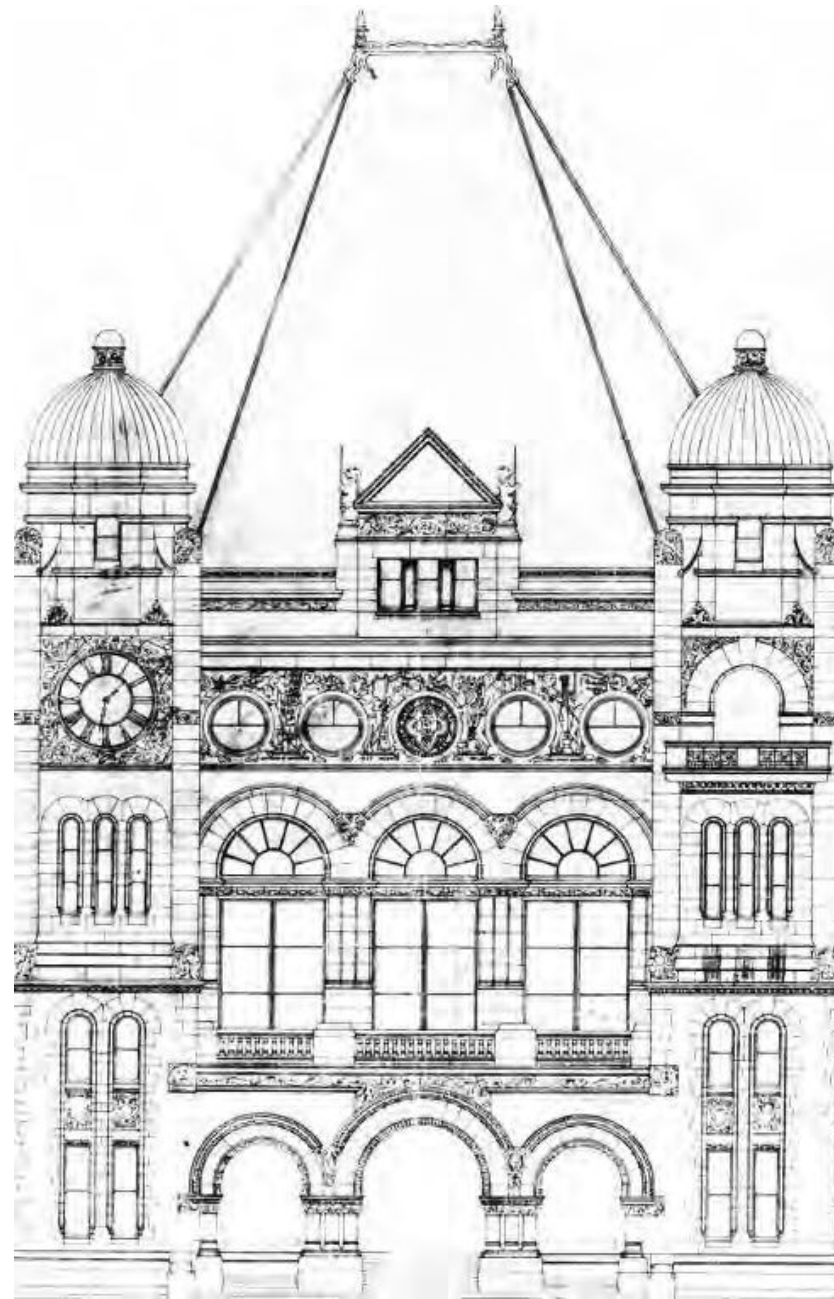




Heritage Day at Queen's Park 2024

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY ONTARIO

The Past
Our Present
Your Future



KEEP | FIX | REUSE

**The huge potential of Ontario's
older buildings for housing and
other uses**

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*ACO Heritage Awards Celebration 2019
1871 Berkeley Church Toronto (Rehabilitation)*

ACO is Ontario's lead non-governmental organization on built heritage and cultural heritage places

Through education and advocacy, ACO encourages the conservation and reuse of structures and landscapes of architectural, historic, and cultural significance for the benefit and inspiration of Ontarians.

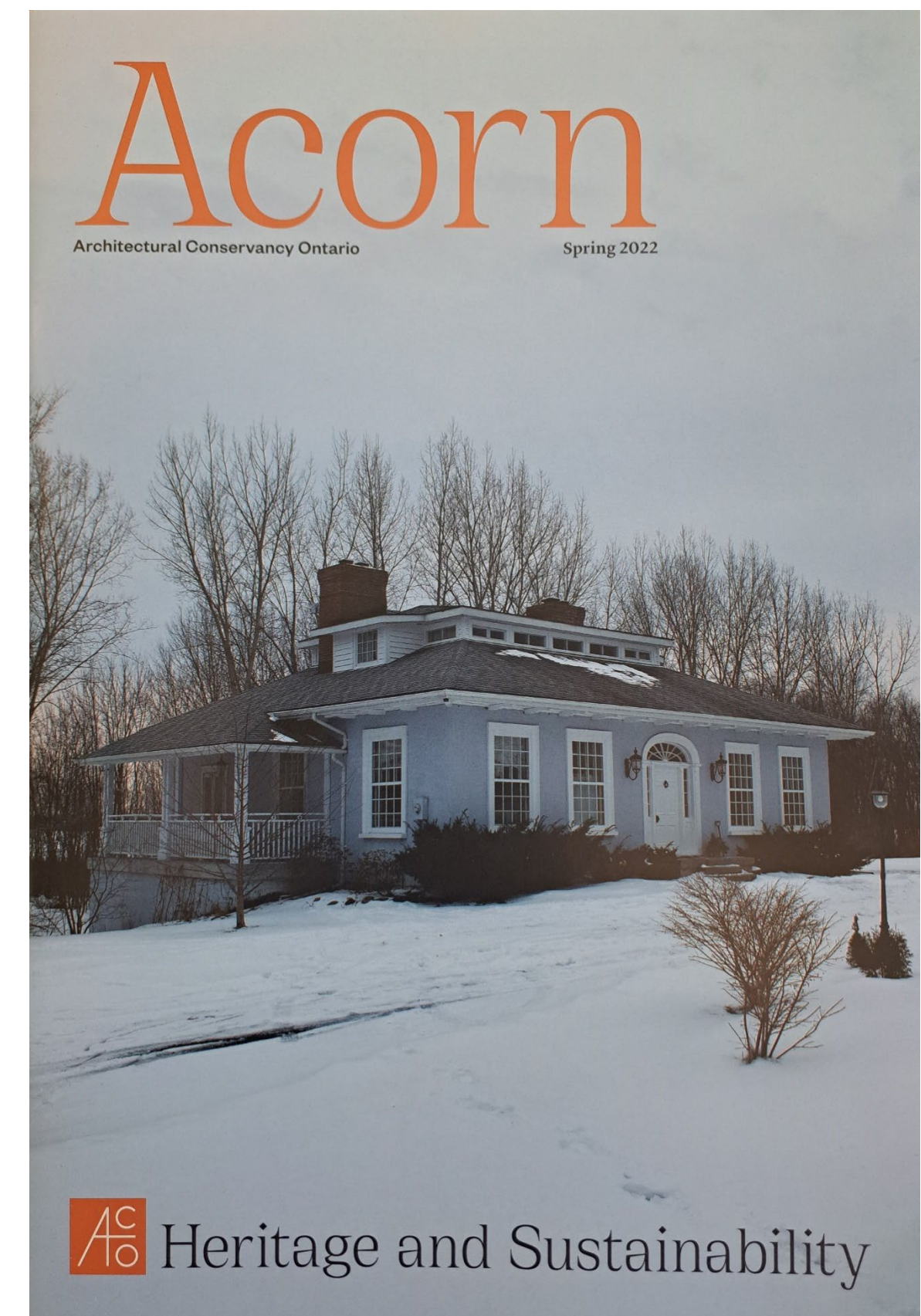
Our Goal: Keep, Fix, and Reuse Ontario's older buildings and places.

Established 91 years ago in 1933, ACO is a network of volunteers connected by 16 branches throughout Ontario with almost 1,000 members. There is a small coordinating staff in Toronto.

Together we:

- Publish Acorn in a Nutshell e-newsletter (2,300 subscribers) and Acorn Magazine
- Educate and promote heritage conservation through heritage advocacy, tours, symposiums, books, lectures, and conferences
- Advocate for public policy advancement through analysis and comment on existing/proposed provincial policy and legislation

cont'd



- Collaborate with heritage professionals, communities, and youth through PreservationWorks! and NextGen
- Host annual ACO Heritage Awards celebrating heritage projects
- Member of the National Trust Council representing Ontario
- Engage elected officials from all levels of government to actively Keep Fix Reuse Ontario's heritage and existing building stock



Keep | Fix | Reuse Supports Ontario's Prosperity

Today, let's talk about the enormous benefits of Keep, Fix, Reuse approaches to our existing building stock – economic, environmental and cultural.



ACO NextGen Award Recipient 2021: Celeste Lamondin for her exceptional work as an apprentice mason and her dedication to promoting heritage masonry and women in the trades.

Ontario's Building Stock: Our Nest Egg

Ontario's building stock is the largest collection of tangible assets owned by Ontarians. It is also a job machine:

- Renovation is a \$30 billion industry in Ontario (residential and non-residential)
- Canadians spend **27% more** on fixing up existing dwellings than building new ones
- Residential fix-up employs over 300,000 Ontarians



Before

54 Pitt Street

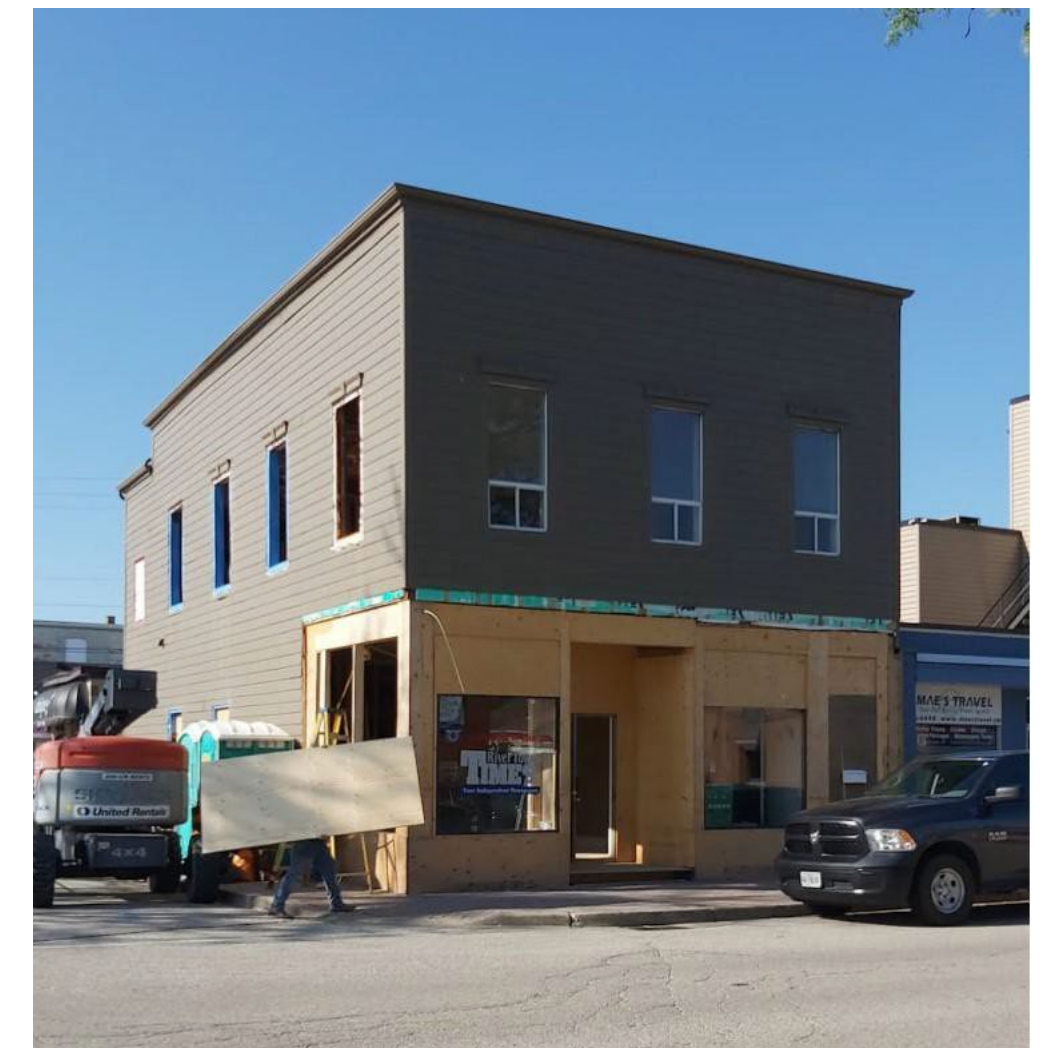


After

Cornwall: Heart of the City Community Improvement Plan
Photo credit: ChooseCornwall.ca

Economic and Community Benefits

- Older buildings and historic landscapes contribute a wide array of **economic, social, and community benefits**.
- Older buildings are often the first home for small businesses and create **revitalization** opportunities in local downtowns, where they have great potential for use as **housing**.
- They draw strong **tourism** interest from within and outside the local community. For example, Ontario's Doors Open 2024 is focusing on adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- Older buildings produce a **sense of place and identity** for local communities – connecting people to their environment and unique histories.



Amherstburg: River Bookshop Restoration, before (above) and after (below).



Keep, Fix, Reuse existing buildings to create housing



*Former Grigg Hotel, now The Cornerstone, London
30 affordable apartments + programs and employment for youth aged 16-25.*



*Bread & Roses Housing Co-op, Kitchener
Former factory became 20 units of affordable housing*



*Former East Front Public School, Cornwall
Now Riverside Retirement Centre, home for 120 seniors*

Keep, Fix, Reuse existing buildings to create housing



2013
Palmerston Main Street
Vacant apartments, boarded up, vacant stores

2023
Palmerston Main Street
Refurbished and fully inhabited upper stories and stores
= customers for uptown businesses



Climate Change: Crisis and Opportunity

- Like the rest of the world, Ontario is facing an unprecedented environmental crisis
- Climate change poses an existential threat to our economy, our society, our safety.
- At the same time, the “Green Industrial Revolution”* has huge potential for Ontario’s economy. **Bill Gates, November 2021*



COP28UAE

- How to reduce our environmental impact and sustainably grow the economy is an ongoing conversation at the highest levels of government and in our local communities.
- **Approaches that keep, fix, and reuse our older buildings address this challenge.**

How Keep | Fix | Reuse Combats Climate Change

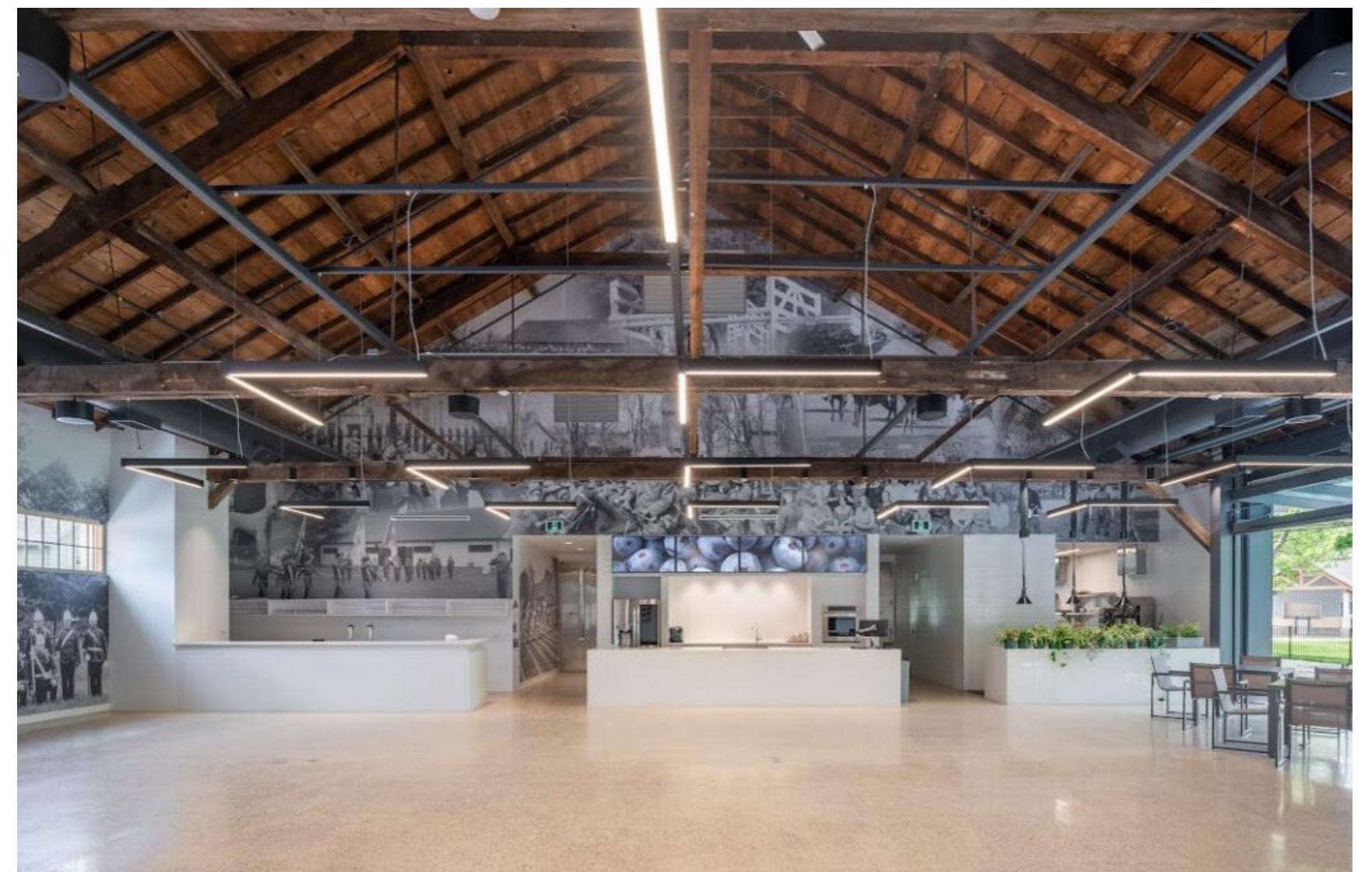


*Demolition of the Forsyth Shirt Factory,
Kitchener*

- The greenest building is the one that already exists.
- Older buildings have inherent sustainability. Reusing building stock avoids huge carbon emissions created in manufacturing and transporting replacement materials.
- The materials and embodied energy in an existing building stay locked up if demolition is avoided.
- Demolition activity itself, including transporting the waste, takes energy and adds to carbon emissions.

How Keep | Fix | Reuse Combats Climate Change

- Most new construction is heavily reliant on steel and concrete, which are huge contributors of GHG emissions.
- Building retrofit and reuse reduces climate change and environmental impacts by 4% to 46%, depending on type, location and assumed level of energy efficiency.
- It can take up to 50 years for a highly efficient new building to compensate for the greenhouse gases emitted in its construction. We don't have 50 years!
- As well, we are running out of landfill space.
- Ontario Waste Management Association website counts 3616 days until Ontario's landfills are full (as of February 7, 2024).



Aurora Armoury: Recipient of the 2022 Paul Oberman Award for Adaptive Reuse for the transformation of one of Ontario's oldest armouries into a vibrant culinary and community hub

Invest in Repair and Reuse – Protect Ontario’s Future

Retaining our hundreds of thousands of older buildings and investing in their repair and reuse

- **Triggers** more economic growth and jobs than new construction.
- **Creates** housing choice for Ontarians through adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- **Helps** save the environment and meet Ontario/Canada’s climate targets. (or emission reduction targets)
- **Grows** the green economy and spurs innovation in ways that decarbonize our built environment.
- **Strengthens** Ontario communities, enhancing identity and pride while building our tourism brand and appeal.



*Kenora: Habourtown Centre
Community Improvement Plan CIP
Photo Credit: City of Kenora*

To Realize These Benefits, We Need Strong Policies to:

Keep

- Discourage destruction/throw-away mindset
- Account for full environmental, economic and cultural values of older buildings
- Mandate recycling of building materials where a structure cannot be kept

Fix

- Stimulate sustainable building repair, renovation and rehabilitation
- Promote energy retrofits
- Develop appropriate and competent skill-sets for renovation sector

Reuse

- Make reuse the first option for public sector owners
- Encourage and support private owners to undertake creative repurposing



Thorold Post Office: Winner of the ACO Paul Oberman Award for Adaptive Reuse, 2007.

Heritage in Ontario post Bill 23

With the changes to the Ontario Heritage Act, it's much harder to protect what communities value and treasure.

- Protection via listing (which gives 60-day protection) is hamstrung.
 - Each property listed on a municipal heritage register must be individually designated by municipal bylaw within the next year.
 - Municipal planning staff and councils are overloaded and underfunded.
- **About 36,000** listed heritage properties must be designated by **January 1, 2025** or taken off municipalities' heritage registers, lose their identification as having cultural heritage value, and risk demolition.
- ACO is asking that this deadline be extended to **January 1, 2030**.
- Protection via heritage designation is also seriously restricted
 - Properties must now meet **at least 2** of 9 criteria for heritage value
 - Formerly just 1 required, consistent with international norms

2024 Priority Requests

We have three key priorities in 2024, all of which support the Conservancy's strategic goal to keep, fix and reuse Ontario's heritage buildings and landscapes.

- 1. Five-year Extension for Listed Buildings:** Extend the expiry date for listed buildings to Jan. 1, 2030. This would reduce the burden on municipalities to adhere to the current date of Jan. 1, 2025.
- 2. Housing-focused Heritage Building Grant:** Create a new, application-based, matching grant program of \$10M/year, to create new housing. The grant program, modelled on an existing Alberta program, would incentivize owners to keep, fix, and renovate/reuse heritage buildings.
- 3. Provincial Policy Statement Review:** Amend the Provincial Policy Statement to prioritize the retention and re-use of Ontario's existing building stock for housing and other purposes.



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**Thank you for the opportunity to meet with
you.**

**We look forward to ongoing discussions to
achieve common goals.**

Contact:

Diane Chin, Chair: president@acontario.ca

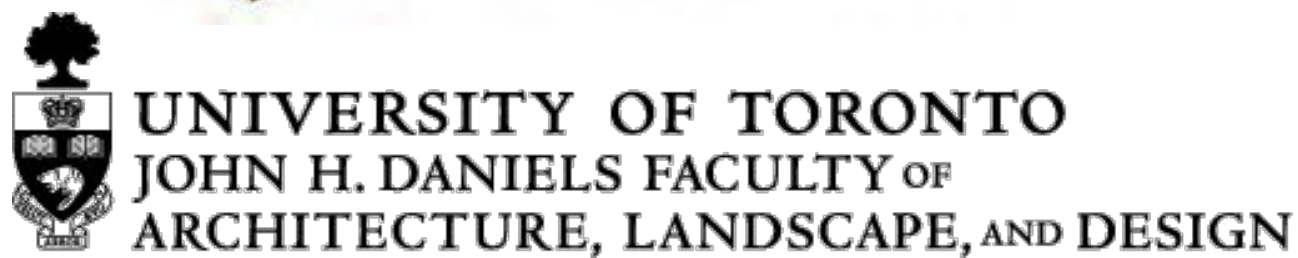
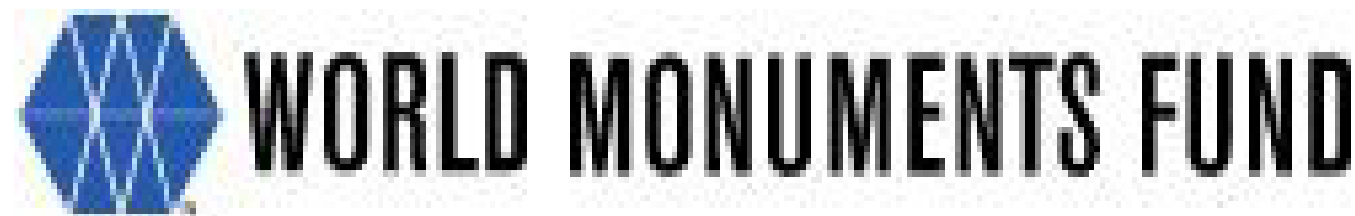
Will Coukell, COO: will@acontario.ca



Appendix A: About ACO

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ACO partners and allies include NGOs, professional associations, academic institutions and businesses



Older Building Stock and the Economy

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