

14th ANNUAL LONDON HERITAGE AWARDS LIKE NO OTHER

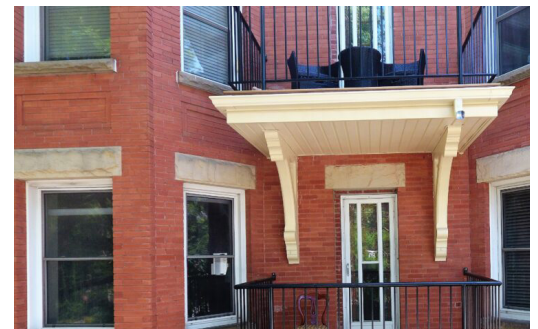
It was a London Heritage Awards event like no other. An intrepid band of Awarders, Presenters and an enthusiastic bunch of supporters came out into the mid-February snow and cold to hand out our annual awards on doorsteps, porches and entranceways in the fresh open and chill air. We were delighted to celebrate our brave recipients' successes and keep up our annual heritage appreciation tradition in spite of spiteful Covid.

We had two awardees in the Downtown area, which is always especially valued. At the Queens Court apartments on Queens Ave. new balcony dividers and finials were installed and other refurbishments undertaken to garner our Major Restoration Project award. Mary Lee Duggan accepted this award on behalf of Middlesex Condominium Corporation #97 who are to be praised for continuing upgrading of these historic apartments.

The Adaptive Re-use Award was given to Y.O.U. (Youth Opportunities Unlimited) who took over part of an empty and neglected historic block at 340 Richmond Street and completely restored it, fixing structural issues, cleaning brick, restoring millwork and windows, installing new HVAC, security systems and wiring for computers and wifi. Proving too that it can be done! This venerable old lady has been adapted into a lively and efficient office, working and living space for young people.



Queens Court Presentation



Queens Court Restoration



YOU Presentation



Street view of YOU Building at 340 Richmond Street..

Heritage Awards...con't page 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the President _____	Page 2	Volunteer Opportunity Coordinator _____	Page 6
Sylvia Chodas Named to Mayor's Honour List	Page 3	An ACO Program Committee Re-imagined ____	Page 7
Community Captains Wanted _____	Page 3	GHHT Booklets Now Available on ACO Website	Page 7
Heritage Awards Continued _____	Page 4	McKillop Architectural Conservancy Fund _____	Page 7
Historical House Sign Milestone _____	Page 5	Buildings on the Brink 2021 _____	Page 8
Queens Park Goes Virtual _____	Page 6		

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Sylvia Chodas

Heritage Awards - Susan Bentley

Policy - Jennifer Grainger

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Newsletter Editor - Brian MacAskill

Newsletter Layout - Marty Peterson

Website - Marty Peterson

info@acolondon.ca

519-645-2845

c/o Grosvenor Lodge

1017 Western Road

London, ON N6G 1G5

Facebook: ACOLondon

Twitter: @ACOLondonOnt

Website: acolondon.ca

Instagram: [instagram.com/aco_london](https://www.instagram.com/aco_london)

ACO MISSION

“Through education and advocacy, to encourage the conservation and re-use of structures, districts and landscapes of architectural, historic and cultural significance, to inspire and benefit Ontarians.”

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From the President...

By: Kelley McKeating, President

Although it's been almost a full year since our last issue of The Advocate, we've tried to stay in touch with our members through our monthly e-Bulletin and social media channels.

2020 was a strange and challenging year for ACO London Region. We started the year off with a bang, participating in several heritage-themed fairs and also organizing and then putting our booth up at the first-ever Heritage Corner at the LHBA London Lifestyle Home Show. Soon afterwards, our world – like yours – changed. We had to cancel a March speaker event. Subsequent to that, we postponed and then cancelled the 47th Annual Geranium Heritage House Tour and a September member bus tour. We conducted our Annual General Meeting on Zoom (“you’re muted!”). Looking at the bright side of 2020, our already popular Historical House Signs program has really taken off! We delivered our 300th sign earlier this month – only three years after the program was first established.

Despite our inability to meet in person, we tried to stay in contact with both ACO members and the community at large. Our Communications Team volunteers were active on social media where we have over 1,700 Facebook followers and almost as many Twitter followers, plus 250 followers of our relatively new Instagram account.

Behind the scenes and in front of our city councillors, it was yet another busy year. As advocates for the conservation of our city's unique architectural legacy, we made recommendations and voiced thoughtful concerns over development and demolition proposals regarding 556 Wellington Street (the London Life/Canada Life parking lot), the Kent Brewery site on Ann Street, 101 Meadowlily Road South, and 93-95 Dufferin Street (the Samuel Peters building just around the corner from the much missed and lamented Camden Terrace on Talbot Street). We also continued to follow the Victoria Park Secondary Plan development process.

On the policy front, we began to investigate the mechanisms that are in place in other communities (in other provinces) to encourage the conservation of built heritage.

Together with the Heritage London Foundation, we once again recognized local champions of heritage conservation. More on that elsewhere in the newsletter.

As we begin to see light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we believe that advocating for London's historic structures, districts, and landscapes continues to be very important. Research shows that there are significant economic (and environmental) benefits to heritage conservation. There is information on this subject on the Resources tab of our website.

Stay healthy and safe! Let's keep our fingers crossed for a resumption of in-person events later in 2021.

Kelley



Annual General Meeting

Thursday May 20, 2021

Our by-laws require us to hold an Annual General Meeting each year. The 2021 AGM will take place on May 20, 2021 - via Zoom for the second consecutive year. Stay tuned to the April e-Bulletin for further details and registration instructions.

Sylvia Chodas Named to Mayor's Honour List

ACO London devotee and former board member Sylvia Chodas has been recognized for her dedication to London history and built heritage. Many ACO London Region members know Sylvia in her role as the Geranium Heritage House Tour (GHHT) chair.

Sylvia Chodas has been an active volunteer and advocate in London's heritage community for many years. As well as volunteering with ACO London, she is also a member of Heritage London Foundation and the London and Middlesex Historical Society.

Sylvia's energy and vision were particularly notable in her role as GHHT chair. This popular event has taken place in older neighbourhoods across the city for the past 47 years. Pulling it together takes months of research, site visits, community outreach, and volunteer recruitment with the committee.

Another event in which Sylvia has played a key role is the annual ACO London/London and Middlesex Historical Society joint bus tour which takes guests on day-long guided tours of historical towns and sites across Southwestern Ontario. Like the Geranium Tour, these annual bus tours require intense advance planning and research. Sylvia has been a volunteer tour guide for ACO London walking tours during Doors Open each September and has led downtown heritage tours for Museum London during their summer season. She also leads tours of the historic City-owned Grosvenor Lodge and Elsie Perrin Williams Estate properties.

She is a regular volunteer at community heritage events such as the annual Heritage Fair and has made presentations on the London area's heritage to a variety of community organizations. She has spoken out and written letters in support of heritage conservation advocacy efforts for many years, both as an ACO London Board member and as an individual citizen. Fellow heritage advocate and ACO London board member Genet Hodder summed up Sylvia's contributions: "Sylvia has been and continues to be such a positive force for heritage conservation. She is always up for the challenge. Her knowledge, enthusiasm, and 'let's do it' attitude are great motivators for the heritage community and beyond."

Dorothy Palmer

With material from Mayor's List presentation



Sylvia with Alan Beck, whose late wife Julia was ACO President. Sylvia is presenting Alan with a poster of the London Doorways booklet, which Julia had researched. Sadly Alan died last December at the age of 92

Community Captains Wanted

Does your neighbourhood have a lively on-line forum where community issues and events are shared and debated? ACO London Region is seeking volunteers, already active in these groups, to serve as liaisons and help give the ACO a better sense of the role that heritage issues play in those neighbourhoods.

These "community captain" responsibilities would include the following:

- Remain active in your on-line groups and community. Note the types of discussions going on - especially when the topic relates to built heritage.
- Where appropriate, promote the value of heritage conservation. ACO London Region has educational resources to help with this.
- On occasion and where appropriate, conduct polls, on behalf of ACO London Region, to get a better handle on the issues which matter most.
- Encourage community events that relate to heritage and heritage conservation. The ACO may be able to support events with research, booths, expertise, etc.
- Advise the ACO of any planned community events that they may wish to participate in.
- At regular intervals, a member of the ACO Board will reach out to discuss what's been going on in your group as well as provide support and offer ideas.

If you're interested in becoming a community captain for heritage and acting as an informal liaison between your neighbourhood and the ACO, please contact us at info@acolondon.ca.

London Heritage Awards...continued from page 1

At 25 Empress Avenue the owner, Vicky Lightfoot, undertook a small-scale restoration of her Designated 1874 home. She had been restoring and renovating her house for many years -- mainly the interior and completed the process last year by repairing and in places replicating the gable edge trim to her house. A skilled carpenter also created a new pendant finial, basing the design on other historic residences in the neighbourhood.



Presentation to 25 Empress Avenue.



25 Empress Avenue - replicated gables.

The whole MacNeil/Pevler family got involved at 135 Duchess Avenue where they transformed the front of their house by building a new wooden porch complementary in style to the period of the original structure. A brother of the family helped, and the children got involved too. This labour of love has helped not only to enhance their house, but the whole of this part of the streetscape.



Presentation 135 Duchess Avenue



135 Duchess Avenue - completed

An Ontario cottage at 360 St James Street looks as charming as the day it was built, with all the intricate detail of the porch, steps and balustrades being skillfully and meticulously restored and repaired. A presentation to the home owners will be done at a later date.

Many thanks to Michael Wojtak, Chair of the Heritage London Foundation, Kelley McKeating, President of Architectural Conservancy Ontario, London Region Branch, and Stephen Turner, City Councillor for presenting these awards. Pay a visit to our website: londonheritageawards.ca for a live video of the events and more information.



360 James Street.

Historical House Sign Program Reaches Milestone

When a Historical House Sign was delivered to Andrew Nelson this week, his property at 22 Peter Street became the 300th in London to be recognized through ACO's popular program. Andrew and his late wife Christine moved to London in 1994. As archaeologists, Andrew said they were naturally inclined to have an interest in old things. Andrew teaches at Western, while Chris was involved with London's Advisory Committee on Heritage and later became a Heritage Planner with the city.

The history of the Nelson home was completed thanks to ACO volunteers Joey McDowell and Linda Whitney. The home was determined to have been built circa 1870 in the Ontario Farmhouse style. The white clapboard dwelling, somewhat unusual in London, was first occupied by Oren O. Benson, a melodeon maker at Benson Brothers whose factory was located on King Street between Clarence and Wellington. In addition to being the 300th sign location, 22 Peter Street has been designated by the City of London under the Ontario Heritage Act and was toured by hundreds of Londoners during ACO's famous Geranium Heritage House Tours in both 1974 and 1998. The property also has a strong connection to another local heritage advocate, as it was the longtime home of artist, teacher, activist, and relentless defender of the Woodfield Neighbourhood - Evelyn Lamont Crooks. There is a plaque dedicated to her memory under the magnolia tree in the front yard.



22 Peter Street became the 300th to receive a Heritage House Sign

Initiated in 2017, ACO London Region's Historical House Signs program is modelled after a similar program in Stratford. Posted in a visible location facing the street, the signs are a reminder of the city's rich stock of historical homes. Each sign displays the construction date of the house, plus the name and occupation of the first occupant(s). In addition to the sign, each owner receives a printed monograph with information about their home's unique story - the names of the people who lived there, the places they worked, and how their neighbourhood evolved.

Once a sign is requested, the address is assigned to one of the ACO's dedicated volunteers who then combs the historical maps and records available through the Western Archives, the Central Library's London Room, and various on-line resources. This research takes approximately 10 to 30 hours, depending on the property.

When the program started in 2017, there were just two volunteers (now there are 15!). One was ACO member and former Board member Sharon Lunau, credited for sparking the initiative here in London. The other was Dorothy Palmer who has researched approximately 70 properties and counting! Dorothy recalled the challenge of finding records for the oldest residence signed to date: the farmhouse located at 1252 Hamilton Road. It dates back to at least 1860 on lands settled in the 1820s.

Another Historical House Sign Program volunteer is Heather Guizzetti, who recently took over the role of coordinator. "I think of the program as a way to help people connect to their community in a new way," said Heather.

Walking along a street, the ACO signs give a great glimpse into a neighbourhood's history. You may have an image of houses being built over decades or serving a particular population. ACO's research has found that some streets were built out quite quickly, while others were developed very slowly over many years. The people living within the newly-built homes represent a wide range of occupations and reflect the city's economic base during each era. A few notable examples are a Bacteriologist, a Projectionist, and a Baseball Legend.

To help Londoners find the signs, there is an on-line map on the ACO London website that shows sign locations across the city.



Queen's Park Goes Virtual: ACO's Annual Heritage Week Lobbying Day

By Mike Bloxam

On Wednesday, February 17th, members of ACO from across the province engaged Members of Provincial Parliament through the medium du jour: video conferencing. 23 MPPs in total - representing all four political parties and from all corners of the province - took meetings with ACO spokespeople throughout the day to learn about the importance of heritage and discuss how conservation efforts are a boon to the people they represent.

This year's focus was on the 63 shovel-ready projects across the province to repurpose heritage properties and get them occupied. MPPs were asked to advocate earmarking \$50M in COVID Recovery Funding to rehabilitate, retrofit, or adaptively reuse heritage buildings by using existing Canada Infrastructure Plan funding allocated to Ontario by the federal government, and create a special Heritage Infrastructure stream. The government in British Columbia did this (called the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program: Unique Heritage Infrastructure stream) by awarding \$15M, generating \$10M in matching contributions, and resulted in creating 4329 jobs!

There are three benefits to this type of investment: creating jobs, fighting climate change, and improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Benefit #1: job creation

More jobs are created than with new construction. New construction is about 50/50 labour and materials. Restoration and renovation can be as much as 75% labour. For every dollar spent you get twice as much local employment, and use about half the resources.

Benefit #2: fight climate change

Retrofits and adaptive reuse of existing buildings reduce greenhouse-gas emissions (and reduce energy costs) and reduce demolition waste. It can take between ten and 80 years for a new energy-efficient building to overcome the climate change impacts created during construction (e.g. mining new iron ore, smelting new beams, transporting to work site, etc.).

Benefit #3: improve individual and community wellbeing

Seven UK studies found that living in heritage buildings and neighbourhoods improved sense of pride, sense of place, social cohesion, and increased local economic activity.

I had the great opportunity to speak with our MPP in London North Centre, Terence Kernaghan. He was very receptive to the ideas put forward by our group (two of our ACO compatriots from Chatham-Kent and me) and shared a few good thoughts of his own about adaptive reuse and reducing needless demolition being sent to landfill.

Of course, MPPs need to hear from us more than once a year. It never hurts to reach out to your local elected officials and let them know the importance of heritage conservation and how it is the best for the economy, the environment, and society. It's the sustainable choice!

Volunteer Opportunities with ACO London Region

ACO London Region is looking for individuals interested in joining our volunteer Board of Directors. We require energy, leadership skills, an interest in built heritage conservation and a willingness to commit a minimum of two years to board service. Between board meetings and special projects, the time commitment is approximately 5 to 10 hours per month. Our most pressing need is for a treasurer to serve from May 2021 to May 2023. Strong organizational skills and a comfort with numbers are essential for this role. Some familiarity with bookkeeping software and accounting principles would be helpful. The outgoing treasurer will provide training and support as needed during the transition. We also need a Membership Secretary. Much of the membership renewal process is on-line and automated. This role involves outreach to improve membership engagement. When applying please specify whether you wish to be considered for the treasurer, the membership secretary or an "at-large" board position.

There is also a need for individuals to fill a variety of volunteer roles within our small charitable organization. If you have a passion for built heritage and/or architecture, this would be a great way to expand your network and meet like-minded people. Opportunities include event planning, policy research, grass roots advocacy and community outreach communication. No special training or expertise required.

If you think we're the organization for you please contact us so that we can tell you more about the communities and roles that interest you most.

Contact: Kelley McKeating at info@acolondon.ca

An ACO Program Committee Re-imagined

The pandemic restrictions put a full stop to almost all of our member events in 2020. That pause has given your Board the opportunity to begin to rethink the what, how, and why of the events that our Program Committee plans for you each year. As we reset and prepare for a return to in-person events, we want to hear from ACO members and friends!! Please send a quick note to info@acolondon.ca with your ideas and suggestions for future events. Do you want us to continue with the same events as in past years? Is there something new you'd like us to try? Here are some questions to get you thinking:

- Is there a house with interesting architectural or historical features that you'd love to tour? Send us the address and we'll see what can be arranged.
- If you or a friend would be willing to open your own heritage home to a small group of ACO members for an evening (once public health protocols permit), please let us know.
- Would you enjoy a Zoom tour if an in-person house tour isn't possible?
- Would you like to attend a talk on a specific topic? Different architectural styles? The history of a specific London neighbourhood? The legacy of a famous local architect? Something else? Don't be shy! Send us your wish list.
- How about a walking tour? In which neighbourhood? With a tour guide at a scheduled time or self-guided with a booklet?
- Does a bus tour to a neighbouring town interest you?

Please drop us a line. Tell us what types of events would interest you and also what events do NOT interest you.

We're going to need new volunteers to help us implement the suggestions that we receive. If you'd like to help with the organizing and publicizing part of the process, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us at info@acolondon.ca.

Geranium Heritage House Tour Booklets, now available from ACO Website

Looking for an opportunity to get out of the house and explore the city around us. ACO London Region has a suggestion. Re-live our Geranium Heritage House Tours by downloading a tour guide from our website. ACO London Region has made available all tour booklets since 1974. There are six featured tours that will be changed on a regular basis, with a directory of all of the guides to make it easy to find an area in London to explore at your leisure.

ACO London Region asks that you respect the privacy of the property owners, and enjoy your self-guided tour from the sidewalks.

E. Ann & Ian D. McKillop Architectural Conservancy Fund

Ann McKillop was a wife, mother, grandmother, educator, heritage preservationist and cottager. Ian McKillop was a husband, father, grandfather, businessman, athlete, cottager and enthusiastic supporter of Ann's work in heritage preservation. Passionately involved in heritage preservation for over 50 years, Ann was a founding member of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, London Branch. She was keenly involved in the preservation and restoration of many significant London heritage buildings, including the Labatt Building Ltd. Ridout Street Restoration at the forks of the Thames River. Ian joined Ann in efforts to save the Labatt Buildings and volunteered at the Annual Geranium Heritage House Tour which has showcased heritage properties in London for over 40 years.

Ann received a number of honours for her dedication to heritage preservation including the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario Award of Excellence, the Heritage London Foundation Award of Excellence, and a spot on the Mayor's Honour List. As a testament to Ann's ongoing commitment to educating Londoners about the importance of heritage preservation, she co-founded the Annual Geranium Heritage House Tour, which has been running for more than 40 years.

To honour Ann and Ian's legacy, their children established the E. Ann & Ian D. McKillop Architectural Conservancy Fund at London Community Foundation in 2017. This forever fund supports the efforts of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, London Branch in promoting, conserving and interpreting the architectural heritage of the London area.

The McKillop family wishes to remind ACO members that they will match all donations made to the fund each year, up to a specified maximum. If you want to help build this endowment to support ACO London into the future, please consider an on-line donation: <https://www.lcf.on.ca/fundpages/2019/10/2/e-ann-mckillop-architectural-conservancy-fund> or telephone the London Community Foundation to find out how to donate by cheque.

Building on the Brink 2021

This is the 2021 edition of HLF and ACO's list of 6 threatened heritage buildings in the City of London. One of the messages evident in this year's selection is the risk associated with development proposals and plans, such as the recent devastating experience with Camden Terrance of Talbot Street. Vacant or seemingly abandoned buildings may also be vulnerable. The red barn at 247 Halls Mills Road shows, in the extreme, the results of neglect and non-use of valuable historic and heritage structures.

First launched in 2006 by Heritage London Foundation, the list brings attention to the state of significant heritage properties in the area that have been vacant for awhile and/or whose heritage value is at risk.

This year's list is as follows:

1. 93-95 Dufferin Avenue; The double house at 93-95 Dufferin Avenue represents a time when London's influential people lived in the prestigious neighbourhood extending north and east from the great Courthouse at the Forks of the Thames. It is among the precious few buildings that remain in the Talbot Street area from the second half of the 19th century. A twice designated property, it is now threatened with demolition.

2. Kent Brewery Site; The Kent Brewery was established in 1859. It became the third largest brewery in London, after Carling's and Labatt's. In 1889, Goodspeed described the premises as "one of the oldest landmarks in the city." Events in the brewery's history were covered by *The Globe*, suggesting a brewery of more than local significance. The brewery was closed in response to prohibition in 1916. Since its brewing days, the building has served as a winery, a cheese factory and a cigar factory, among other uses. The main Kent Brewery building at 197 Ann Street remain the "largest surviving brewery artifact from Victorian London Middlesex.

3. Old Victoria Hospital Lands - South Street - The War Memorial Children's Hospital (a functional bricks and mortar war memorial to the fallen of WWI; built 1922) and the Victoria Health Services building (former Western University Medical School building; delayed in 1917 by the First World War, completed 1921) form a distinctive pairing of the former Victoria Hospital campus, complemented by their shared scale, materials, and setback, as well as the soon to be repurposed Colborne building on the opposite side of South Street.

The War Memorial Children's Hospital building was long used as a hospital for children, a title now passed onto the Commissioners Road Victoria Hospital Campus. This building's "Memorial" status commemorated by the fundraising efforts of over 50 organizations from the area, is evident by many memorial design elements incorporated by the local architectural firm, Watt and Blackwell, such as wreaths and funerary urns. The most notable of these design elements is the front ispiece of stone pilaster that grouped together suggests the form of a cenotaph.

The Medical School building located to the west retains important institutional - styled neoclassical architectural detailing with subtle Art Deco influences. The building was designed to be a state-of-the-art training and research facility, with large windows and skylights.

4. 1588 Clarke Road; This home is constructed of London buff brick in the form of a typical one and a half story Ontario gothic-rivval farmhouse (built circa 1860's) with symmetrical front façade facing north towards the Thames River.

This property is the homestead of the Tackabury Family, deeded to John Tackabury Sr. by the Mayor of Boston Mass. (Edward Hale, the son of the Hon. General John Hale who fought with Wolfe at the Plains of Abraham). In all six generations of Tackaburys lived at this farm.

5. 176 Piccadilly Street; This property consists of a one-storey wood cottage with a hipped roof, a symmetrical primary façade and a small gable over the central, raised entry. It is located on the northeast corner of Piccadilly Street and St. George Street, immediately north of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Previous to the 1922 Fire Insurance Plan, this property appears to have also been referred to as 124 Talbot, however, 176 Piccadilly Street does show up as early as 1881 in the City Directories. The 1881 City Directory lists carrier Martin Morkin followed by his widow, Margaret, between 1883-1889. Family research shows that Margaret (O'Meara) Markin, a widow, lived there with her son Martin, his wife Elizabeth (Kernohan) Morkin, and Margaret's daughter Julia.

6. Gatehouse of the Elsie Perrin Williams Estate; This picture perfect cottage stands just inside the gated entrance to the Elsie Perrin Williams Estate at 137 Windermere Road. It was for many years the home and office of the grounds keeper who looked after the magnificent grounds of the property, extending south from Windermere Road, down to the Medway Creek and east toward Western Road. It was reputedly designed by Elsie Perrin herself, daughter of the Perrin Biscuit manufacturer, when she was 15 years old. It was built around 1895, long before the Spanish Colonial estate house was erected on the property in 1918.