors Open was introduced to Canada, in Toronto, in 2000. In 2013, there were almost half a million Doors Open site visits across the Province when more than 100,000 people visited 1291 sites (which means each visitor visited an average of five sites over the weekend). These figures show that there is enormous interest in the built environment and that it is a powerful magnet for tourism. It is also a magnet that attracts great economic benefits. During Doors Open events in Ontario in 2013, 76,688 local visitors spent an average of \$28.39 each, while 32,773 visitors from elsewhere spent an average of \$86.16 each. This means that, in 2013, Doors Open injected a total of \$5,000,866.72 into the provincial economy, all from weekend events run by unpaid volunteers who charge nothing, for visits to historic buildings and neighbourhoods (as well as to newer architecture that might become “heritage” in future.)

Apart from Jane’s Walks and Doors Open, many municipalities stage their own heritage events. In a survey conducted on the economic benefits of tourism, all participants (including the Senior Planner of the City of Windsor and the Tourism Manager of Lanark County) stated that their towns’ historic architecture has economic value. In Lanark County, \$50 million is infused into the local economy each year by tourism, much of it dependent on the county’s 146 designated heritage properties, some of which are national historic sites. Other examples are Southampton, Port Elgin, Port Hope - and Perth, a town whose heritage core earned it the title of “Prettiest little town in Ontario”, in addition to its status as of one of Ontario’s most popular tourist destinations.

This information provides a glimpse into how architectural conservation is economically beneficial to Ontario tourism. To maintain and grow this value, the conservation and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings needs the support of individuals, communities, municipalities, the provincial government *and* businesses – in all parts of the province. Groups like Architectural Conservancy Ontario can encourage and warn but they cannot save the province’s heritage, alone.



City Sightseeing bus in Toronto brings tourists to Casa Loma

<http://www.rgiondocom/city-sight-seeingtoronto-hop-on-hop-off-city-tour>

Economic Benefits of Architectural Conservation for the Film Industry

According to the Ontario Media Development Corporation, the film industry in Ontario broke production worth more than \$1 billion in 2011, and it continues to grow. Knowing the economic importance of this industry, it is important to understand that filmmakers rely heavily on *location*, which can include architecture of all kinds. While some films are shot in places that the tourism industry would consider to be “heritage” (Casa Loma, again!) more are shot in such places as bars, pool halls, businesses, schools, airports, industrial buildings, corner stores, private homes and gas stations. Movies and television are also shot in suburbs, back lanes and neighbourhoods that might not be considered “heritage” at all – until they become tourist- and realtor-attracting “celebrities” on screen. For this reason, it is no wonder that film and television producers consider themselves to be *creators* as well as appreciators of heritage. This expansion of the “heritage envelope” is an enormous boon to conservationists whose appreciation of the built environment is broader than those whose affection for it is more conventionally aesthetic, historical and sentimental. It is this need architectural and cultural *diversity* which explains why the OMDC’s Location Data Base, which lists as many as 12,000 filming locations throughout Ontario - making it one of the most extensive in the world.

An example of how the most unlikely location can acquire esteem of a kind of that is practically indistinguishable from the esteem that is normally associated with “heritage”: the graffiti alley in Toronto, where Rick Mercer performs his rants for CBC Television:



An example of how a single production creates economic benefits is the filming of *Crimson Peak* in Kingston, Ontario. According to that city’s Media Relations Officer, Cindie Ashton, an estimated \$300,000 was brought into the local economy as a direct result of filming, with potential for more in future, as locations scouts became more aware of Kingston’s extensive architectural value (in a city that contains more than 1,200 protected heritage properties.)



Crimson Peak (2015, director Guillermo del Toro) is filmed in Kingston's Market Square. For more information on the filming and local economic benefits see <http://www.station14.ca/video.html?id=302>

Another example is Perth, where an episode of CBC's *Best Laid Plans* was filmed over a total of three days. During that time a significant amount of money poured into the community. 50 local paid extras were hired at \$20/hr., Couetts Coffee Shop was hired to cater lunch, and five locations were rented for approximately \$500 each, while downtown retailers benefitted from the presence of approximately 100 CBC staff. In addition to these benefits, local media coverage, drew even more attention to the town and showed off the value of Perth as a quality filming location.

The economic importance of the film industry is especially obvious in Toronto, a location so popular, there have been as many as 35 productions in progress simultaneously.



Toronto's architecture has been invaluable to the film industry for decades.



Still from *Scott Pilgrim vs the World* (2014) in front of Ramona's house on Carlton Street in Cabbagetown (which became a Heritage Conservation District in 2004.)

In *Scott Pilgrim vs the World* (2010) Director Edgar Wright took "some pride in having captured the original Lee's Palace mural before it was torn down to make way for a burrito joint, and then replaced by a new painting." *Scott Pilgrim vs the World* depicts Toronto landmarks which include Casa Loma and Baldwin Steps, Cabbagetown, Hillcrest Park, Bloor Street, Manning Avenue, a local school, library, coffee shop, record shop, Wychwood Barns, the Distillery District, the CN Tower, a back alley and inside a bus. The result: a movie Tour Guide of Toronto sites famous and not so famous so lavish, it was considered worthy of a photo-spread in *The Torontoist*.

http://torontoist.com/2010/11/reel_toronto_edgar_wright_talks_scott_pilgrim_vs_the_world/



**Hotel Waverly (1917)
Silver Dollar Room (1958)
still from *The Silent Partner*, 1978**

**(director: Daryl Duke, starring
Elliott Gould, Christopher
Plummer, Susannah York)**

The Silver Dollar Room was designated heritage by the City of Toronto in January, 2015 but the Hotel Waverly was not. At time of writing, the owner of both buildings is seeking to demolish and replace them with a 22-storey, mixed business and residential tower. A decision by the Ontario Municipal Board regarding their fate is anticipated imminently.

An Asset at Risk

Though its film industry is growing, Ontario is at risk of losing its production potential as buildings are demolished and replaced with buildings, which are, to filmmakers, far less interesting. According to Will Hoddinott, a location manager for CBC Television's *Murdoch Mysteries* the quality and availability of locations is decreasing every year. Architectural diversity is diminishing, to a point where, in his words, *"If a building has columns it's conserved, all others are demolished for new glass and steel condos, so that's what Toronto has become"*.



Crew setting up to film for *Murdoch Mysteries* in Cambridge .

<http://www.cambridge.ca/gallery-internal.php?gid=49&pg=2>

Murdoch Mysteries is set around the turn of the last century in Toronto, where suitable locations are increasingly hard to find. Consequences of this problem are a boon for municipalities like Cambridge and Guelph where suitable locations do exist and, among Ontario heritage buffs, a popular and challenging game of "spot the location".



Filming *Murdoch Mysteries* on Douglas Street in Guelph, Ontario .

<https://avowles.wordpress.com/2013/11/16/genius-loci-sense-of-place-draws-my-footsteps-and-a-murdoch-mysteries-film-crew/>

Sources for the Tourism Industry

Kevin Alexander. Senior Planner, City of Windsor.

Dawson Bridger. Community Programs Officer, Ontario Heritage Trust, Program Manager for Doors Open Ontario.

Julie Mulligan. Marketing Management, Ontario's Highland Tourism Organization

Denise Pinto. Global Director, Jane's Walks.

Karren Rennie. Heritage Tourism Manager/Curator, Town of Perth

Kathyn Russell. Tourism Development Coordinator, County of Elgin.

Marie White. Tourism Manager, Lanark County.

Sources for the Film Industry

Cindie Ashton. Media Relations Officer, City of Kingston.

Harvey Crossland, Director, CBC TV *Murdoch Mysteries*.

Will Hoddinott, Location Manager, CBC TV *Murdoch Mysteries*.

Sandra Kybartas, Production Manager, CBC TV *Murdoch Mysteries*

Ontario Media Development Corporation.

"Year in Review 2011-2012: Creative Industries – Driving Ontario's Economy".

List of Films Set in Toronto

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_set_in_Toronto

Top 25 Toronto Films

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/cover-story/top-25-toronto-films/>

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Commissioned to research and write these papers by Architectural Conservancy Ontario in the summer of, 2014.

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