



Heritage Ottawa NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Preserving Our Built Heritage

May 2025 Volume 51, No. 2

2024
WALKING
TOURS

www.heritageottawa.org

Our Tour Season Begins June 12!

We are excited to be offering 13 tours for the 2025 season. Several are new: Golden Triangle Communities, Ashton Village, Hogs Back - Beyond the Falls, and A Journey Through Ottawa's Herstory. Others are favourites back by popular demand.

See page 7 for a full listing.

Walking Tours are \$10 for members and \$25 for non-members.

Visit our website for more details and to register online:

heritageottawa.org

Visitez notre site Web pour plus d'informations et pour vous inscrire en ligne : patrimoineottawa.org



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Watson's Mill and Dickinson Square – A Future in Jeopardy?

By Ruth Mills



Photo credit: Watson's Mill Manotick Inc. 2019

Watson's Mill

On February 4, 2025, the Finance and Corporate Services Committee declared the heritage property at 1127 Manotick “as surplus” to the City of Ottawa’s needs and to have it “marketed for sale.” The property in question comprises two iconic buildings: Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed, both designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Together with Watson’s Mill, they form the core of Manotick’s historic Dickinson Square.

A bit of history

Dickinson Square is a special enclave of history located in the heart of the Village of Manotick. Founders Moss Kent Dickinson and his business partner Joseph Merrill Currier constructed the 3 1/2 storey flour and grist mill in 1860 of locally quarried limestone.

The Carriage Shed was built during the same period as a drive shed for farmers to stable their horses

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Heritage Ottawa is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Ottawa's built heritage.

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Watson's Mill and Dickinson Square continued...



Photo credit: Watson's Mill Manotick Inc 2014

Dickinson House

while using the mill. In 1867, after Dickinson became the sole owner of the milling enterprise, he built a 2 1/2-storey, gable-roofed clapboard house across the street from the Mill, which remained in the family until 1931. The Mill complex changed hands, eventually ending up, in 1946, under the ownership of former mill employee Harry Watson, who changed the name to Watson's Mill.

The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) purchased the Mill, Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed in 1972, and together the site became known as Dickinson Square. In 2006, the RVCA declared its intention to sell the historic properties to help finance the construction of its new purpose-built headquarters on Rideau Valley Drive. The ensuing battle to "Save Our Square" was hard fought, resulting in the City of Ottawa purchasing Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed in 2008. Ownership of Watson's Mill was transferred to

Watson's Mill Manotick Inc., which operates the Mill as one of the very few functioning industrial heritage grist mills in North America.

Declaration "as surplus" to needs

The recent surplus declaration was unexpected and is certainly at odds with the City's stated goal of making the conservation of cultural heritage resources a priority. Disposal of the properties in question to a private owner, even with heritage protection under the OHA, could lead to an improvident disposal, putting both Watson's Mill and Dickinson Square in jeopardy.

Fortunately, the City appears to recognize the importance of placing the properties in good hands so that the historically significant buildings can be preserved for continued community use. To this end, the City has begun negotiating with Watson's Mill Manotick Inc. (WMMI) with a view to transferring the properties to it for a nominal consideration.

Who is Watson's Mill Manotick Inc. (WMMI)?

WMMI is the not-for-profit organization which took over ownership of Watson's Mill in 2008, having operated it since 1997 as a heritage museum. The Carriage Shed is used as WMMI office space and used bookstore, which provides it with a vital source of revenue. The loss of this "surplus" property would severely compromise WMMI's ability to continue to preserve and operate Watson's Mill.

In 2022, WMMI took over the museum management of Dickinson House from the Rideau Township Historical Society. As a result, WMMI expanded its Mill-centric mission to include the continued preservation and operation of the whole of Dickinson Square as a heritage destination and vibrant community hub in Manotick.

Future in jeopardy?

WMMI has the dedication and drive to successfully obtain ownership of

the properties from the City. But as a non-profit, it does not have the dollars. According to WMMI president, Susan Gahrns, it is essential that the property transfers from the City be accompanied by substantial seed money, or the exercise will be futile.

Both Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed are in very poor condition due to the City's failure to properly maintain them over the years. Apart from operating costs for utilities and the like, the buildings have large capital needs. Although WMMI will be mounting a fundraising campaign and applying for grants, it will take considerable time for these efforts to bear fruit.

Without public support, the community stands to lose Dickinson Square, which is much more than the individual buildings that it contains. It is not only a place where people relive local history (the establishment of Manotick), it is a community green space where people come to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of

a special enclave within metropolitan Ottawa. Since its inception, the Square has been the beating heart of Manotick and it remains so today. It is essential that the Square be saved for public use for present and future generations.

Ruth Mills is the past-president and a current board member of Watson's Mill Manotick Inc.

YOU CAN HELP BY

- writing to the City and politicians at all levels to encourage the City to provide WMMI with adequate financial aid to support the transfer of the properties to it;
- visiting **www.watsonsmill.com** to donate and/or become a "Friend of the Mill" (a new donation program to be launched by WMMI to harness community support);
- posting this story on social media and following WMMI on Facebook **www.facebook.com/WatsonsmillManotick** and Instagram **www.instagram.com/watsonsmillmanotick**;
- becoming a member of WMMI; and
- volunteering at WMMI **info@watsonsmill.com**



Carriage Shed

Canada Needs the *Historic Places of Canada Act*

By Leslie Maitland

As I sit in my home office composing this article, Canada faces existential threats in an increasingly hostile world. As a nation, we have had to re-examine what we value, and Canadians have been vocal in doing so. Among the many things that we cherish are the iconic places of our National Capital, a city which belongs to all Canadians. Think of the Parliament Buildings, the National War Memorial, and the National Museums.

The most important piece of heritage legislation to emerge in this generation died with the last session of Parliament. At first reading, Bill C23 the *Historic Places of Canada Act* (HPCA), received solid multi-party support. The legislation stalled at second reading before it could be referred to the House of Commons Environment Committee. Canada is the only G7 country with no legislative protection for its nationally significant heritage sites. Heritage Ottawa calls for the re-introduction of the HPCA once Parliament sits again.

These federally-owned heritage properties include sites designated as national historic sites upon the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and other sites identified as federal heritage properties identified by the Federal Heritage Review Office (FHRO; formerly the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office). As of 2022, by Parks Canada's accounting, there were over 200 federally-owned heritage properties in the National Capital (taken to be the City of Ottawa and the City of Gatineau).¹ Other federally-owned heritage properties exist across the country, and in many cases, these

buildings and places are treasured touchstones in their communities.

This legislation is particularly important to the National Capital Region. The National Historic Sites and significant places here are the uber-national historic sites of the nation. The National Capital Region is where Canadians come to find their sense of nationhood, to celebrate our democracy, and to demonstrate peacefully and lawfully, at these very historic properties. But the protection of these sites is currently not guaranteed. Indeed, Heritage Ottawa came into existence over the battle to protect the East Block from demolition, and we are not so complacent nor so naive as to think that something similar could not happen again. Just look at the Central Experimental Farm, also a federally-owned national historic site that is under constant threat.

The bill was also intended to address regulation of the historic canals, whose existing regulations date to the 1970s, when the historic canals were transferred from Transport Canada to Parks Canada. The Lachine Canal, Trent-Severn, and Rideau Canal (a World Heritage Site as well as a National Historic Site) cut through a sizeable number of cities and communities in central Canada which benefit from these canals immeasurably and would benefit again by refreshed legislation. These canals meander through many federal ridings.

Rarely is legislation perfect in its first draft, and here are some highlights of areas to improve. HPCA excluded properties owned by the Crown Corporations and Agencies, and

so the national museums would be excluded from the HPCA, including the National Gallery, War Museum, National Arts Centre, History Museum, and Museum of Nature. Considering the national significance of these structures, that's really not on; the shell game of Crown Corporations and Agencies is just that: a shell game to avoid compliance.² As well, there is no language around protection once a heritage property is removed from the federal inventory.³ What to do about heritage resources underwater is not addressed either (think the *Erebus* and *Terror*). The bill also needs to provide for effective oversight of the conservation of federally-owned heritage properties, such as through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. This would help to address demolition by neglect (Example: 24 Sussex). The National Capital Commission (NCC) is charged with the maintenance of the official residences (as per the *Official Residences Act*), and the NCC takes its mandate very seriously. But this has not translated into action: the NCC's hands are tied without direction from the political level. So let's take the politics out of the decision-making.

Heritage Ottawa has been assured that any final HPCA legislation will comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This has particular significance for the National Capital, for we are on the traditional, unceded territory of the Anishinaabe peoples.

Heritage Ottawa, the National Trust for Canada, and heritage

conservation experts like Dr. Christina Cameron and Marc Denhez provided input to Parks Canada on the draft legislation as it is to date, and these organisations and individuals were prepared to provide expert testimony to committee once the bill passed second reading. If the bill is re-introduced, Parks Canada may count on a supportive constituency to get the HPCA through Parliament. Several parliamentarians have been vocal supporters, and we thank John Aldag, Yasir Naqvi and Elizabeth May in particular for their efforts.

The HPCA leaves unanswered protective measures for the nearly 1000 National Historic Sites owned by others. In their absence, other measures, such as a robustly funded cost-sharing program can

assist non-governmental owners with conservation efforts, and a cost-share program is concrete assistance. The HPCA is indeed just a housekeeping bill, but it is an important first step towards sound conservation of our national treasures. While one might argue that it falls short, for reasons cited above, we should not let perfection be the enemy of good.

It would be entirely reasonable to say that Parliament will have other, more pressing problems to deal with once it reconvenes. But the lack of protection for our national historic sites and federally-owned heritage properties is part and parcel of our culture of neglect. We have neglected our health care systems, military, infrastructure, educational systems, and more. These chickens have come home to roost.

It needn't be this way. We can and we must address these issues.

Designation empowers us to articulate the narrative of national significance, and it empowers us to share the national narrative with our fellow Canadians. Designation allows us to celebrate our accomplishments, recognize our shortcomings, and find a path to a better and more just Canada. But we have to maintain what we designate.

For these reasons, Heritage Ottawa encourages Parks Canada to re-introduce a version of Bill C23 to Parliament once it sits again. Now, more than ever, Canadians need to celebrate our heritage in our National Capital.

Leslie Maitland is a volunteer with Heritage Ottawa

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- 1 This number can shift. The Federal Heritage Properties Office continues to evaluate federally-owned heritage buildings, which can add to the number, while at the same time, federally-owned heritage properties can be removed from the list if the property is declared surplus to requirements and sold. In this latter case, properties are usually transferred to the Canada Lands Corporation (CLC), which does an excellent job coordinating heritage designations with municipalities.
 - 2 Surely the National Museums are well looked after. Well, I invite you to look at the degraded condition of the Cornelia Oberlander landscape that is part of the National Gallery.
 - 3 The Federal Heritage Review Office commits to best efforts as a matter of policy. Canada Lands Corporation exists to facilitate the transfer of federal property to ownership by others. To date, it is CLC's policy to work with provincial and municipal jurisdictions on protective measures for heritage properties, but this is a policy and not codified in law.

HERITAGE OTTAWA EXCURSION TO GLENGARRY COUNTY

Heritage Ottawa is organising another in its series of popular field trips. This one will cover sites in Glengarry County, including Williamstown (Nor'Westers Museum and Sir John Johnson House), St Raphael's Church Ruins, Alexandria (St Finnan's Basilica and the Glengarry County Archives) plus lunch in Alexandria, concluding with a tour and wine tasting at Stonehouse Vineyard. The tour will take place on Thursday, June 19, with a luxury bus transporting participants for the day. For more information and to register, visit Heritage Ottawa's website, or contact us at info@heritageottawa.org, or 613 230 8841. Places are limited, sign up now.

Amazing Stories / Iconic Landmarks – The 2025 Heritage Ottawa Walking Tour Season

By Julie Harris Chair

Heritage Ottawa's 2025 Walking Tour season starts on Thursday, 12 June 2025! Explore our list of new tours and popular walks from previous years that showcase Ottawa's history, landscape and architecture. In an hour and a half, each tour offers the perfect blend of storytelling, meeting neighbours, and looking at places in new ways.

We will be starting with the University of Ottawa's Historic Quadrangle tour in French on Thursday, 12 June 2025. The guide is Michel Prévost, the former chief archivist of the University of Ottawa. Founded in 1848 and situated in



Photo: Julie Harris

Prince of Wales Falls, Hogs Back – Beyond the Falls Walking Tour to be guided by Julie Harris on Sunday, 17 August 2025, 2 pm.



Photo: Brittney Anne Bos

Famous Five Monument, A Journey Through Ottawa's Herstory Walking Tour to be guided by Brittney Anne Bos, Thursday, 17 July 2025, 7 pm.

Sandy Hill since 1856, the University of Ottawa’s original plan, buildings, religious spaces, and design are part of a larger story that speak to the Capital’s founding and growth.

Our second new tour of the season is guided by the dynamic historian and heritage professional Brittney Anne Bos. Inspired by Brittney’s expertise in heritage and women’s history, *A Journey Through Ottawa’s Herstory* on Thursday, 17 July 2025 will feature places where local and

national stories of individuals, events and institutions reveal the important roles that women have played in shaping the city and nation.

Three other new tours are *Golden Triangle Communities* guided by Jack Hanna of the Centretown Community Association on Thursday, 19 June 2025, *Ashton Village*, guided by John Bottriell of the Goulbourn Township Historical Society on Sunday, 13 July 2025,

and *Hog’s Back – Beyond the Falls* on Sunday, 17 August 2025 guided by historian Julie Harris. The Hogs Back tour aims to be a complement to one of Heritage Ottawa’s most popular tours *Architecture and Engineering Along the Rideau Canal*, which is guided by retired professional engineer David Jeanes. His tour will be held on Colonel By Day, Sunday, 3 August 2025.

Julie Harris, Chair, Heritage Ottawa Walking Tour Committee

In addition to the walks listed below, we expect to add two or three tours to our schedule. Please check the Heritage Ottawa website for updates to our program.

Heritage Ottawa Walking Tours 2025

TOUR	DATE	TIME
« À la découverte du quadrilatère historique l’Université d’Ottawa »	Thursday, June 12 2025	7 pm
Lowertown East	Sunday, June 15, 2025	2 pm
Golden Triangle Communities	Thursday, June 19, 2025	7 pm
Rockcliffe West	Thursday, July 3, 2025	7 pm
The Scientific Landscape of the Central Experimental Farm	Sunday, July 13, 2025	2 pm
A Journey Through Ottawa’s Herstory	Thursday, July 17 2025	7 pm
Ashton Village	Sunday, July 20, 2025	2 pm
Architecture and Engineering Along the Rideau Canal	Sunday, August 3, 2025	2 pm
Hogs Back – Beyond the Falls	Sunday, August 17, 2025	2 pm
Hintonburg	Sunday, August 24 2025	2 pm

IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING DAVID FLEMMING



Heritage Ottawa mourns the loss of our former President and outstanding volunteer, **David Flemming**, who died on April 25, 2025 at the Ottawa Heart Institute.

David has been the voice for heritage in Ottawa for many decades. He was a deeply committed and respected leader in the fields of heritage conservation and museology who played a significant role in shaping the heritage landscape of the city.

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, David spent his career as a museum and heritage professional, first with National Historic Sites and Parks Canada before serving as the director of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax and later at the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum in Ottawa.

David was actively involved in Heritage Ottawa for close to 25 years, as president (2003-2012), as a committed board member, and as chair of our busy Advocacy Committee, only retiring from his duties in January. As a trusted and knowledgeable spokesperson for Heritage Ottawa, David conducted countless media interviews about the importance of preserving historic places and adapting them to new uses. Whether in writing, over the phone, on air, or on the street in front of threatened heritage sites, he helped raise awareness about heritage places that matter to our communities.

David's dedication to Heritage Ottawa strengthened our organization and we will miss his wise council and thoughtful activism. Although tenacious in his commitments, he was always calm, articulate and fair minded, inspiring consensus in resolving issues and guiding others. David Flemming was admired by all who were privileged to know and work with him.

We extend our condolences to David's family and friends. We are deeply honoured that his family asked if Heritage Ottawa would accept donations in David's memory. If you would like to make such a donation, please visit www.heritageottawa.org/make-donation.

Hintonburg Fire Hall – 7 Fairmont Avenue – Adaptive re-use over many years

By Linda Hoad

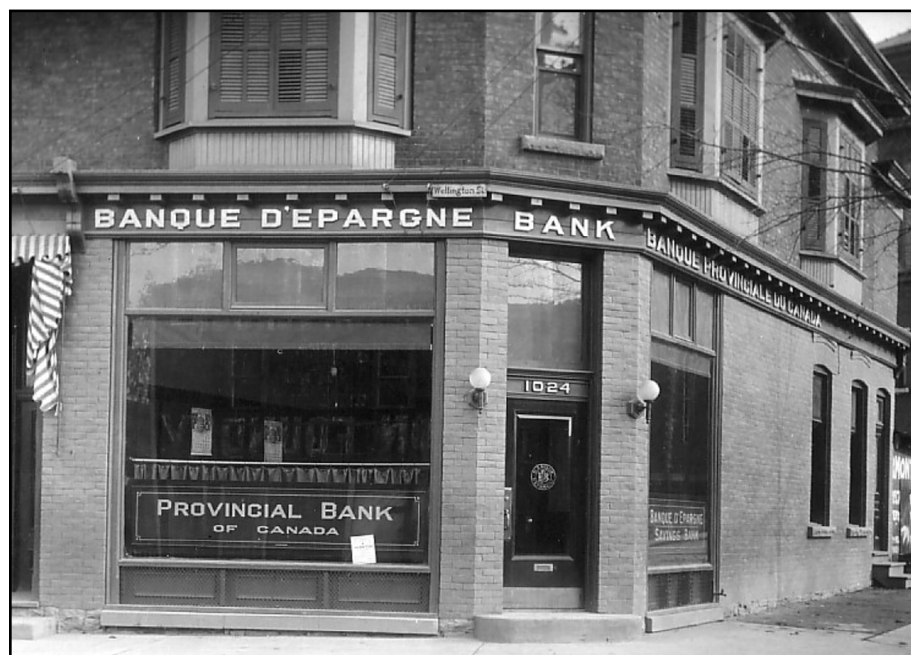
1901-1924

In May 1901, the Hintonburg Village Council chose E. L. Horwood, an Ottawa architect, to prepare plans and estimates for a new fire hall on Seventh Avenue (now Fairmont Avenue). Construction was undertaken by the Villeneuve Brothers of Hintonburg, at a cost of more than \$2,000. The fire hall was a two storey brick building; the hose tower, located on the north west corner of the building, was 60 feet tall – the first thirty feet in brick and the top thirty feet of wood clad in iron.

In 1923 the Fire Station Survey Committee reported to the Board of Control that station No. 11 on Fairmont “should be immediately vacated and a new fire hall built” because of the dilapidated state of the building. Fire Station No. 11 moved to the new fire station at 424 Parkdale Avenue in 1924.

1924-1958 Police sub-station number 2

After the expenditure of \$700 for repairs, 7 Fairmont became police sub-station number 2. In 1958 it was announced that the police station would move to Westboro and that “the time-worn building on Fairmont Avenue, formerly an Ottawa fire station, will be demolished after the move”.



1024 Wellington [now Bridgehead] ca 1920 – fire hall tower on the right at rear

Credit: Ottawa Evening Journal January 25 1902 page 8

Photo: J-C Dubé family

1959-1985

City of Ottawa sold the building for \$20,100 to Gauthier & Co. who operated a funeral parlour there until 1985. The tower was probably removed at the time the building was converted to a funeral parlour, leaving the rounded corner that still remains a distinctive feature of the building.

1986 –

Mixed-Use Commercial/residential building now occupied by Forbes Beauty Services and 6 apartments.

Although the front and north facades have been altered over the years, the original brick structure can be seen on the south wall.

Linda Hoad is Vice President, Operations, of Heritage Ottawa



Photo: Racine Robert & Gauthier ca 1960

7 Fairmont, Ottawa



Photo: Bytown Property Management

7-9 Fairmont, Ottawa 2023

The Meet & Mingle Fundraiser that Brought Heritage and Community Together

By *Ulisses Gonzalez*

As the guests trickled in, students, professors and heritage enthusiasts came together and filled the Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre's (CDCC) Parlour Room with laughter, conversation and a shared passion for architectural history. The School for Studies in Art and Culture (SSAC) Meet & Mingle Fundraiser, organized by the History and Theory of Architecture Society (HTAS), a student-led undergraduate club at Carleton University, partnered with Heritage Ottawa to create an evening that was more than just networking, but to celebrate community, education, and shared passion for cultural heritage.

This event, held on February 7th, gathered members of the SSAC, encompassing programs in Architectural History, Film, Music, and Art History. Despite the professional yet festive atmosphere, the evening's deeper purpose was to support student travel bursaries and education initiatives. The funds will help students attend field trips, conferences, and cultural events, expanding their understanding of their studies beyond the classroom.

HTAS Takes the Lead:

This event, which was the first of its kind, would not have been possible without the vision and dedication of HTAS. What began as a small idea quickly evolved into a large-scale event due to months of careful planning, communication, and teamwork.

HTAS's Presidents Gerardo Maldonado Jimenez and Zaid

Hashim entrusted VP External Ulisses Gonzalez to oversee the event, recognizing his ties with Heritage Ottawa as an Assistant Coordinator for the Heritage Tours. Together, Ulisses and student presidents worked with Heritage Ottawa, SSAC professors, and volunteers, while the remaining HTAS executive team took on key roles from AV setup and check-ins, photography, and hospitality.

The evening was driven by student initiative. From raffling tickets to a film screening by the Film faculty to bringing in a live pianist from the Music faculty, every SSAC department contributed. When students show initiative and get help from nearby organizations like Heritage Ottawa, the cooperation proves the possibilities of multidisciplinary programming.

An Evening of Connection and Impact:

Not only was the fundraiser a monetary success, it also created an impact on everyone who attended. Over 60 attendees who gathered to discuss their personal and professional experiences had an opportunity to engage in interesting conversations from diverse disciplines. For many, it was a rare chance to have informal talks with teachers and meet local heritage experts.

This particular event encouraged students, especially those new to the university, to step out of their comfort zones and engage in conversation, learning and find common ground across generations. The funds raised from this fundraiser made student-driven events more possible going forward. Heritage Ottawa's presence



The SSAC and HO social evening

Photo: *Ulisses Gonzalez, SSAC*

helped raise awareness of volunteer opportunities and career options.

Why This Event Mattered:

Heritage is more than preserving buildings, it's about maintaining community, values and dialogue. Through events like these, youth can see how their academic interests might create practical prospects in the cultural sector, architecture, and heritage. Interacting with experts guides and provides insight for the students.

In a fast-changing society, involving youth is absolutely vital. Although many students today focus on innovation and the future, knowledge of the past gives the future context and depth. Organizations like Heritage Ottawa and the work of HTAS members will equip students to not only study the built environment but also steward it for years to come.

Looking Ahead:

One of the most common reflections from students was how valuable it was to be in a networking space free

of intimidation. Surrounded by classmates, teachers, and community partners, attendees were able to relax, share stories, and begin building relationships that might shape their academic and career paths.

HTAS plans to host more inclusive, multidisciplinary events going forward. From movie nights and mixers to collaborative heritage walking tours with Heritage Ottawa, we are excited to give more opportunities for students to engage with the community and significantly contribute to the cultural life of the city.

We'd like to thank Heritage Ottawa for supporting and amplifying student voices. Readers interested in staying connected, following HTAS on Instagram @hta.society is a great way to stay in the loop. Whether you're a student, a professional, or a heritage enthusiast, there's always room at the table.

*Ulisses Gonzalez, V-P External,
The History and Theory of Architecture
Society, Carleton University.*

Heritage Ottawa Needs YOU!

Volunteers are the heart and soul of Heritage Ottawa.

Do you enjoy local history, architecture or design? If yes, we encourage you to join Heritage Ottawa and to get involved.

Volunteers are needed to help with:

Newsletter

- People interested in researching/drafting articles on built heritage resources or issues for our Newsletter, website or social media.

Walking tours

- Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators to help our volunteer tour guides ensure the safety of participants.
- People interested in researching/developing new walking tours.

Fundraising/Sponsorships

- We are looking for people that want to engage in fundraising appeals (donations, sponsorships) and seek items for auctions.

Volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition

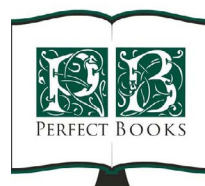
- Someone to oversee this critical function
- Someone to research and write volunteer profiles and award nominations

For more information and/or to express an interest, please contact us at info@heritageottawa.org

See www.heritageottawa.org



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