



# Cabbagetown Preservation Association NEWSLETTER

Celebrating the architectural integrity and historic character of our neighbourhood



## Parliament Street on the Cusp -Developing a Vision

### A CPA Talk

Thursday November 30  
7:00 to 8:30 pm  
Meeting House, Riverdale Farm

Please use the Winchester Street entrance across from the Necropolis gates. (in person only)

CPA Board member and amateur historian Gilles Huot will outline the past 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. Most of those between Gerrard and Wellesley still stand.

Parliament Street - our main street - is now at a crossroads. Toronto's March of the Mid/High Rises is upon us. Let's first look at its past so we can better consider its future.

This talk is intended to set the stage for a more fulsome and important discussion on the future of Parliament Street that we are planning to hold in February 2024 during Ontario Heritage Week. Stay tuned for more details about the February meeting.

Also at the meeting there will be a presentation to the winners of the:

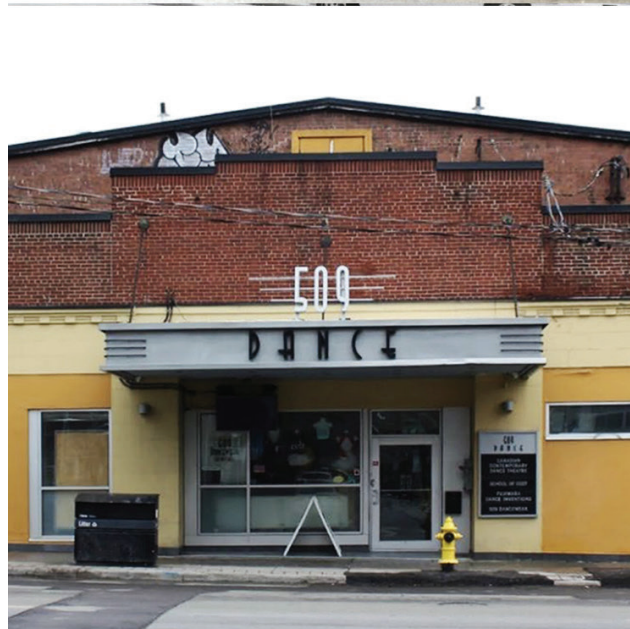
- 2023 Streetscapes in Bloom Award Winner
- CPA Recognition Award Winner

This is a free event and all are welcome!

But please, if you are not already, consider becoming a CPA member by clicking [HERE](#).

### Inside:

- 2 A Word from the Chair
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- 8 Awards, Tour of Homes



Archives of Ontario and City of Toronto



# A Word From the Chair

Cabbagetowners enjoy Parliament Street as one of the most unique main streets in the city. Physically, it's a jumble of storefronts varying in condition from authentically restored to near demise. Culturally, every category of society and every economic status is represented. All—rich and poor—share the sidewalks and rub shoulders. It is not precious, it is distinctive. As such, it's a difficult street to define and plan. What it does have going for it is its relatively intact Victorian frontages and strong neighbourhood culture. Even Starbucks didn't survive Jet Fuel.

In this issue of the CPA Newsletter, we focus on new challenges to old places. For developers who want property and governments that are unsupportive of heritage, the housing crisis offers an argument to weaken heritage protection and to tear down old buildings. In rebuttal, Gilles Huot writes about the proposal to develop the former dance theatre on Parliament Street, the implications for the street's future and how the community might engage with this project.

Expanding the conversation further, Gilles will present a CPA talk on November 30th, walking through the history and development of our main street. Later in February at a CPA Talks meeting, there will be a full panel discussion of what the future of Parliament Street could look like. This will be announced in the new year.

More generally, I report on some solutions to these issues that were explored at The National Trust for Canada's annual conference in Ottawa last month as well as new thinking on the concepts and practices of heritage protection.

Please join us on November 30th for Gilles' presentation. We will meet at the Riverdale Farm Meeting House at 7:00 PM.

Stephen Yeates,  
Chair, CPA

# Parliament Street on the Cusp

## Parliament Street Is Changing – What Can We Do? Developing a Vision for Our Main Street

By Gilles Huot

*Note: The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and not necessarily of the CPA. We are publishing it to support community efforts in envisioning the future of Cabbagetown's main street. These are some background remarks to launch the conversation*

*We at the CPA are planning a community meeting in February 2024 on the future of Parliament Street. Many of the themes we would like to touch are included in Gilles' piece. This is why we agreed to publish it. Please use it as a starting point for your reflection and we hope to see you at our February meeting (details to be published on the CPA website and various other media).*

### Why Am I Writing This?

The future of Parliament Street will be very different from what we see today and I feel that an event that occurred a few months ago triggered the need for the Cabbagetown community to once again get involved in its future.

In the spring of this year, a developer submitted to the City of Toronto a proposal to change a zoning By-law that would allow him to build a 10-storey (plus mechanical penthouse) condominium tower of 85 units at 505-509 Parliament Street. The main building, 509 Parliament Street, has a storied past, starting as a movie theatre then becoming a CBC studio. It currently houses the Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre.

The current zoning By-law for the stretch of Parliament Street that runs between Gerrard and Wellesley allows for a height of up to 4 storeys.

Over the last 25 years, Parliament Street has undergone many changes but they were always aligned with the current zoning By-law. The 505-509 Parliament proposal is different in that it will effectively change the rules that were put in place to protect the character of the neighbourhood.

The developer is likely positioning his proposal as a response to the Province's call for more residential units. However, his proposal is only for market value condominium units and not for affordable rental units. Therefore, the proposal will do nothing to aid the current housing crisis and will only succeed in altering an already vibrant, albeit slightly weathered, community thoroughfare. And it will act as a catalyst for many more similar block-mass towers.

With a group of neighbours, I've been fighting this proposal, not because we oppose the redevelopment of Parliament Street but because it, in no way whatsoever, responds to city planning and design principles, existing infrastructure, urban fabric, history, and community needs. The proposal would lead to the creation of an urban canyon created by 10-story buildings on both sides of the street.

Toronto is a city known for its unique neighbourhoods which showcase the diversity that makes our city world-renowned. What options are there to create a better community and neighbourhood through development, embracing growth while maintaining its personality?

What I suggest here is to think about what we would like to see happening with our main street. We can't just let developers decide what it will be like. Let's help reshape our main street. Yes, Parliament Street will be redeveloped. But how can we make sure that the community benefits from it (and not only the developers)?

### Characteristics of Great Main Streets and Successful Downtowns

To help guide our thoughts, let's have a look at some concepts that would make a great main Street.

### Considerations Related to Parliament Street

#### Heritage

Cabbagetown is one of the early Heritage Conservation Districts established in Ontario. This has preserved a neighbourhood of tree-lined streets of Victorian homes, picturesque and unique (one of the most sought-after neighbourhoods in the City). Parliament Street still retains some of the original housing stock that was converted into retail. This has created varying elevations along the street.

#### Leveraging of Heritage Buildings

Over the years, storefronts were added to the original Victorian buildings so much so that many of the original facades disappeared. Leveraging the heritage aspects of the stores (e.g. removing additions when possible) and returning to the original facade (or contributing retail facade) could give the area a unique cachet (and would be an easy way to widen the sidewalks).

#### Height of Buildings

The current By-law allows for a maximum of 4 storeys as it was set to protect the neighbourhood. This should be our starting point. If heights beyond 4 storeys were to be allowed, what should the community get in return (this is where our vision comes in)? We could "negotiate" but we need to know what we want in return.

#### A Neighbourhood Main Street

Parliament serves three communities, Regent Park at Gerrard Street, Cabbagetown at Carlton Street and St. James Town at Wellesley Street. Each section has retail geared to each population. Parliament provides (or should be providing) gathering spaces for each community and for the community at large.

#### Public Realm

As the main artery, Parliament Street provides spaces to gather, meet or observe. Outdoor dining has been very successful along the street. But the width of sidewalks and lack of public space is a problem.

#### Community Events

From the Cabbagetown Festival, Holiday celebrations, Neighbourhood Runs, etc., Parliament Street hosts many community events.

#### Diversity

From high-end homes to public housing, a variety of ethnic communities, and people of all ages, Cabbagetown does not have one distinct identity. It caters to all people, regardless of age, ethnicity, income.

#### Community Retail

Many businesses rent their retail space on Parliament Street. They create a diverse and unique character in the neighbourhood. Private development typically is about maximizing investments with little regard to community welfare and retail identity. In redeveloped areas, rents tend to be high and make it impossible for independent businesses to survive. Typically, chain stores inhabit these developments and Parliament Street could eventually be like any suburban thoroughfare. Is it what we want? If not, how can we avoid it?



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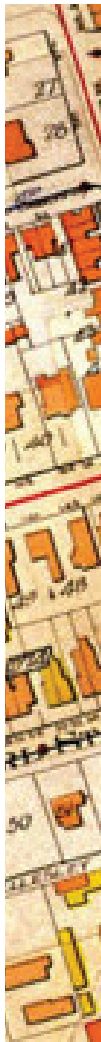
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# Parliament Street on the Cusp

## Extensive Social Services

Cabbagetown and our Ward (Toronto Centre) has the city's highest concentration of shelters, crisis centres, safe injection sites, and supportive/public housing - all within one or two kilometres of the intersection of Carlton and Parliament. Homelessness as well as addictions and mental health issues are part of our neighbourhood's fabric. Any new project coming into the area needs to understand the safety concerns as well the need to assist in the support services needed in this community.

## Traffic, Parking, Roadways

Lots of work to do about this, especially if intensification increases traffic. Carlton-Parliament is already a dangerous intersection for both pedestrians and drivers. Removing one line of parking on Parliament could allow for widening of sidewalks and other initiatives (e.g. bike lanes). How can laneways, parking lots, etc. be integrated into developments in a reasonable fashion? Some laneways (e.g. Broadcast Lane) are also too narrow to allow for high intensification.

## Accessible, Good Transit In and Out

The current system is at capacity and needs improvement. What about the planned streetcar up Parliament to Castle Frank station?

## An Evening/Night Life

A few pubs and bars exist; there could be improvement. What about other forms of entertainment such as a cinema?

## Gathering Spaces

There is a lack of local performance spaces such as parkettes.

## Community Services

Daycares, schools, doctors offices, and seniors' residences are in short supply especially considering current neighbouring densification (Regent Park and St James Town). Planning for those services should be part of densification plans.

## Moving Forward

Here are some ideas that can create development that addresses these unique qualities of Cabbagetown.

## Designate Parliament as an HCD:

This would manage development while maintaining the heritage character of Parliament Street. It would not impede redevelopment but would ensure that it is done in a reasonable and measured fashion. This should lead to the restoration of some original facades. If designating the whole street is impossible or would take too long, as many contributing individual buildings should be designated as soon as possible.

## Streetscape Enhancement:

Increased population means need for larger or more outdoor green space, transit services, schools, and other public infrastructures. Developers should be responsible for enhancements to the public realm as part of their projects. Covered sidewalks, either arcades or canopies, widening sidewalks via setbacks from property lines, seating areas for gathering, green space options, café/restaurant patios, connections to rear laneways would create a stronger public realm while increasing safety and accessibility. With the increase in population, the street will need to accommodate more people. In many spots, present sidewalks barely allow for two people to pass each other. If redevelopment could be set back an additional a few feet in from their property line, a wider, more inviting pedestrian zone could be created. Also, sidewalk widening by removing one lane of parking would create a more pedestrian/community-friendly space. Additional public parking could be required in the new developments to offset the loss.

## Articulated Elevations

The City of Toronto Streetscape Guidelines states that buildings should vary in their elevation all treatment, setbacks, and massing, depending on their location along the street, from mid-block to corners. This avoids a massive wall of buildings looming over the public zone.

## Community Enhancement

Creating public spaces such as a plaza (see Streetscape Enhancement above) should be part of the developer's responsibility, in discussion with the local community (example: Carrot Common on Danforth).

## Development Diversity

The response to the housing crisis should be a variety of housing options beyond condominium towers. Affordable housing and rental options should be a requirement of any development. Affordable rentals are available above most of the existing retail spaces on Parliament Street. If the buildings are gutted, the associated rental housing units disappear as well. With affordable housing at a premium, it doesn't make sense to reduce the number of this type of units in our neighbourhood.

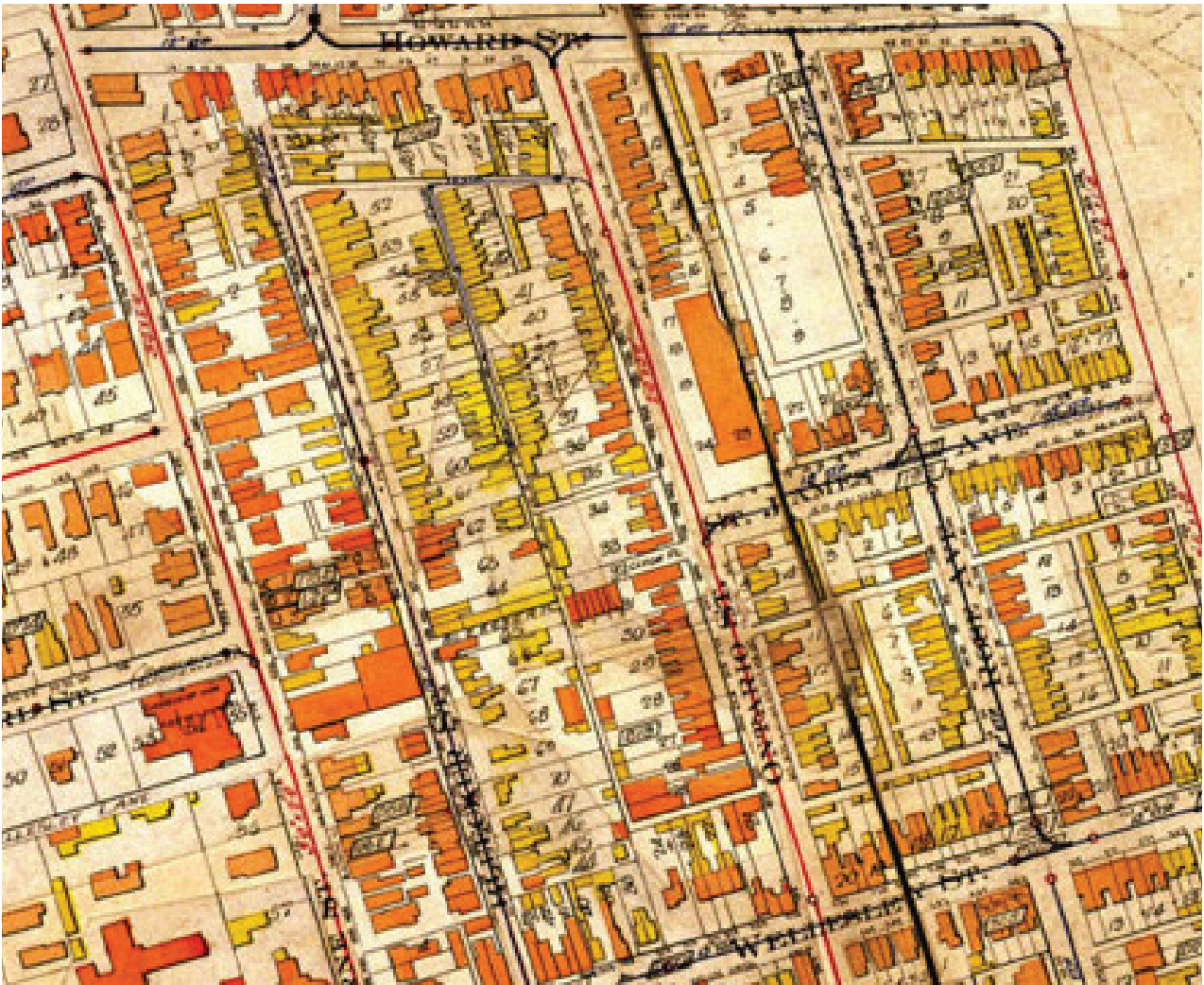
## Next Steps

My goal here is to get the conversation going. I do not have many answers but I think that together we can find many of them.

Change is inevitable and it is incumbent upon us to embrace neighbourhood development in a thoughtful manner that respects our heritage and needs of the community.

We need to develop our own vision of the future of Parliament Street and then pass it on to the City and prospective developers. We cannot make our vision mandatory. But if it is taken into consideration by the City and the developers, they would get our support. We must persist as long as the street is threatened.

The Cabbagetown community has always been strong and vocal. It did "save" the neighbourhood once (see Quick History of Intensification in Our Area). We should build on this legacy. We need to be part of discussions and decisions that will affect our neighbourhood and especially our main street.



St. James Town streets before development. Good's Fire Insurance Atlas. City of Toronto Archives





# Parliament Street on the Cusp

## A Quick History of Intensification in Cabbagetown

by Gilles Huot (with some notes from George Rust-D'Eye)

### Regent Park

Regent Park was originally a neighbourhood of Victorian homes. Just like Cabbagetown, from late in the 19th century till WWI, it thrived with just a few hiccups. With WWI, it took a downturn that was aggravated by the Great Depression. Then came WWII. At the end of the war, most of Regent Park Victorian homes were in pretty bad shape as they were mostly made out of wood (those in today's Cabbagetown were mostly made out of bricks) and not maintained. This "slum" was not only infested with rats but also with social ills and crime. The bulldozers showed up around 1947 and crushed them all. A new neighbourhood of public housing in mostly low-rise brown-brick buildings emerged.

Although it only had a few highrises at its south end, it was Toronto's version of Le Corbusier's much criticized "towers in the park" concept: buildings in a "park," most of them not fronting a street. The last buildings appeared in the late 1950s.

That version of Regent Park was much loved by many of its residents, mostly new immigrants to the city. But social problems and crime, including drugs, reappeared very quickly. A much needed revitalization of the neighbourhood started in 2005. Many highrises and townhomes replaced the post-war brown-brick buildings.

The renaissance of Regent Park is now nearing its end with the planned demolition in the coming months of the last few remaining post-war buildings near Gerrard and River streets. Once completed, the new Regent Park will be a mixed-housing neighbourhood of modern highrises and townhouses with market-value condos, public housing, senior homes, etc. This neighbourhood south and south-east of Cabbagetown is being hailed as a social success (important British and American newspapers reported on it). It already has a very high density and the new section (at Gerrard and River) will even be more dense with buildings towering at 39 storeys.

### St. James Town

From the late 1800s till the 1950s, a large area bordered by Sherbourne, Bloor, Parliament, and Wellesley, was also occupied by Victorian homes, just like today's Cabbagetown. Just a few of them remain today near the intersection of Bleecker and Howard streets. The rest was bulldozed to make way for the white towers (rental apartments) of St. James Town - also designed as another Toronto version of Le Corbusier's "towers in the park" concept. This neighbourhood north/north-west of today's Cabbagetown is the most dense neighbourhood in Canada. More towers were just added, condos this time, on Howard near Parliament and a few more are in the works.

### Cabbagetown

Most houses that can be seen in today's Cabbagetown were built in the 1880s and 1890s. Just like our neighbours to the south, Cabbagetown became a slum for a large part of the 20th century. By the 1930s, most of these sturdy homes had been turned into rooming houses.

In the late 1970s, astute realtors saw the value behind the sturdy, decaying but still beautiful Victorian facades and started buying them, restoring them, and flipping them.

But developers had their eyes on Cabbagetown. Their plan was to continue the bulldozing that started in St. James Town. Yes, what is today's Cabbagetown could have become an extension of St. James Town.

It took a handful of courageous, skilful, and articulate Cabbagetowners (the seed that grew to become the Cabbagetown Preservation Association) and a changing of the guard at City Hall (with Mayors David Crombie and John Sewell) to stop it. This

cleared the way for the renaissance of Cabbagetown that bloomed in the 1980s. Also, these efforts eventually led the City, in the early 2000s, at the behest of residents, to designate sections of Cabbagetown as heritage conservation districts (HCDs). We can even say that these efforts ended up making Cabbagetown one of the most beautiful and sought-after neighbourhoods in Toronto.

### Parliament Street Yesterday and Today

Parliament Street is one of the oldest streets in Toronto. It is named after the Upper Canada parliament buildings that once stood at its southern end (at Front Street). The street started as a path cleared in the early 1790s by the British army under the orders of John Graves Simcoe, first Lieutenant Governor of Upper

Canada. He wanted his soldiers to open a road through the woods so he could reach his summer home (a log cabin overlooking the Don Valley) that he pompously called Castle Frank. It was situated where the Rosedale Heights School of the Arts now stands.

At first, Parliament, between Gerrard and Bloor streets, was a residential street dotted with Victorian homes. By 1890, most of the lots on Parliament Street north of Gerrard had been built on.

By the 1950s, most of the Parliament Street Victorian homes south of Gerrard and north of Wellesley had disappeared with the development of Regent Park and St. James Town

Although built in various styles, most of the buildings were erected at the same period, in similar sizes (2-3 storeys), and for the same



City of Toronto Archives.

purpose thus providing an unbroken streetscape of consistent building forms fairly unique in Toronto. Most had small front yards. For a time, only a church (location of today's No Frills) and a marble stone manufacture (location of today's Rexall's) broke the flow of residential buildings.

Over the years, Parliament Street became a commercial street with owners adding storefronts and bringing most of the buildings right out to the sidewalk. As a result, most of the Victorian buildings that still exist can only be seen by looking above the retail additions.

More services started to pop up: theatres, fire stations, restaurants/bars, and, of course, stores (including Harry Rosen's original store at 407 Parliament). Streetcars went all the way up to Bloor Street.

Today, many Cabbagetowners live on Parliament Street in apartments above those stores. There are also a few free-standing residences. Most of the Victorian structures between Gerrard and Dundas and those between Wellesley and Bloor streets were demolished.

Parliament Street is Cabbagetown's main street. Although at times it feels gritty and in need of TLC, it is also full of history and potential.





# Parliament Street on the Cusp

## National Trust for Canada: Transforming Heritage

by Steve Yeates



Restored lantern, Winchester Hotel. Steve Yeates

**When most people think of heritage** preservation, they think of the protection of buildings. In fact, the original motto of the Cabbagetown Preservation Association was “Preserving the architectural integrity and character of our neighbourhood since 1989.” We rethought that.

The protection of our neighbourhood character and, in fact, the neighbourhood itself had become increasingly urgent in the 1970s and into the 1980s as the uniform high rise tower development of St. James Town threatened to spill into the surrounding communities. In fact, that was the City’s plan. Cabbagetown was seen as a rundown enclave of decaying homes, rooming houses, sketchy alleys, and more than its share of petty crime.

Cabbagetown was physically decaying but it had always been a lively community. Neighbours knew each other; as they do now, shops and services served the community on Parliament Street; it was home to hundreds of people.

In the 1960s and 1970s new people taking up residence in the neighbourhood saw other values. The arts community – artists, writers, musicians – took advantage of cheaper housing and the proximity to downtown. Among some, a vision developed that this was an area of rough beauty. Hundred-year-old homes were being renovated or restored and a sense that this was part of the history of Toronto and Canada was taking hold. The New York Times noted that Cabbagetown was the largest continuous area of Victorian homes in North America (conveniently, nobody can find the quotation, but we believe it, anyway).

In 1988, as the threat of the St. James Town-type towers loomed over Cabbagetown, a small developer purchased a row of three workers’ cottages that anchored the view of the north end of Metcalfe Street. A nondescript residential building was slated to replace the houses. That was the trigger that gave birth to agitation to save the area from slow or rapid demolition. The reform-oriented City government was sympathetic to a more thoughtful approach to development. Out of this came the establishment of the Cabbagetown Preservation Association and the eventual creation of a few Cabbagetown Heritage Conservation Districts.

At that time the CPA and the neighbourhood were concentrating on the physical and visual aspects of heritage. As the organization matured, other aspects of heritage were recognized. The CPA’s slate of walking tours increasingly went beyond architecture into

topics of our city’s history. A new enterprise of the CPA started a decade later with Cabbagetown People, recognizing important contributors to the social landscape of the neighbourhood and beyond.

There is more to think about.

In October 2023, I attended the 50th annual conference of the National Trust for Canada, Transforming Heritage. The National Trust encourages the protection of historic places, buildings and environments by supporting and encouraging heritage policies and laws, awarding preservation actions by municipalities and acting as a centre for information through its conferences and newsletters.

At its annual conferences, new and emerging ideas and issues of heritage are presented and discussed. At this conference there were several emerging areas of focus, including:



The row of cottages that galvanized the neighbourhood. Steve Yeates

- The maturation of heritage concepts beyond buildings and streets.
- New economic and political challenges to heritage work.
- The relationship of heritage protection to climate change.
- The perceived conflict between heritage and housing supply.
- Expanding awareness beyond the circumference of Euro-Canadian heritage.

### New Values in Heritage

Michael MacLelland, a Principal of ERA Architects, described the ongoing heritage reset in Canada as encompassing new values and concerns.

Heritage has always attempted to preserve markers of our history. Aside from that, our judgement of what is worthy of heritage designation has been strongly influenced by our taste and by the quality of the buildings. For example, the Toronto Dominion Centre and Osgoode Hall are examples of buildings of superb design, materials and details as well as their historical importance. Similarly, Cabbagetown houses are valued for their more elaborate design and connection to our history.

However, other values are being recognized as equally important while the subjects of heritage are becoming more broad than the earlier default of just buildings. Tower blocks exemplify several values that are being considered in heritage decisions. Their

obvious heritage values are their demonstration of the era’s architectural style and of their evidence of rapid mid-century demographic change. In addition, there is social equity in tower preservation as a part of the heritage of non-European immigrants. Looking beyond the heritage of European settlers is a more recent value in the heritage conversation.

The preservation of Tower blocks by new techniques of tower renewal links heritage with other values, such as environmental concerns and economic value. As tower blocks reach the limits of their life expectancy, past practice would be to demolish and replace. The embedded carbon in the destroyed building materials would be released while the energy used and carbon released in rebuilding would have a high environmental cost. The energy used in human uses of the building is a fraction of that used in the construction of a building.

### Selling Heritage – Economics, Politics, Housing

The Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force holds that heritage preservation is partly to blame for housing unaffordability and that it is used as a shield to prevent building density.

Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster*, fast tracks planning and approvals and creates more obstacles to heritage preservation (Nova Scotia has introduced a similar bill, Bill 239). For properties that are registered (the building is of interest but not protected) but not designated (the building is protected), the bill makes their listing precarious by limiting the listing to only two years. The buildings are removed from the list if their owners have not completed the long process of designation by that time. They can’t return to the designation list for five years and the bar for designation is set higher.

Phil Pothén of Environmental Defence said that we must sell what people want. In his presentation he noted that it isn’t enough to tout heritage as virtuous in itself. Heritage protection isn’t just about buildings. It extends to streetscapes and neighbourhoods while acting as a driver of tourism and positively impacting the social fabric of communities. That argument needs to be supplemented with acknowledgement that heritage exists along with the need for new housing and can fulfill part of that as a route to new homes.

Pothén had views that will ruffle the feathers of some heritage advocates. Most would agree that heritage does not have to be





# Parliament Street on the Cusp

in opposition to affordable housing at accessible prices, as the Ontario government contends. Going beyond that value, Pothen contends that to have credibility in the current political and economic atmosphere, Heritage Conservation Districts must remove ideas of consistent massing, avoidance of shadows and maintenance of density if we are to keep in the discussion with the powers that want to shut heritage down.

Less controversially, he states that heritage preservation is in retreat in Canada. In the face of the housing emergency, the best approach for preservation is to accept arrangements that increase density, such as allowing secondary suites in houses, laneway suites, the conversion of valuable commercial buildings into co-ops or homes and practicing adaptive reuse. For example, the work to restore St. Luke's United Church on Sherbourne Street will repurpose the sanctuary as a multipurpose venue and discretely add several stories of dwellings.

Kayla Galvin of the Ontario Association of Heritage Professionals noted that building large single homes in sprawl and destroying old, closely built neighbourhoods would be inefficient in relieving the housing shortage. Victorian neighbourhoods were already dense when they were built. What is needed is more dwellings, not more rooms, noting that larger houses mean fewer dwellings by area. Increasing density with laneway suites and subdividing older homes into attic and basement apartments would restore more dwellings if owners wanted to do that. She also noted that a change in government policy for tax laws to favour reuse over demolition would help move this forward.

Galvin also stated that using the housing emergency as a weapon to get around heritage ignores the shortage of construction capacity, which is restrained by labour and materials shortages and the restrictions of the higher-interest economy.



Toronto Chinatown 1914. City of Toronto Archives.

of Little Jamaica is woven by its businesses, associations and organizations and the social networks of the people who run and use them. Its distinction is created by the shared background of the residents.

Another cultural landscape that needs protection is Kensington Market, a unique historical area that is always threatened by gentrification. Its network of small, independent shops and businesses goes back to the early part of the 20th century as Eastern-European Jewish im-migrants occupied the area and established what was known as the Jewish Market. Follow-ing them were Portuguese and Italian immigrants and, more recently, people from East Asia and the Caribbeans. Architecturally, Kensington

As we work to reconcile with our past, more non-Indigenous Canadians are becoming aware of the history that was invisible to us until only recently. Physical artifacts, oral histories, and archaeological evidence of trading networks and cultural sites are being slowly revealed.

Indigenous groups have started to initiate their own archaeology on their sites, sometimes collaborating with archaeologists and museums to discover more detail about their heritage. Museums have started to return materials that are still an active part of living Indigenous cultures while making reproductions of these returned artifacts for study and display.

There is an urgency to do more archaeology as sites are covered by construction or as climate change washes and disturbs the locations of shoreline artifacts. Resources are scant but Reconciliation efforts advance as Indigenous and non-Indigenous archaeologists and historians collaborate. In doing so, non-Indigenous heritage professionals have been working to incorporate or be guided by Indigenous knowledge and perspectives as work proceeds on these sites with the consent of First Nations.

Perry Stein of a Lethbridge community planning group noted that part of the responsibility for preservation and rediscovery of Indigenous heritage lies with urban planning that incorporates all aspects of the local culture, including First Nations sites and names of places.

## Cabbagetown

Cabbagetown and the CPA's journey in heritage has to some extent mirrored the expansion of thought in heritage circles on what heritage means. From the immediate necessity of preserving a few houses to saving streets and then the larger neighbourhood, the CPA has incorporated Toronto's history and some local cultural description in our walks and, soon after, its people and community in its Cabbagetown People program. Although we have acknowledged the work of Indigenous people who have mostly assimilated and contributed as part of settler society, we have been very light on what activities and culture existed here in pre-European society. There are opportunities to expand on this work in our Necropolis walks and when talking about the Don River.

The housing crisis will also affect us as we decide how to react to challenges such as taller buildings on Parliament Street and working with the Cabbagetown Heritage Conservation District Committee in managing community response to these and other events.



The higher density of older places. Alpha Ave. Steve Yeates

## Cultural Landscapes

From the beginning, our approach to heritage has been Eurocentric, focusing on artifacts of European history, settlement and culture. Increasingly, heritage interest has been encompassing the experience of other cultures existing in Canada and their approaches to heritage. At the conference there were several examples.

A place can be an entity. A neighbourhood itself can have a strong distinction that makes the preservation of its integrity as important as that of a physical structure.

Black Urbanism Toronto gave a presentation on the revival of Little Jamaica and its struggle with Metrolinx, which has been displacing businesses that support the cultural life of the community. The fabric

Market is mostly Victorian; culturally it is a microcosm of Canadian history and by this measure alone is a National Historic Site.

The original Chinatown in Toronto and Chinatowns across North America were seen to have no value as a place by city governments until recent decades. Filmmaker Karen Cho introduced her film Big Fight in Little Chinatown about the Chinatowns that have been erased by insensitive development, including close brushes with oblivion in Toronto and Montreal. In most cases, Chinese communities had to use strategies to make their communities too valuable for a city's tourism to be destroyed.

The most glaring omission in heritage has been the dismissal of the vastness and complexity of Indigenous history and its diversity of cultures across Canada.



Lest We  
Buried  
by Gilles H



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## The CP

Stephen Ye  
Sarah McC  
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Matt Mint  
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Join us!



# Cabbagetown People



## Lest We Forget: Tales of Soldiers Buried in the Toronto Necropolis

by Gilles Huot



Every year on the eleventh hours of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, we pause to remember those who served during wars from which many never returned.

But many who served never made it to the front. Until recently, military tradition dictated that soldiers were to be buried where they fell. For that reason, very few soldiers buried in Canadian soil, like those in the Necropolis, were killed in action. The stories of these soldiers are nonetheless engaging.

Thanks to the Industrial Revolution, countries engaged in WWI had access to sophisticated weapons that could kill on a grand scale. There were still bayonets and horses on the battlefields of WWI but there were also machine guns, submarines, heavy artillery, tanks, poison gas, and... warplanes.

Warplanes were used for the first time during WWI. When the war broke out, there were very few pilots and many needed to quickly be trained. These early planes were dangerous machines made out of wood frames wrapped in fabric or laminated paper. Many pilots perished before even being able to embark on a combat mission.

In August 1917, Captain Gordon Hanlan was trying out a new type of airplane - a Sopwith Scout - over England when a portion of

the wing broke out at 7,000 feet. Hanlan plunged to his death. He was scheduled to fly to France the very next day. Hanlan was 26, from Toronto, and the eldest son of Ned Hanlan, a world-champion oarsman (sculler) and city councillor. The Hanlans ran a hotel on the Toronto Islands and Hanlan's Point is named after them.

Roy "Brownie" Brown's story is a little less sad. He was born near Ottawa. Wanting to become a pilot, he trained at the Wright School of Aviation in Ohio.

On April 21, 1918, Brown led a squadron engaged with the "Flying Circus," a German group of planes led by Baron Manfred von Richthofen who was, at the time, Germany's highest scoring fighter pilot. Richthofen was so self-assured and arrogant that he painted his plane bright red. This dubbed him the Red Baron. On that fateful morning, Brown was chasing him when, against all odds, Richthofen's plane went down and the Red Baron was no more.

However, gunners from an Australian regiment were also shooting at the red plane from the ground. To this day, both sides - the British flying service (Canada didn't have its own air force at the time) and the Australians - claim to have shot down Richthofen. We will likely never know whether or not Brown shot down the red plane. But one thing is sure: he played a determining role in the German hero's demise.

After the war, Brown established a small aviation company. After this venture failed, he settled on a farm near Toronto. When WWII broke out, he attempted to enlist in the Canadian Air Force but was refused. The fact that he sustained many injuries having been involved in the few plane crashes he survived was likely a factor. Brown died of a heart attack in 1944 at age 50. A few years ago, the Last Post Fund installed a military headstone to Brown a few yards from the unmarked grave where he is buried.

Many military headstones quietly stand at attention in the lower part of the Necropolis, at the level of Rosedale Valley Road. It is hard not to get a bit emotional in this section of the cemetery. First, the sheer number of military graves in this area is foreboding. Then, something takes you when you look at the age of those buried there: 28, 25, 22, 21, 19, 18, and... 16. Most of these were young men were in training, about to be sent to the front. Most died in October 1918; WWI ended just a few weeks later. An invisible and deadly enemy took them before they could face the Germans: the Spanish Flu. So many young lives wasted.

And of course, history had to repeat itself and, in 1939, another war engulfed the world.

At the beginning of WWII, Kathleen "Kay" Christie joined the Canadian army as a registered nurse and was given the rank of Lieutenant. In 1941, she was offered a posting to a secret destination that ended up being a military hospital in Hong Kong.

But three weeks after arriving in Hong Kong, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. A little known fact is that Hong Kong was also attacked by the Japanese on the same day. Within a few days, Hong Kong surrendered and the hospital where Kay worked became a prison camp. Overnight, she became a prisoner of war while continuing to care, with quickly dwindling resources, for the sick and wounded. As a prisoner, she was moved around a few times. Living conditions in the camps were pitiful but she claims that she was never mistreated, contrary to what she was able to witness happening to men around her. In mid-1943, she was freed as part of a prisoner exchange and made her long way back to Canada.

For years, she never was able to talk about her experience, even to her children. But she opened up about it in a 1992 interview with CBC. Kay Christie died at age 82 in 1994.

Ainsworth Dyer was born in 1977 and was raised in nearby Regent Park. He was a rambunctious child and spirited teenager. He eventually joined the army and was deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina and then to Afghanistan. He was a well liked soldier and had all the best military qualities. He was destined to a great future.

But on the night of April 17, 2002, Ainsworth was taking part in a live-fire exercise in a field near Kandahar. An American pilot flying above mistook the exercise as an attack on his plane and shot back, killing four Canadian soldiers. Ainsworth was one of them. He and his three comrades were the first Canadians soldiers to benefit from the policy change in 1970 that allowed repatriation of Canadian war dead. Dyer was buried in the Necropolis with full military honours.

These are just some of the many unique stories of Canadians at war. They were willing to fight to maintain the ideals of this country. They deserve to be remembered.

Lest We Forget!

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## CPA: Who We Are

Founded in 1988 to encourage the preservation of the architectural integrity and historic character of Cabbagetown, the CPA does that and more:

### Cabbagetown Walks

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Lively discussions about Cabbagetown's past, present and future

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The Cabbagetown Tour of Homes

### Award Programs

The Peggy Kurtin Awards Program  
The Streetscapes in Bloom Award  
The CPA Recognition Award

The CPA Student Experience Program





# Awards and Congratulations

## Doug Fisher: the 2023 CPA Recognition Award Winner

Every year the CPA Board recognizes a member of the community who has made important contributions to Cabbagetown. This year's winner is Doug Fisher who has, among other activities, kept residents aware of what is happening in our neighbourhood.

Doug first moved into Cabbagetown in 1986 onto Sackville Street and in 1991, he bought his current house on Wellesley Street. He's been here ever since. He and Irene love their home and appreciate greatly the enjoyment they receive from their neighbours and friends in the Wellesley Cottages and nearby Alpha Avenue and Laurier Avenue.



Before all of this happened, he had an active political career and he operated his own business.

In 1980, Doug won the federal election in Mississauga North. Over the next four years as a Member of Parliament, he chaired the Toronto Liberal caucus, served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and chaired a subcommittee on the taxation of artists. From 1967 to 1979, he worked as a part-time political organizer, managing campaigns at each government level for leading figures in the Liberal Party.

Since 2012, he's written a weekly blog, the Cabbagetown Neighbourhood Review. Today, it serves our area and the neighbourhoods south to the lake with news about local events, controversies, stores, clubs and pubs. It is well-received. It gets over 2000 views each week and during its eleven-year history, it has attracted over two million views.

From 2005 to 2012, Doug managed the Cabbagetown Business Improvement Area. He organized the annual Cabbagetown Festival, handled members' issues, lobbied the City of Toronto and innovated a series of special events. During his time at the BIA, he learned how to write and publish an online blog.

From 1975 to 2005, Doug operated his own small business which eventually became a nation-wide distributor selling Canadian books to schools and libraries.

He and Irene have family memberships in the Cabbagetown Preservation Association, the Cabbagetown Residents Association, the Nature Conservancy and the Bruce Trail Conservancy. They're also members of the Art Gallery of Ontario and the McMichael Gallery. Irene is a painter and Doug is an amateur stargazer. Their Golden Retriever, Ticket, and their two cats, Smudge and Tina, complete their family.

## The Peggy Kurtin Award for Excellence in Restoration.



Receiving this year's award was 274 Carlton Street, owned by Alain Saumur and Neil Modi with design provided by Architectural Designer, David Smith.

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. In addition the masonry was completely and painstakingly restored and the front fence has been rebuilt to exactly match the neighbouring fences.

The PK Award winner's prize is a watercolour painting of their home by Rosie Sheppard.

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## The Streetscapes in Bloom Award 7 Winchester Street



The Streetscapes in Bloom award winner for 2023 is 7 Winchester Street. The garden, with its changing palette of seasonal colour complements the sensitively restored Bay and gable house, with its unique semi-circular porch. This beautiful garden met and surpassed the SSB criteria, both in variety, quality and diligent maintenance throughout the season, ensuring that the garden always looked fresh.

The award, a watercolour painting by Rosie Sheppard, will be given at our November 30th public meeting.

### Rosie Sheppard

Our artist, Rosie Sheppard, has been writing and providing art for the Newsletter since she was in elementary school, about fifteen years ago. Aside from her professional life, she has become an expert watercolourist and has produced many award paintings for the CPA.

## A Successful Tour of Homes

Daniel Bloch

Chair of the Cabbagetown Tour of Homes (2019, 2023)

On September 17th the Cabbagetown Tour of Homes returned with a big comeback after a 3 year hiatus due to the pandemic. The sold out event was very well attended.

Eight homeowners generously volunteered their homes, ranging from contemporary to traditional and even two homes that had a bit of old world character. Many had been recently renovated with designers on site showcasing some of the latest design trends. One home was featured on breakfast television and another in the Toronto Star.

The event raised money towards the CPA's many programs and initiatives. An afterparty was hosted by the organizing committee and was generously sponsored by Weenan General Contracting, whom we would like to thank along with our other sponsors.

The Tour of Homes is a massive undertaking and I would like to once again thank my outstanding committee made up of:

Alex Corey

Christina Jackson

Sarah McCarten

Frank Prendergast

Without the help of these people who donated many hours of their time, this would have not been possible. In addition we would like to thank our many volunteers who came from all over the city to assist with making sure the safety and care of the homes and ticket holders was our priority. Finally we would like to thank those businesses locally and throughout the city who assisted with selling tickets. We were thrilled for this event to be on such a beautiful day and happy to see our local businesses in the area well attended, with ticket holders enjoying the promotions and special offers.

We hope to see you at our next major event: the Hidden Spaces and Gardens tour, which will be in the Spring of 2024.



## Cabbagetown HCD Renovators need to Know:

Owning a property in one of our four Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) gives you the advantage of living in a beautiful historic neighbourhood of leafy, human-scaled streets, Victorian era architecture and a tangible connection to Toronto's past. These characteristics that we find so attractive are protected by the Ontario Heritage Act and the Guidelines of each district's HCD Plan.

For changes made to parts of homes that are visible from the street, a Heritage Permit from the City of Toronto's Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) is required.

A Heritage Permit Is Required For:

- Any renovations, alterations or additions that are visible from the street (this includes: windows, doors, porches, siding, and brick).
- Use of materials that are not now on the house or not original.
- Renovations that reduce the home's heritage value or demolition.

Any Building Permit in an HCD, even if the work does not have any heritage aspects, will require review and approval from HPS.

Considerations:

- New additions, including items such as skylights, will need to be located to the rear and side, away from the main elevation.
- New garages and parking spaces will need to be located in unobtrusive areas, normally to the rear and side yards.
- Additions must be sensitive to the character of their neighbours in size and height.

A Heritage Permit Is Not Required For:

- Painting of wood, existing stucco or metal finishes.
- Repair of existing features: roofs, wall cladding, dormers, cresting, cupolas, cornices, brackets, columns, balustrades, porches as well as steps, entrances, windows, foundations, and decorative features provided that the same type of materials are used.