



Cabbagetown Preservation Association

August, 1997

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 9 No. 12

FREE!!!!

Now that we have your attention, the C.P.A. will once again be doing walking tours of our neighbourhood as part of the Cabbagetown Fall Festival Saturday, September 6 and Sunday, September 7. The tours are free of charge and leave every 10 minutes from 1:30 to 2:30 on Saturday and 12:00 to 1:00 on Sunday from the SE corner of Sumach and Winchester. The tours will give you a new or renewed insight into the history and architecture of our wonderful neighbourhood. See you there.

Walking Tour Report

Once again this year the C.P.A. was asked to participate in the Summer Walking Tours organized by Heritage Toronto and sponsored by Sun Life Canada. The C.P.A. provided volunteer guides for approximately 70 people on June 21st and again for approximately 150 people on July 20th. Our volunteers did a great job and a very pleased Heritage Toronto sent a letter complementing them and for their depth of knowledge and the expertise in their presentation. Kudos to those hard workers.

There will be another opportunity for you to take in a tour at the Fall Festival (see above). If you will be unable to make to the Festival, we will be hosting tours on Sunday, October 12 at 11:00am and Saturday October 18 at 1:00pm, as part of the international conference **Jane Jacobs Ideas That Matter**. The October tours will depart from the Corner of Parliament and Carlton.

Congratulations

Heritage Toronto (formerly The Toronto Historical Board) presented three awards to Cabbagetowners in a ceremony on June 9th. The awards are made to individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the preservation of the City's history.

An **Award of Merit** was presented to Christopher Dew for the complete restoration and sensitive rehabilitation of the 1860 cottage at 35 Spruce St., the Homes First Society received a **Certificate of Commendation** for the adaptive re-use of the abandoned Avion Hotel building at the corner of Sumach St. and Gerrard St. and last but not least The Cabbagetown Preservation Association proudly received a **Certificate of Commendation** for on-going efforts to promote neighbourhood history and the preservation of heritage architecture.

Call for Submissions

We are considering a revision and expansion to the Touring Old Cabbagetown guidebook and would like input from our membership. If you would like to suggest a home or building for inclusion and or have some historical information about a building in Cabbagetown Please let us know. You can contact Peggy Kurtin at 967-6432.

If you would like to write an article for inclusion in our Newsletter we would be interested in hearing from you. The topic should be in the theme of "preserving the architectural integrity and historic character of our neighbourhood". We reserve the right to edit and or modify the material in any way. The only enticement which we are able offer successful writers is publication in the newsletter. Please contact Ted Gzebb at 925-5891 or if you're on the net tgzebb@yesic.com with any questions or to submit your idea.

Thank You

A heartfelt, but belated, Thank-You to the wonderful folks at the **Pet Menagerie** on Parliament Street for their continuing generous support of the C.P.A. through their donations for the Forsythia Festival. Pet Menagerie have been a longtime supporter of the Festival and were omitted in the last newsletter.

Considering Renovations?

Anyone who is planning to do renovations, big or small, should pay a visit to **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**, 18 Coldwater, Toronto - ph. **510-2223**. They have a treasure trove of building materials new and old which have been generously donated. Some items have been rescued from demolition projects. Their prices are very reasonable and the volunteer staff are helpful and knowledgeable. Best of all,

proceeds go to providing affordable housing to low income families who might otherwise be forced to reside in sub-standard housing.

Guest Contributor

The following is an article written by one of our members. If you have ever wondered about those plaques on the houses and buildings in Cabbagetown, here is your chance to find out all about them.

Historical Plaques in Cabbagetown

by John Court

Historical plaques inspire a feeling of standing in the very footsteps of history. On a practical level, they offer a wider appreciation of our heritage, each one providing context and details on the rich tapestry of people, places, buildings, and events that contributed in important ways to the fabric of today's society.

Plaques are installed where they can be easily read. Many host sites, however, are people's homes or other private establishments to which public access is not normally available. Hence the presence of a plaque does not necessarily imply a right of public access to its adjoining property or building. .

Many Players in the Historical Plaquing Field

Plaques installed by public agencies commemorate their subjects' heritage importance to the municipality, province or nation, while educating the public about them. As a rule (but not always), the more senior the heritage agency's government affiliation, the greater the degree of significance of its plaque subjects. Hence, federal (red and gold) plaques, researched and installed by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), recognize a subject's importance to the heritage of our whole country. Provincial (blue and gold) plaques are researched and installed by the Ontario Heritage Foundation (OHF). Plaques installed by Heritage Toronto, formerly the Toronto Historical Board (THB), cel-

celebrate the contributions of people, places, structures and events important to the history of the entire City, as well as to their own neighbourhood. As well, communities like ours may enjoy one or more local plaquing programs.

How are Heritage Plaque Subjects Chosen?

Heritage agency plaques are unveiled after a formal request has been submitted and evaluated successfully. The agency researches the subject and its historical contexts to determine the elements and extent of its significance to their jurisdiction. This is a delicate, labour-intensive and partly subjective matter, similar to nominating someone for the Order of Canada. Despite their remarkable dedication and expertise, government heritage bodies are chronically under-funded, so a plaque proposal may be tied up for years, or decades. If a heritage agency does reach agreement on the merits of plaquing a nominee, it then queues up behind others that are already waiting or are higher on the agency's geographic and demographic priorities. (If the local advocates who are championing a nomination help by supplying historical information and then follow with vigorous lobbying, the process may move more quickly.)

Since the plaquing process is largely a responsive rather than proactive one, anomalies sometimes arise. Among two or more subjects of seemingly comparable merit, such as (for example) the magnificent High Victorian Gothic chapels of St. James-the-Less and the Necropolis, one may be a national historic site (the former, as of last year) while the other(s) may languish unrecognized by any heritage agency. With the different varieties and large number of plaques that have been installed in Cabbagetown, there are too many for a complete listing here except for the few national historic markers.

Local Initiative Plaques

Among the more prominent and unique plaque initiatives that we enjoy are those of the "Old Cabbagetown Tour of Homes." Although not all are installed on historic buildings, they celebrate our pride in maintaining the primarily residential char-

acter (with closely allied commercial and educational uses) of this historic area. Specifically they acknowledge each awarded homeowner's public-spirited participation in the charitable program that has raised money for many important local purposes.

Other local plaques include a few that provide historical interpretation for institutional settings. Notable are the cemetery trustees' plaques installed to brief us on the history of the Necropolis. Its modestly-scaled entrance complex (1872, Henry Langley, architect) offers spiritual and aesthetic inspiration by beautifully integrating the chapel with the arched carriageway, gatehouse and landscaping. A different, more low key plaque installation in a sheltered glade of Hillcrest-Wellesley Park celebrates a prominent event and its deceased leader, namely Tony Brady (1934-1991) and the Forsythia Festival that he founded and led for two decades.

City of Toronto (THB) Plaques

The City's plaquing program is twofold: (I) marking sites designated by Council bylaw under the Ontario Heritage Act for their historic and/or architectural significance; and (ii) commemorating other historically important people, places and events. The former type is more numerous, but generally limits the information inscribed on them to signifying that the designation was made ("Heritage Building") and the date of the bylaw's enactment.

The second type, THB commemorative plaques, provide more interpretation for their subject. One example for an historic person honours the late architect, B. Napier Simpson, Jr. at the entrance to Napier Simpson House at Riverdale Farm. An historic event plaque was installed for the 1974 centennial of Winchester Public School (Winchester and Rose Ave.), also noting on it that the oldest surviving part was built in 1897. It should be noted that Winchester has not yet been designated, in spite of its dramatic proportions, and its uniqueness as the last Victorian school building in Cabbagetown.

Province of Ontario (OHF) Plaques

There are no provincial plaques in Cabbagetown, for various reasons: a lack of local nominations to the OHF; severe budget cuts; their understandable reluctance to duplicate a Federal plaque; and installing plaques elsewhere for a few historic Cabbagetown people such as C.W. Jefferys and Napier Simpson. There are, however, several OHF plaques nearby, including: Little Trinity Church and the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse; John Ross Robertson (291 Sherbourne); Jarvis Collegiate and predecessors, est. 1807; Herbert Bruce, former Lt. Governor and Wellesley Hospital founder; and Elizabeth Simcoe (Bloor at Castle Frank Rd.).

We can readily contemplate a good number of local candidates to propose for provincial recognition. A start with the surviving, 19th century landmarks might include Trinity College Medical School, Riverdale Farm, Winchester School and the Necropolis entrance complex.

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National Historic Sites (HSMBC Plaques)

The aforementioned St. James Cemetery chapel (Cumberland & Storm, 1860) is our only National Historic Site to the present time. On the other hand, a special category of HSMBC plaques marks the grave sites of Canada's Fathers of Confederation (most of whom are also honoured with a plaque at their former home or other location). There are two of these in St. James Cemetery, for the Hon. Sir William P. Howland and the Hon. James Cockburn.

Several well-known foes of the last century's Anglican, Tory elite would "not have been caught dead" in St. James, so the Necropolis non-sectarian from the outset — provides their final resting place. These include William Lyon Mackenzie and his two compatriots who were not able to skedaddle across the border and escape the gallows after the 1837 Rebellion, Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews. There are no national markers for them, but there is for the equally anti-Tory Father of Confederation and founder of The Globe [and Mail], the Hon. George Brown.

Members of CPA's Board

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MEMBERSHIP

YOU MAKE THE CABBAGETOWN PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION HAPPEN WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

Your \$10 membership fee in the Association is very important. It provides part of the financial basis for our survival together with the proceeds from the sale of our books, t-shirts, mugs and postcards. Please join CPA today:

Name _____

Address _____

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Please mail or deliver your membership to 15 Dermott St., Toronto, Ontario, M5A 3B5.