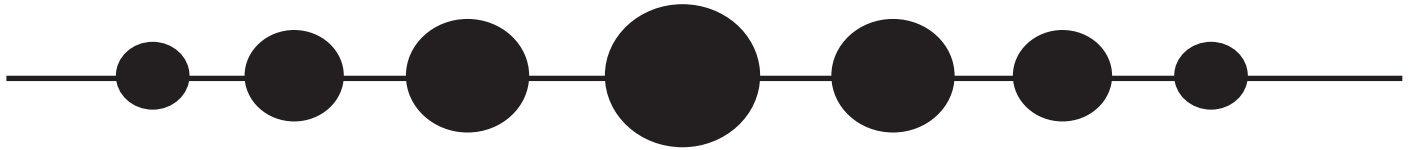

Heritage Matters



A Report Prepared by:
Association Heritage New Brunswick

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Author's Note

The purpose of this report is to provide a basis of information, in the context of New Brunswick, for policy makers, business leaders, other groups, and citizens. The information in this report can easily be edited, sections removed or altered, to suit your needs. Depending on your purpose the focus may be altered or narrowed to address certain specificities, for example:

Businesses: Why use heritage buildings? What are the advantages of locating your business in a heritage zone or building? Why is it beneficial to restore a heritage building rather than start from scratch? How can this affect your customer base and your community? What are, if any, the resources available to encourage this development?

Government Officials: “Heritage first,” why should policy makers and city officials encourage the conservation of heritage buildings? Why is it beneficial under *current* provincial legislation to do so? What incentives are there for municipalities to create heritage review boards and designate heritage areas? What are the provincial and national incentives for heritage conservation and restoration? How can legislation be improved?

Author's Note

Heritage Groups, associations,

etc.: How can *you* promote and strengthen your organization?

What are the best means to educate similar groups in your area; why is this beneficial? What outlets are there for funding, for engaging with municipal and provincial governments, and connecting with people?

Citizens: What kinds of organizations exist in your area? Is there a heritage by-law in your locality? Is there a heritage review board? How can you engage? How can you benefit?

Although some of these questions may not be *specifically* addressed, it is my hope that by reading the report adequate information is conveyed for you to come to your own conclusions in order to tailor the information to your specific needs and address specific questions.

Purpose

This report addresses three broad questions.

Why is conserving our built heritage important?

That is, what are the specific economic, environmental, social, and culture benefits of it?

What is already being done?

That is, what sort of legislation do we have in New Brunswick? What organizations are there that focus on conserving our built heritage?

What can we do to improve and how do we do it?

That is, what are specific things people or organizations can do to promote the conservation of built heritage? With all the things being done, what can we do to improve?

Economic Benefits

The aesthetic, cultural, and historic benefits of heritage conservation, are, and have been well known for years. The economic benefits of historic conservation, however, may not be immediately apparent. Heritage conservation is often perceived as a “luxury” investment, this is not the case, there are numerous economic benefits catalyzed by conservation. In what follows, I will address the economic benefits of heritage conservation as it pertains to **labour, the local and regional economy, tourism, taxes, and property values.**

Impacts on Labour

Heritage conservation, and especially restoration, has significant impacts on job creation in construction and related fields. That is, these projects create more jobs for carpenters, roofers, plumbers, electricians, bricklayers, masons etc. than new construction of comparable cost.¹ Compared to new construction, heritage projects of similar size use 66% more labour, or, they create 2 to 5 times as many jobs. Essentially, a larger percent of money is spent on labour rather than on materials.²

Although, like all construction related projects, jobs are temporary, heritage projects tend to last longer and can occur more often in the winter because many projects involve working on the interior of an already existing structure.

The work requires and or fosters a higher level of skill and artisanship. Many universities and colleges across Canada offer programs with a specific focus on things like heritage carpentry or Engineering programs that include a heritage perspective because of this.

Economic Benefits

Local and Regional Benefits

In terms of generating local and regional impacts, heritage conservation is perhaps the most effective form of economic development. Donovan Rypkema collects American research on the economics of heritage to help counteract some of the more pervasive arguments against conservation. His research shows that in the US \$1m invested in heritage conservation creates:

In the United States One Million Dollars Invested in Heritage Conservation Creates:

- 12 more jobs than \$1m manufacturing semi conductors in California
- 12 more jobs than manufacturing \$1m worth of cars in Michigan;
- 20 more jobs than mining \$1m worth of coal in West Virginia;
- 29 more jobs than pumping \$1m of oil in Oklahoma;
- 22 more jobs than cutting \$1m worth of timber in Oregon;
- 2 more jobs than processing \$1m of steel in Pennsylvania;
- 9 more jobs than \$1m invested in banking services in Colorado. ⁴

Economic Benefits

Renovation and Deconstruction:

It is less expensive and more sustainable to renovate an existing structure than it is to demolish and rebuild on the same location.⁵ If demolition must occur, respect for built heritage in the form of deconstruction, where the buildings materials are salvaged for use in new construction, also has positive economic benefits. It requires more labour, more workers, more hours, and

although the practice comes at a higher upfront cost, studies from Portland Oregon, where a deconstruction program has been implemented, have shown that it has a positive net benefit for Portland's economy.⁶ Not only that, but deconstruction has positive environmental benefits because it uses recycled building materials.

Money stays in the local economy:

More importantly, money spent on heritage restoration stays within the community. That is, money invested comes from local people or local governments. And, if money does come from government, studies have shown that any grant or tax incentives leverage a significant amount of money from the private sector. For example, in Rhode Island, the "Rhode Island Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit" generated 5 times the

Economic Benefits

value of tax credits in total economic activity.⁷ In Canada, The Commercial Heritage Properties Incentive Fund (CHPIF), a Canada-wide pilot program (2003 - 2008), was designed to test the benefit of a heritage tax credit. The results were impressive: federal contributions of \$21.5 million supporting 49 projects leveraged over 8 times more in private sector investment (\$177.2 million).

Heritage Tourism

Having vibrant, engaging, and educational heritage is great for tourism. Tourism is a major industry, and, studies have shown that “cultural heritage tourists” are the largest growing group of tourists in North America. Moreover, these tourists have more capital to spend. That is, they tend to be older, stay longer, and spend more money.

A 2009 report from the government of Ontario found that statistically, over half of all tourists who partook in cultural or entertainment activities while traveling visited a historic site, museum, or art gallery.⁸ As Canada’s population ages, a growing number of tourists travel purely for this reason! Those who do travel to experience a place’s history tend to be older, stay longer, and spend more.⁹

Economic Benefits

Effects on Taxes and Real Estate

Heritage buildings are often in prime, central locations and are highly desired and in high demand. If used to their potential, owners of heritage buildings or within heritage conservation areas often pay higher taxes, which in turn increases local and provincial property tax revenue.¹⁰

Despite higher property taxes, it is also better for owners. Regardless of housing market trends, studies have shown that properties designated heritage or that are located in a designated heritage conservation area, have either maintained or increased in property value even during market downturns. Historic buildings, often well built and in excellent locations, are a safe investment. Investors who

purchase said real estate can expect to see an increase in the property's value.¹¹

In 2016 in Saint John total real estate sales increased by 14%, in the historic uptown, real estate sales increased by 45%. We can see here, in New Brunswick, that heritage places are in higher demand. In fact, one could argue that the bulk of real estate value (which increased 16% from 2015 to 2016) was generated in Saint John's historic uptown.

Social and Cultural Benefits

In New Brunswick historic buildings are everywhere, it is easy to overlook the value and importance these places bring to our society. Historic buildings, however, have numerous benefits for individuals and for the whole of society.

Walkable Neighborhoods & Social Cohesion

Historic neighborhoods are often some of the most “walkable,” that is, they were often planned and built so

that services and amenities were easily within walking distance. Research shows that people who live in “walkable” neighborhoods get above average exercise, rely less on automobiles, and are more likely to be socially engaged with their neighbors. As a result, obesity, heart disease, air pollution, traffic fatalities, and crime are reduced in “walkable” neighborhoods.¹²

Heritage places create a sense of shared history and reinforce feelings of connectedness

among community members. Greater social cohesion increases a community’s “social capital” and its ability to solve problems and achieve common goals.

Identity and Sense of Place

Cultural heritage encompasses people and communities; our cultural heritage includes and envelopes — it is a reflection and testament to the values our society holds, has inherited, and wishes to pass on to future generations. Everything-

Social and Cultural Benefits

from oral tradition, memory and language, to collections, archives, places, buildings and landscapes; it is reflected in the things that we enjoy and learn about by visiting museums, archives, historic sites and parks. Moreover, preserving, maintaining, and restoring our built heritage gives identity and distinctiveness to the towns, cities or rural areas where we live.

Inclusion and Diversity

By revitalizing older neighborhoods, heritage conservation helps preserve long-established social ties and community networks. Because they usually offer a variety of services and housing options, historic neighborhoods also facilitate the mixing of people of different backgrounds and the formation of more diverse and inclusive social networks.

Architecture

Architecture is a tangible and substantive representation of place and history. By preserving the architecture that surrounds us we are able to share, live in, enjoy, and directly experience the culture of those who came before us. Historic conservation of buildings visually and tangibly conserves our cultural identity.

Social and Cultural Benefits

Community Oriented Events

Heritage places provide opportunities and venues for community celebrations and other public events that bring people together. In many communities, heritage buildings are an important source of affordable workspace for volunteer groups, social service agencies and other community-oriented organizations.

Cultural Experiences

Maintaining heritage sites, buildings, and zones creates the climate for vibrant cultural experiences. Tourism, art, and

festivals are drawn to places with historical meaning. In effect, local residents benefit from the learning and engagement that historic sites and areas bring. The more involved a community is with its cultural heritage, the more attractive, meaningful, and effective that community will be for both locals and tourists.

Education

Heritage places are educational resources that help people understand and appreciate architecture, technology, art and culture. As repositories of local history, heritage places also

help us understand our own communities and remind us of our responsibilities to past and future generations.

Collective Memory

By strengthening our communities past through conservation, we also strengthen our future. A knowledgeable, appreciative, reflective, and respectful collective memory of our past allows us to engage more meaningfully and thoughtfully with our present and more strategically with our future.

Environmental Benefits

Environmental sustainability is increasingly becoming a focus for policy makers, businesses, and citizens. Most would not associate historic buildings and their conservation with sustainability and environmental stewardship, however, preserving and restoring historic buildings is both a sustainable and environmentally friendly practice. Here are some benefits the conservation, use, and restoration of historic buildings has on the environment.

Uses less energy and resources

Demolishing and rebuilding over an existing building, regardless of its historic significance, uses more resources and expends much more energy. One of the largest contributors to landfills is demolished building material.¹³ Deconstructing (when demolition is the only option), refurbishing, or renovating existing structures is less impactful on the environment

than rebuilding. The “greenest” building is the one that is already built! New studies have shown that it takes anywhere from 10 to 80 years for a new ‘green’ building to make up its negative impact on the climate.¹⁴

Uses already existing resources, utilities, services etc.:

New construction consumes a great amount of natural resources including forests and timber, land, coal, and oil as well as the pollution of land,

Environmental Benefits

air and water. In addition, new construction requires increased utilities and services from local and provincial governments such as power, sewage and water, schools, hospitals, fire, police, and roads. All of these expenditures can be drastically reduced through the preserving and development of existing structures and neighborhoods. Moreover, the act of demolition is irreversible. No amount of regret, redoubled effort, or expense can possibly bring back a lost historic structure!

Artisanship and Method

In addition to historic significance, most historic buildings were designed (to the extent of technology available at the time) to be energy-efficient. When buildings are maintained with materials and methods comparable to the original, these energy-saving features can continue to benefit building tenants. Many buildings built before the 1960's are actually better at conserving energy

than many built after. This is because historic buildings often have thick masonry walls to conserve heat, tall windows and skylights for natural interior lighting, and floor plans with large open spaces that allow for air circulation. It takes energy to construct a new building; it saves energy to preserve one.

Tools that Encourage and Support Heritage Conservation

In this section, I turn to initiatives, legislations, grants, programs, and organizations that encourage heritage conservation. In this section I aim to answer questions such as:

- 1) What are governments, businesses, organizations, and citizens doing to promote and ensure the conservation of our heritage, historical sites, and buildings?
- 2) What do the Provincial and municipal governments of New Brunswick do to preserve our

heritage? How is legislation structured? More importantly, is there room for improvement?

In 2010 the province of New Brunswick passed the Heritage Conservation Act.

In it are laid out the laws, regulations, and processes surrounding heritage sites and heritage areas. In order to move forward, first we must understand the Act that governs heritage sites and places in the province. The Act itself is 102 pages, however subsections 28-68 are the most relevant to

heritage conservation. A link to the full document can be found by clicking **here**.

Certain businesses choose to locate their businesses in historic buildings. These businesses benefit from the unique environment customers experience when they shop there. Studies have found that even being around historic places and buildings increases happiness and self-esteem.¹⁵

Tools that Encourage and Support Heritage Conservation

The Heritage Conservation Act

Essentially, the Heritage Conservation Act details who may designate something “heritage” how they can do it, and all of the laws, regulations, and stipulations surrounding this designation. The Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, as well as individuals and municipalities, can all take action when it comes to heritage conservation. The Act allows municipalities to create their own heritage review boards and by-laws. Essentially, this gives municipalities the autonomy to create a heritage by-law and

designate their own heritage zones and thereby grant certain protections to their heritage assets. Citizens, where there is a municipal by-law and review board, can apply to have a place designated even if it is outside of a heritage zone. If a heritage review board and by-law does not exist, citizens can still apply through the province, however, a place will only be designated by the province if it has significant provincial importance. A good example is the McAdam train station.

There are several jurisdictions in New Brunswick that have appointed heritage review boards and officers and have created municipal by-laws in order to preserve their jurisdiction’s unique heritage. These are: Saint Andrews, Fredericton, Moncton, Saint John, Caraquet, Sackville, and Rothesay. Anyone wishing to alter a place designated “heritage” in any of these cities can only do so with the explicit permission from their jurisdiction’s Heritage Review Board or, if it is a provincial heritage place, the Minister.

Tools that Encourage and Support Heritage Conservation

Provincial Grants

Apart from the economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits of heritage conservation and restoration are there any others? Are there initiatives that are unique and specific to New Brunswick? What do our governments do to prioritize and incentivize this kind of engagement?

There are several provincial programs created to preserve, revitalize, and maintain New Brunswick's historical buildings:

The Community Cultural Places Grant

Find the government website and relevant application documents **here**

- Directed at small communities or communities at risk who wish to take advantage of their art and heritage.
- Directed at community based initiatives to re-store, renovate, and re-purpose significant heritage places.
- Could include museums, halls, lighthouses, churches, streetscapes, squares, or parks.
- The program will contribute 75% of costs, up to a maximum of \$75,000
- The program uses the framework delineated in the "Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada" to evaluate proposals, which can be found [here](#).

Tools that Encourage and Support Heritage Conservation

The Heritage Place Conservation Grant
find the government website and relevant application documents **here**

- For the rehabilitation of built heritage, that is, buildings and landscapes.
- Only structures owned, or in a long-term lease agreement, with a not-for-profit organization are eligible. Buildings must be registered provincial or municipal heritage places.
- Component A will contribute 75%, up to a maximum of \$5,000 for conservation expertise and specialization.
- Component B will contribute 50%, up to a maximum of \$30,000 for conservation related aspects.

The Heritage Place Property Tax Abatement
find the government website and relevant application documents **here**

- An incentive for heritage restoration for (primarily) commercial buildings.
- Eligible properties must meet certain criteria; the property must undergo a significant restoration with construction costs of at least \$100,000, or 20% of the assessed value of the property (costs can include interior and exterior).
- The project must follow the guidelines referred to in paragraph 53(3)(e), see above, of the Heritage Conservation Act. The project also must adhere to the “Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.”
- Approved projects will be forgiven a “portion of the net increase in provincial and municipal property taxes resulting from the increase in the assessed value of the property for a four-year period.”

Tools that Encourage and Support Heritage Conservation

Municipal Initiatives

As mentioned, there are several municipalities that have taken advantage of the provincial Heritage Conservation Act and created Heritage Review Boards and Heritage by-laws to protect their unique heritage. Most recently, Saint Andrews has held public heritage consultations, appointed a heritage review board, and is in the process of reviewing and implementing their own heritage by-law. More on this can be found on the town's website **here**. Other

jurisdictions like Fredericton, Saint John, Moncton, Caraquet, Rothesay, Sackville, and Sussex also have heritage review boards and by-laws.

Saint John is one of only three jurisdictions in New Brunswick that offers Heritage grants for the restoration of heritage buildings. Moncton and Sackville also have grant initiatives. Saint John is, however, the best example of a municipality taking charge of its own distinct heritage. As such, I will use Saint John's by-laws and heritage grant

programs as examples for other municipalities and local governments. That being said, there is still room for improvement in Saint John. A link to Heritage Conservation for the city of Saint John, including a full link to their Heritage by-laws, grant programs, and application process, can be found **here**. In what follows, a brief explanation of their legislation will be laid out.

Tools that Encourage and Support Heritage Conservation

Saint John Heritage Conservation Areas By-Laws

Saint John's legislation designates nine heritage zones. In so doing, it affords these zones, and the buildings within, all the protections laid out in section 55 of the Heritage Conservation Act as well as those added in section 9 of the city's by-law. In fact, Irving Oil is in the process of planning the construction of its new headquarters within the "Trinity Heritage Zone" in uptown Saint John. Because of this, all plans must meet the approval and requirements of Saint John's heritage review board. **Here**, from the minutes

of their October meeting, we can see the kind of screening process the committee is going through with regards to this new construction. In this meeting, the review board, as per their mandate, approved the projects proposed windows, doors, roofing, and materials. Although during the overall process some aspects of the by-law were not upheld, without Saint John's by-laws in place, this process would have occurred without any regard for the heritage buildings this new edifice will be surrounded by. Indeed, consideration of Saint John's unique urban landscape may not have occurred at all. By

looking at any of the minutes (all are publicly available **here**) from the Saint John Heritage Review Board's meetings, the wide variety of heritage considerations the board undergoes are apparent. From replacing residential windows, doors, and staircases, to new businesses and brand new construction, any alterations occurring in any of Saint John's nine heritage zones or on any designated heritage building outside, must be approved by this review board. For a city like Saint John, a city steeped in (especially) important urban and industrial history, these considerations must be made.

Moving Forward

What can be done to preserve our built heritage? How can we improve?

There are many historic buildings across the province in danger of demolition. Each has an important past and should be saved. Although in some regards insufficient, the legislation we have is the foundation upon which we can build and improve in order to conserve New Brunswick's built heritage. What can we do to improve? What can we do to move forward?

Establish a Heritage Advocacy Group

There are few penalties, and none at the provincial level, for those who breach the *Heritage Conservation Act*. The Act, although a good start, is ineffective. Any legislation that has no legal repercussions to encourage its adherence is necessarily ineffective. *The Motor Vehicles Act*, for example, creates legal framework for things like speed limits, blood alcohol levels, registration, and driver's licenses. Without the harsh penalties the Act also lays

out, albeit the good intent of the supporting legislation, its purpose: to protect those on the road, would be unfulfilled. This is the case with the *Heritage Conservation Act*; without penalties, there is no incentive to abide by the law. A Heritage advocacy group, like that in Ontario, which oversees their Heritage Act, and has the legal authority to penalize those who do not abide by the Act, is crucial to heritage conservation. We believe that the creation of an "arms length" heritage advocacy group is essential for the future of our built heritage in this province.

Moving Forward

Designation

One of the best ways to preserve heritage places in New Brunswick is to officially have them designated as such. This, as explained above, will give the place all the protection and recognitions laid out in the Heritage Conservation Act or in a Municipal Heritage by-law. As we have seen, there are different ways this is carried out in different parts of the province. However, regardless of where you live, and whether or not your jurisdiction has an appointed heritage review board, you as an individual can still apply to have a place designated as heritage if it has

provincial heritage significance and you follow and abide by the applications and regulations. Investigating and advocating for a place's historical importance is vital to preserve it. It is our sole method of affording our built heritage legally binding protections.

Improve Legislation

After careful consideration, we believe that the Heritage Conservation Act, although an important step, does not go far enough to preserve and protect our built heritage. We recommend it be amended to include a "Heritage First"

approach. That is, we encourage legislation that prioritizes the sustainable re-use of historic buildings for provincial development. Government – especially when purchasing or relocating government employees – should always look to that community's built heritage first. It is an investment that generates much more for the community than new construction. Moreover, as the government is an extension of the people, it is our job to encourage and hold them to these standards.

Moving Forward

Deconstruction over Demolition:

If demolition must occur, we encourage the reuse and recycling of building material. This means adopting “deconstruction over demolition” mandates. That is, legislation ensuring that buildings built before a certain year must be deconstructed rather than demolished. Both practices not only prioritize and respect our built heritage; they also (as seen above) have positive economic and environmental implications.

In this aim, we also encourage government to amend its Municipalities Act to allow

municipalities themselves to provide tax incentives, rebates, and breaks for their constituents. The current tax abatement program is ineffective. Moreover, tax incentives for homeowners could be established at the municipality’s discretion. The province offers no tax incentive for homeowners, a program like that in Nova Scotia, where the government reimburses some of the cost of building materials purchased to restore a heritage structure, would be beneficial here as well.

Get Involved

We encourage concerned citizens to reach out in their communities and engage with one of the many heritage or historical societies in our province. If there aren’t any in your area, start your own! There are also provincial and national organizations who work tirelessly to preserve, restore, and enrich our heritage. Furthermore, if a designated heritage building in your area needs restoration to be brought back to life, there may be a provincial grant that you are eligible for. See our list of provincial incentives above for more details.

Moving Forward

Create Heritage Review Boards

We encourage municipal governments to take initiative and create heritage review boards for their region. This allows for additional protection, management, and control over your municipalities unique historical resources. Moreover, preserving, revitalizing, and effectively using heritage buildings and resources galvanize a wide variety of important individual and communal benefits.

Create Municipal Tax Incentive or Grant Programs

We especially encourage municipalities with heritage review boards to create their own grant programs to help fund citizen heritage projects. The benefit of making heritage restoration and conservation an attractive and financially feasible endeavor has positive implications for the health and prosperity of your community.

Increase Funding

Finally, we encourage the provincial government to increase availability and funding for its heritage grants. A government serious about creating jobs and opportunities should see built heritage for what it is: an invaluable asset. It is not just the economy and job creation that conservation and restoration can bolster, as we know, heritage buildings have positive social, cultural, and environmental implications as well.

Moving Forward

To move forward as a province we must keep a keen eye on our past. The conservation and appreciation of our heritage and history cannot and should not be seen as antiquated or outdated practices. Innovation, entrepreneurship, and progress are not contradictory buzzwords. A province like New Brunswick, with high unemployment and rising deficits, should be, and I believe is, serious about progress. On the face of it, it may seem that conservation implicates stagnation, lethargy, or perhaps an unproductive embrace of antiquated practices. This is not the case. We cannot move forward without looking to our past; innovation and progress cannot occur without respecting where we came from and how we got here. The conservation of our built heritage absolutely represents progress, is innovative, and provides a host of benefits for society, culture, the economy, and the environment. Economic, entrepreneurial, architectural, and environmental innovation all can occur, and are indeed galvanized by the conservation and appreciation of the built heritage that surrounds us.

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