



ARCHITECTURAL
CONSERVANCY
ONTARIO

ACO PROVINCIAL ELECTION QUESTIONS 2018

Who is ACO?

Through advocacy and direct action, Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO) has been a leader in preserving Ontario's architectural and environmental heritage since 1933. With a head office in Toronto, ACO is a grassroots organization with 25 branches in communities across the province.

For the upcoming provincial election on June 7, 2018, ACO is seeking to determine where Ontario's political parties and MPP candidates stand on important heritage issues. We invite your responses to the five questions below.

1. Financial Incentives for Heritage Conservation

Rehabilitation of Ontario's heritage resources enhances the unique character of streets and neighbourhoods, attracting business, creative enterprise and tourism to our communities. Ontario, unlike most provinces, currently lacks any province-wide fund or incentive for the conservation of our heritage buildings. The last dedicated program for this purpose was the highly successful Heritage Challenge Fund almost 20 years ago. From 1999-2001 \$5 million in funding for community projects was offered on a matching basis and was quickly taken up, with 80 projects funded.

Would you/your party support a dedicated provincial grant fund and/or provincial income tax incentive for rehabilitation/repair of heritage properties?

2. Conserving Ontario's School Heritage

All over the province a hundred years of community investment in school buildings is in jeopardy because of a maintenance backlog and a funding formula that tilts in favour of new construction over maintaining existing stock. Replacement buildings are often built to a lower standard and will not last as long as well-maintained existing stock. In the past ten years we have lost several remarkable schools, and many more are at risk.

Would you/your party support a review and redesign of provincial funding approaches for existing schools and new school construction to remove disincentives and encourage the retention, conservation and re-use of heritage schools?



3. Heritage as an Environmental Priority for Public Sector Buildings

The wise management of our existing public building stock has compelling societal and environmental benefits. Building renewal and re-use capitalizes on materials and energy already invested, reduces construction and demolition waste (20-30 percent of landfill is building waste) and builds resilience to climate change. In 2010 the provincial government approved exemplary standards for the conservation and use of its own properties, but heritage resources in the broader public sector also deserve attention.

Would you/your party support a province-wide policy directing public sector organizations — provincial agencies, schools, hospitals, municipalities, conservation authorities, etc. — to give priority to the continuing use or adaptive re-use of existing buildings (identified as heritage or not) in their facility and capital planning; and where buildings are determined to be surplus to needs, use best efforts to dispose of the building/facility to other public or private sector owners for re-use or sensitive redevelopment?

4. Energy Efficiency Incentives for Heritage Windows

It has been widely demonstrated that properly restored or rehabilitated old wooden windows and doors, fitted with storms where needed, are as energy efficient as new replacement products. They also take up a fraction of the carbon footprint of new products. Studies have proven that most owners of old homes would rather keep their original windows and doors, but are pressured to replace them by well-meaning retrofit programs that neglect to include restoration options.

Would you/your party support direct funding, or funding through tax incentives, for restoration and refurbishment of existing doors and windows on pre-World War II buildings, thereby helping historic buildings enjoy maximum energy efficiency while maintaining their traditional character?

5. Relieving Property Tax Pressures on Heritage Buildings

Property tax assessment is based on the property's value, including its unrealized potential development value. If we are to conserve heritage buildings appropriately, property assessment/taxes must be based on the actual income of the property, not on potential income that can only be realized through complete or partial demolition and redevelopment. For these reasons, the City of Toronto appealed to the Ontario government in January 2017 requesting examination of a separate tax class for heritage property.

Would you/your party be prepared to work with municipalities to ensure that property taxes and other provincial policies are not creating demolition pressures on heritage properties?

Thank you for giving this your attention. Please provide your responses to coo@arconserv.ca. Your responses will be shared with our membership and more widely in the heritage/environmental community.

If you have any other proposals, ideas or comments for ACO on heritage issues, please let us know.