
CABBAGETOWN PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION 2023-2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CHAIR'S REPORT & COMMITTEE REPORTS

CHAIR'S REPORT

The CPA has seen one of its most active and challenging years. Along with our normal events, awards and programs we have engaged with other community actors to potential challenges faced by Parliament Street.

Our events have kept us busy. Our Tour of Homes in September 2023 was the biggest yet, with 8 homes and 800 visitors. we have just completed a successful Hidden Gardens and Private Spaces Tour. And our walks have branched out to work with heritage Toronto from a booth at Cabbagetown Farmers Market for a Necropolis tour, *Black History, Unburied*.

Our Awards honoured several people for their contributions to our community. The Peggy Kurtin Award for Excellence in Restoration was given to 274 Carlton St. for its thorough and faithful façade restoration. The annual CPA recognition award went to Doug Fisher for his many contributions to the Cabbagetown community and the Streetscapes in Bloom award went to the spectacular garden at 7 Winchester St.

Thanks to the energy and creative imagination of our former chair Gale Moore, our newest award is the CPA Student Experience Award. Two SEP awards have been made for 2024 with work to be completed over the summer. Bracha Stettin, a Master of Landscape Architecture candidate, U of T, will deliver a historical ecology project entitled Trees and Time. Shivangi Chauhan, Masters of Urban Design candidate in the Daniels Faculty of Architecture and Design at U of T will produce a 20 minute short film on the rich tapestry of culinary diversity and urban design along Parliament Street

In the background, our core programs have been moving forward. Cabbagetown People added two biographies to its website: Barbara Mercer, author, poet and visual artist, and Alex and Agnew Burley, brothers, who left a mark in the world of boxing.

And If you have moved to Cabbagetown within the last year, you should have received a welcome brochure with information about the heritage of this community and an

invitation to become involved with the CPA, either as a member or a volunteer. Over 100 of these brochures were distributed in the last year.

Our media have been active as well. We really need residents to be aware of local heritage issues, Cabbagetown's heritage status and the perks and responsibilities that go with that.

With our large team of delivery volunteers evaporating in the pandemic, we went to a digital version which could only reach those on our list. We are returning to sending newsletters to all households to reach all of Cabbagetown, which is our mandate.

Social media is part of our day to day communication. Instagram has been maintained by Steve Yeates for the beauty shots and by Christina Jackson for promotion of our events. Facebook, which is maintained by Gilles Huot, has a similar function as Instagram with an emphasis on events, history and items related to Cabbagetown People.

We are also started to put a few videos on YouTube. We'd love to find some video production expertise in the community, possibly something like Cabbagetown Heritage Minutes. Please let us know if you are interested and can help.

Our two continued websites cabbagetownpa.ca and cabbagetownpeople.ca continue to evolve.

Finally, taking a big part of our attention this year was our Cabbagetown Talks sessions. We had two; both were triggered by the sale and designation of 509 Parliament, the old CBC studio and, currently, dance school. There were fears of what might happen to our main street in the near future, resulting in a large petition to the City to designate the heritage building.

In response, the CPA held a meeting in the Farm Meeting House in November on the history of Parliament Street. That put us close to capacity.

In a follow-up panel discussion on the future of the street for our February talk, we booked the Winchester Street Theatre, which was packed with over 200 attendees. The panelists did not disappoint and the questions were plentiful and lively. A full description of this evening is in our Spring 2024 newsletter.

This AGM is our Past-President Gale Moore's last meeting as a CPA Board member. The CPA Board has always been a hardworking panel of committed, aware people. When Gale Joined the board in 2015 she brought with her a jolt of new energy and direction.

Gale was one of the Board members who nudged us into more direct cooperation with other Cabbagetown groups, voiced our concern at City meetings about the women's shelter on Carlton Street, shared in the thankless job of managing the CPA website, encouraged closer ties with the National Trust for Canada, including attendance at their annual heritage conference and initiated and ran the CPA's Student Experience Program. And all that in addition to managing the duties of Chair. A big thank you to Gale and good luck in your future endeavours. But I am sure that we haven't seen the last of you.

Stephen Yeates,
Chair, CPA

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CPA AWARD PROGRAMS

The Peggy Kurtin Award Program for Excellence in Restoration

Since 1998, the Peggy Kurtin (PK) Award for Excellence in Restoration has been given annually to an outstanding restoration project. Honouring the best and most authentic restoration project(s) of the year, this award is at the heart of the CPA's purpose of celebrating architectural and streetscape restoration, and encouraging work of high quality.

The winner of the Excellence in Restoration Award for 2023 was 274 Carlton Street for its thorough facade restoration. This house, part of a triad built in 1891, is a Bay & Gable style with squared bays. The most important aspect of this restoration is the completion of the upper and lower porches which now join the others in the row of three houses, completing the row as built. The facade had been painted, allowing the masonry below the paint to deteriorate. A complete restoration of the brick took care to match the brick colour to the neighbouring houses, which had been built with Don Valley brick. Completing the restoration, the front fence was rebuilt to exactly match the neighbouring fences.

CPA Recognition Award

Founded in 2011 as the Volunteer of the Year Award, in 2017 the Board decided that tying this award to a specific year did not allow us to honour what are often lifetime contributions of a Cabbagetown resident or friend of Cabbagetown, nor did it truly reflect the nature of the contributions. The award, which is not necessarily given every year, is now called the CPA Recognition Award, and the winner is announced at the CPA Fall meeting that usually takes place at the end of November. Winners receive a glass wine cooler engraved with their name and the name of the award.

The 2023 award was presented to Doug Fisher who was acknowledged for his many lasting contributions to the Cabbagetown community. For many years, he was the Executive Director of the Cabbagetown Business Improvement Area (BIA) but he is now mostly known for his very informative weekly Cabbagetown Neighbourhood Review that gets several thousands of views every week. More information on the award and on Doug and previous years' winners can be found in the Awards section of our website.

Streetscape in Bloom

The Streetscapes in Bloom Award is an annual competition created to celebrate front gardens that are available for everyone to enjoy over the gardening season. Any street facing Cabbagetown garden may be nominated, and will be assessed through visits over the course of the summer using the criteria set out on our website. The winner receives a watercolour painting of the front garden by local artist Rosie Shephard and an art glass medallion from Kitras Glass that can be displayed in the garden.

Congratulations to our 2023 winning garden: 7 Winchester Street. This garden features a thoughtful arrangement of heights, textures, plant types, density, and colours. Clearly developed and nurtured over many years, this garden reflects the owner's dedication and meticulous care. Its striking beauty is such that it would naturally catch your eye, even outside the context of the competition, standing as a testament to the transformative power of gardening in our community.

CPA Student Experience Program (SEP) Award

In the summer of 2022 the CPA launched a pilot project which offered two awards, each worth \$1,500, to graduate students whose research was in some way relevant to the historic Toronto neighbourhood of Cabbagetown. The idea was to mobilise relevant research and ideas from the university to the community through some form of public engagement: a public talk, an installation, etc. The objectives are to showcase graduate student work, to give students hands-on experience with managing a small award (structured as a contract), to provide an opportunity to add to their portfolios and CVs, and to encourage them to appreciate, perhaps in new ways, the importance of heritage in a community. The 2024 program built on the pilot which was deemed a success by the students and by the CPA. There is now a [webpage](#) on the CPA website and information on the 2022-2023 winners has been posted.

For this year's competition, the information was distributed widely to universities across the City. Two awards have been made for 2024 with work to be completed over the summer. Bracha Stettin is a Master of Landscape Architecture candidate, University of Toronto. Her project entitled *Trees & Time* will deliver a zine focusing on historical ecology. Shivangi Chauhan is a Masters of Urban Design candidate in the John H.

Daniels Faculty of Architecture and Design, University of Toronto. Her project, *Parliament Street Chronicles* will be a 20-minute short film that delves into the rich tapestry of culinary diversity and urban design along Parliament Street in Cabbagetown. Congratulations to both our 2024 CPA Student Experience Program Award winners.

EVENTS

Cabbagetown Tour of Homes

The CPA returned with the renowned Cabbagetown Tour of Homes which had not run since 2019 due to the pandemic. This was our biggest tour yet, with over 800 tickets sold and 8 wonderful homes featured, ranging from Victorian and Contemporary designs with a little bit of old and new in regard to the interior characteristics.

The tour was spread out over both the east and west sides of Cabbagetown and attendees were graced with great weather and the neighbourhood was looking its best. We would like to thank once again our sponsors. Also a big thank you to Daniel Bloch (who chaired the tour for the second time) and his committee who assisted with many months of hard work in every way. The 2023 tour took on many new challenges from moving to a digital format for the ticket/booklet along with organizing over 100 volunteers for whom we are very grateful. Two of the homes were also featured on the TV program *Breakfast Television* which helped boost ticket sales.

The next tour will be in September of 2025. If you would like to volunteer your home, please reach out to us! The organizing committee is purely volunteer-based and will also be looking for individuals who can join the organizing committee and assist with future planning.

Hidden Gardens & Private Spaces

For a few months now, the Hidden Gardens & Private Spaces Committee has been planning the 2024 version this popular garden Tour. The Tour will take place on June 2, 2024. We will report on it in our 2024-2025 CPA Annual Report.

The Hidden Gardens & Private Spaces tour offers a rare opportunity to explore captivating gardens nestled within Toronto's historic Cabbagetown neighbourhood. This biennial event becomes a delightful journey through a tapestry of enchanting gardens, picturesque streets, and Victorian architecture. Master Gardeners posted in some of the gardens can offer guidance and insights into plant care, design principles, and sustainable gardening practices.

With its rich history and distinctive character, Cabbagetown provides the perfect backdrop for garden enthusiasts to gain inspiration from an array of unique and charming gardens, lovingly created and nurtured by dedicated gardeners.

As a self-guided walking tour, participants may set their own pace and path, allowing for a personalized experience that caters to individual interests and preferences.

Cabbagetown Walks

In the summer of 2023 and in partnership with Heritage Toronto, we piloted a new walking tour format. Once a month on a Tuesday afternoon, Heritage Toronto installed its booth at the Cabbagetown Farmers' Market. The booth was the departure point of several short tours of the Toronto Necropolis nearby. The theme of the tours was *Black History Unburied*.

The guides from both the CPA and Heritage Toronto (from its Emerging Historians program) took close to 200 participants to the graves of remarkable Black Torontonians: Thornton and Lucie Blackburn (freedom seekers who became successful entrepreneurs), Albert Jackson (first Black letter carrier whose appointment didn't go well), William Peyton Hubbard (first Black Toronto City Councillor), and many more.

Cabbagetown Talks

Fall 2023

We held a Cabbagetown Talk on November 30 at the Meeting House on Riverdale Farm. At the meeting, we announced our 2023 Streetscapes in Bloom winner (7 Winchester Street) and presented our 2023 Recognition Award to Doug Fisher.

Then our speaker, Gilles Huot, CPA Board member and amateur historian, took the stage with a slide show that outlined the history of Parliament Street and its evolution. From a trail in the woods to a vibrant - although slightly grimy - main street, Parliament has gone through various phases, just like the neighbourhoods it serves. At first, it was a residential street. This is why so many stores look like homes. Then, "services" started to appear: churches, restaurants, stores. Indeed, storefronts were added to the ground floor of Victorian homes and the upstairs were turned into rental apartments. Then Regent Park and St. James Town appeared and most of the homes on these stretches of Parliament disappeared. However, most of those between Gerrard and Wellesley still stand. Gilles's presentation is available on the CPA's YouTube channel.

Parliament Street - our main street - is now at a crossroads. Toronto's March of the Mid/High Rise buildings is upon us. This Cabbagetown Talk was a look at the past of our main street, taking stock of its evolution so we can better consider its future. This talk

was also setting the stage for a more fulsome and important discussion on the future of Parliament Street that took place in February 2024.

Winter 2024

There was standing room only at the Cabbagetown Talk that took place at the Winchester Street Theatre on February 27, 2024.

We gathered representatives from various background for a panel discussion centering around heritage, housing, redevelopments, etc.

You will find a detailed account of this very informative evening as well as articles on this important topic in the Spring 2024 issue of our newsletter. The fall 2023 issue of our newsletter also devoted a few pages on the future of Parliament Street. (Note: current and back issues of our newsletter are available in the News section of our website.)

As always, if you have suggestions for topics or speakers, or perhaps you are a local media person, academic or writer who enjoys working with ideas, please get in touch. The [CONTACT US](#) form on the website is the best way to reach us.

PROGRAMS

Cabbagetown People

After a busy year 2022-2023 (several new plaques were installed, many biographies were added to cabbagetownpeople.ca), the Cabbagetown People Program team quieted down in 2023-2024. The focus was more on updating sections of our cabbagetownpeople.ca website and also moving the whole website to a new server.

We also added two biographies to our website:

- Barbara Mercer, author, Poet, and visual artist
- Alex and Agnew Burlie, brothers who left their mark in the world of boxing

Future plans include a reprint of the Cabbagetown People brochure that would include the plaques that have been installed since the last version was published. The committee has also started compiling names for new plaques that could be installed in the next 2-3 years.

Welcome Package

At the CPA, we endeavour to enrich how visitors and residents experience our unique neighbourhood. Learning about our history, our people, and architecture, and engaging with the attractions and activities produced by our volunteer-led board is a great way to do this.

Several years ago we created an information dense, multi-page New Resident's Package to help us spread the word. But times change and, since then, we launched our renewed website, providing us an opportunity to reimagine our approach - and we're thrilled with the outcome.

We now distribute a *Welcome to Cabbagetown* letter to each new resident, personally signed by the CPA Chair. The letter is accompanied by a beautifully designed, trifold *Explore Cabbagetown* brochure, highlighting the CPA's programs and awards, as well as opportunities to support us through membership, volunteering, and joining our board.

Recipients are encouraged to visit our website to learn more. Not only is this a more cost-effective and sustainable approach, but it is also multipurpose. The compact size of our new brochure enables us to share it more readily via events and partner locations thereby increasing awareness of all that we do beyond new residents.

In 2023-2024, we distributed close to 100 Welcome to Cabbagetown letters.

MEDIA

CPA Newsletter

Steve Yeates continues as editor and designer-in chief, and **Tory Gzebb continues as a staff writer** for our biannual newsletter. With other social media now in place, the newsletter provides an opportunity to dive deeper on heritage and other issues. We hope it encourages the community to be actively aware of Cabbagetown's heritage status, issues and history, and to support and respect interest in Cabbagetown's ongoing evolution.

Due to the pandemic, some of our issues were made available digitally only. But the Spring 2023 issue was available in both digital printed supports, although the reduced run of the paper version was distributed through several retailers in the hood. In this way, we hoped to reach friends and neighbours who do not (yet!) subscribe to our mailing list.

Each issue, current and past, is posted on the News page of the CPA website. This almost complete archive of more than 30 years of news, views, and activities of the CPA is a great resource. We are still missing one or two issues. So, if you are cleaning up and find some old CPA newsletters, please check to make sure you don't have one that we're missing.

Social Media

We continue to use a variety of social media to reach our members and beyond. Our Facebook page, curated by Gilles Huot, now has 980 followers. This page is used to

announce events, share news, celebrate death anniversaries of remarkable Cabbagetowners, etc.

We have a few YouTube videos on our channel and will add more as we go along. We'd also love to find some video production expertise in the community to assist in these efforts. Cabbagetown Heritage Minutes perhaps? Please let us know if you're interested and can help.

The CPA's Instagram site, curated by Steve Yeates, has grown since its launch a couple of years ago to 565 subscribers. Our goal is to meet everyone where they read the news, and to continue to move into new areas. Please follow us on Instagram and Facebook for news and updates about our plans and activities.

CPA Website

The website (cabbagetownpa.ca) continues to serve us well. The e-commerce portion of the site is especially useful, in particular for association memberships and tour tickets. Our payment processing platform, Stripe, is not only secure, but provides bookkeeping and statistics that support the work of our Treasurer.

Also, please visit our other website, cabbagetownpeople.ca, to read about remarkable people who once called Cabbagetown home.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

CPA Membership and Marketing

We continue to encourage members of our community to join our association to support our work, to continue our efforts to promote an active interest in the history of the community, and to encourage participation in these activities. To be blunt, this has been a challenge, and despite the small membership fee of \$20/year for up to four members of a household, we continue to have difficulty increasing our base from the loyal group of supporters who contribute each year. We have made it easier than ever for folks to join with a secure e-commerce application on our website, and the automatic renewal reminders have been very successful. We thank each of you who have contributed over the years.

If you have ideas or an opinion on how to increase our reach in the community (or any other topic of interest), please write to us, or join us on a committee or the board to move forward with us.

Merchandise

Over and above providing information about our programs, answering questions, etc., the CPA's presence at various public events like the Cabbagetown Festival/Cabbagetown Arts & Crafts Show (our booth at Winchester and Sumach), the Forsythia Festival, etc. is also an opportunity to sell our CPA merchandise. It currently includes tea towels and tote bags. These are also usually on sale at our own public events.