

# A SHOCKING DEGREE OF IGNORANCE THREATENS CANADA'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

## The Case for Better Education To Stem the Tide of Destruction

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In Canada we continue to lose both our irreplaceable architectural treasures, such as Alma College in St. Thomas, Ontario, destroyed by fire in May 2008,<sup>1</sup> and the vernacular buildings that constitute our communities and define our sense of place. Stories of the latter appear almost weekly in newspapers and blogs across the country, but the potential demise of the Sambro Lighthouse in Nova Scotia is typical.<sup>2</sup> Some systematic investigations of heritage building losses have shown that the perception of destruction is real. A 1999 study of properties listed in the Canadian inventory of historic building found that since the list was compiled in the 1960s and 1970s, as many as twenty percent had disappeared.<sup>3</sup> An Ontario study completed in 2003 concluded that over four hundred designated and listed heritage structures in that province had been demolished over the previous fifteen-year period.<sup>4</sup>

While fire, demolition by neglect, and development pressure are the usual suspects in the search for the reasons why older buildings are lost, these are usually just the mechanisms or final blows. Too often the loss of heritage structures is actually the result of planning processes in a system that appears to favour what passes for economic development, modernization, and so-called progress over societal values of what should be preserved. Marc Denhez, in his great book *The Canadian Home*, traces the genesis of these attitudes to a very specific time and an altogether deliberate policy.<sup>5</sup> In 1943, W. Clifford Clark, the economic advisor to Prime Minister W. Mackenzie King, denounced existing Canadian



FIG. 1. ALMA COLLEGE IN ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO, WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE IN 2008 AFTER A LONG STRUGGLE OVER LAND USE ISSUES AND THE FAILURE OF THE PROVINCE TO INTERVENE. | [\[HTTP://WWW.EYEFETCH.COM/IMAGE.ASPX?ID=1163910\]](http://www.eyefetch.com/image.aspx?id=1163910).

urbanization, saying that it was pre-industrial revolution and should be updated and modeled on “that rugged young interloper, the automobile industry.”<sup>6</sup> He then went on to draft the *Income Tax Act* that ignored repairs, presumed that buildings depreciate at breakneck speed, and reserved the best tax treatment for demolition—better than donating a building to charity. The government of the day intended to follow a program of planned obsolescence, which would see the bulk of the country’s building stock replaced every generation to stimulate economic activity.

The fact is that current sustainability principles, our new appreciation of energy conservation, the desire for smart growth and culture-led creative cities, all point to the errors of planned obsolescence and the wisdom in adaptive reuse of buildings.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, bad planning decisions continue to be made, resulting in the erosion of our stock of historic built assets. A central problem in this regard lies in the education system. It is perhaps most evident at the top of the decision-making pyramid. A frustrating reality is that while the importance of architectural and built heritage conservation is reasonably well understood by those who study the field of urban change and development, there is still a shocking degree of ignorance on the part of many decision-makers involved in the planning process. That is a strong, bordering on libellous, statement to make about public officials and we can only wish that it were not so. Unfortunately, the degree of ignorance both of the law and the principles of sustainability are all too evident among people who should know better. Some illustrations will demonstrate the point.

Recently in Ontario a meeting of lawyers involved in municipal practice was being organized. The topic of the meeting was

heritage and how to deal with it. A couple of heritage architects were invited to participate in the discussion panel. The issue they were asked to address was whether the *Heritage Act* had any relation to the *Planning Act* or were they stand-alone statutes. That practicing lawyers dealing with municipal matters would ask such a question is almost unbelievable. It would be like asking if the *Criminal Code* has anything to do with the *Prisons and Reformatories Act*. Ontario, as is in the case in other provinces, has clear laws related to the identification and conservation of heritage resources. These laws dating from the 1970s were intended to align Canada with most other countries who are signatories to the World Heritage Convention and other United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declarations and conventions that place heritage conservation unequivocally in the land use planning system where decisions about the disposition of historic assets that are of cultural value to the community are integral components of good planning. In another case in Kitchener, Ontario, in February 2010 a city councillor commenting on adding properties to the Heritage Register said: “It is the people who own these properties, private people who pay taxes on their property, and who are a group of volunteers to tell them what they have to do with their properties?” The “group of volunteers” she was dismissing is the city’s Municipal Heritage Committee, duly appointed under the provisions of a provincial statute, and the issue was listing buildings that clearly met a set of objective guidelines under the *Heritage Act*.<sup>8</sup>

As if the incidents described above were not enough, on Tuesday, September 8, 2009, the Chair of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) appeared before a Parliamentary Committee to answer

questions about the function and operation of the Board.<sup>9</sup> The OMB is an appointed, quasi-judicial body, which among other duties adjudicates disputes relating to land use issues in the province. It has immense power. It is the appeal mechanism for matters under both the *Planning Act* and the *Heritage Act*. Asked by a member of the Provincial Parliament if the members of the OMB who sat in judgement on issues relating to heritage had the necessary expertise, the Chair replied: “Our members understand heritage. They do [...] We have on our Board Marc Denhez, who is known across Canada and the United States. He’s a heritage buff. He knows the business; he knows the act.” A heritage buff? The degree of condescension implied in that statement is troubling to say the least. While the Chair of the OMB tacitly admitted that only one member of the Board was qualified to adjudicate heritage issues and “knows the act,” presumably the Ontario *Heritage Act*, it was clear in the testimony before the members of Parliament that the Chair did not know the act. Constituted under the *Heritage Act* there is a panel called the Conservation Review Board (CRB). The OMB Chair testified that, “The Conservation Review Board are [*sic*] advocates; they’re not adjudicators.” This was said in spite of the fact that under the *Heritage Act* CRB members can be brought into hearings as co-adjudicators with OMB members.

With this level of ignorance about the law and a lack of understanding about built heritage and architectural conservation issues, it is not surprising that the OMB has often made decisions that defy logic and credibility. In early 2009, a Board member ruled that a seventeen-storey tower could be built in the middle of the heritage conservation district in the city of St. Catharines. The case was of course complicated but the ruling was based not

on the clear intent of the *Planning* and *Heritage* acts but on obscure technicalities. While the St. Catharines City Council had designated the area as a conservation district, they had not passed a specific by-law adopting the formal plan for the area. There are other cases, too numerous to mention, but the impression one is left with is that in the land use planning system in Ontario, heritage is considered by many decision-makers as inconsequential and expendable in spite of the clearly stated laws intended to conserve the valuable elements of the built environment. Almost alone among laws, the *Heritage Act* is routinely ignored.

Why, might we ask, is there not more of a public outcry and protest over such poor planning exacerbated by ignorance. The unfortunate conclusion is that both the decision-makers and the general public are so inadequately educated and informed about heritage conservation issues that they are unaware of what they are losing. This is very like the situation years ago with regard to the natural environment, waterways, and air quality. Ordinary people did not realize that chemical plants were dumping toxins in holes all over our communities. Citizens had not been educated to understand that health problems and species extinctions were being caused by the very industries where many of them worked. Once these facts became widely known, there was a groundswell of reaction against such practices and while the fight to clean up the environment is not over, it is a battle that people understand and such understanding began with broad-based education.

Decision-makers such as city councillors and members of the Ontario Municipal Board ought to have a better understanding of built heritage assets and architectural conservation, but the average

citizens may be uninformed through no fault of their own. This study has set out to examine a number of things. The first was to determine whether anything about the built environment is being taught in our schools. In particular we have examined the primary curriculum in Ontario. If as a community we decide that we should be teaching more to our children about the form and richness of the neighbourhoods in which they live, where might we look for inspiration and models? This study draws on our findings to make some recommendations to those groups, agencies, and organizations that care deeply about architectural conservation and the importance of the built environment to our identity and quality of life. What should they be aware of and what can they do?

#### OUR APPROACH

The information used in this study was collected from recent government publications investigating the state of curriculum in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These documents summarize the goals, strategies, and tools used to teach children about subjects related to the environment they live in. Specifically, we narrowed our investigation to include the subjects of social studies, history, and geography in the elementary school system. In addition, a general search of recent research was completed for articles in peer-reviewed journals relating to the topics of heritage, history, local neighbourhoods, and urban design within the field of education. Articles were found in the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *Cultural Resource Management*, the *Journal of Heritage Stewardship*, the *Bulletin of the Association of Preservation Technology*, and *Art Education*. It was revealed that while research was limited within the academic field, information was abundant from public sector

sources. A broad Internet search using the same keywords brought numerous public agencies to light within the three geographic areas: Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Finally, professionals within the heritage community across Canada were contacted to supply their opinion on the methods being used by the ministries of Education and Training, as well as their own public agencies, to teach children about local heritage. They were also asked for suggestions on possible solutions that might generate an enhanced perception of the significant elements of local heritage currently being lost because of inappropriate development.

#### REDEFINING "ENVIRONMENT"

In recent years, the natural environment has become the primary focus of environmental education in schools. This is demonstrated through the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training's commitment to publish and update teaching manuals and curricula in order to encourage sustainable responsiveness and environmental thought. In 2007, the Ministry commissioned the Working Group on Environmental Education to produce a document entitled *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future* to define environmental education, recommend changes to the existing curriculum, and mandate the involvement of school boards and schools to apply sustainable practices in their operations. The guide offers a definition of the environment to be considered when teaching about the subject in social studies, history/geography, and science classes. The definition's focus is clearly reflective of the interest in natural systems and the detrimental effects that human development can have on these systems.<sup>10</sup> As a result of the 2007 document, the Ministry has also published a resource guide for educators to teach

students environmental responsibility and stewardship. Both guides fail to recognize that while the natural system is vital to our lives, most students live in cities and towns, not in forests or in the wilderness. Young people are not taught about the environment in which they actually live, the built environment. It appears they are taught little or nothing about either existing buildings or the planning system that decides what will happen to their immediate environment.

Today, one of the primary focuses of urban planning is on establishing a sense of place and creating community identity. Within the urban framework, this means creating adaptive communities and renovating existing neighbourhoods. While a strong focus on intensifying and revitalizing downtown areas exists,<sup>11</sup> the demolition of existing structures will cause the loss of significant portions of history. Built heritage acts to link citizens with the past and generate an understanding of how our society evolved to where we are today.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, we find that when considering green development, the greenest buildings are those that are already standing. This concept is called embodied energy and recognizes that as long as a structure is standing and being used, all the energy that went into its creation, the firing of bricks, transportation of wood, and smelting of steel, is captured.<sup>13</sup> Intensification comes with the opportunity for adaptive reuse of buildings that still have strong structural elements.<sup>14</sup> It has also been suggested that the adaptive reuse of existing buildings can be beneficial as the materials and craftsmanship are of superior quality.<sup>15</sup> Yet, in February 2010, the City Council in Brantford, Ontario, was urging the demolition of forty-one historic buildings, the entire side of a major downtown street, with no plan or concept of what would replace these structures.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the education of young people about planning can have a substantial effect on their understanding of the local community. Students could be educated about the integration of political, social, aesthetic, and environmental issues within the community. It would allow students to sculpt the environment to meet the needs of the community's populace. As one theorist puts it:

[T]hrough an understanding of the urban framework students can: gather a firm understanding of the issues and needs of individuals and community members to produce relevant developments; build an understanding of the effect the built environment has on people and vice-versa; and finally they would be sensitized to the power of political and economic interests and the deprivation of social, physical and economic traits.<sup>17</sup>

The Ontario Ministry of Education states that the goal of the social studies program is to teach students "to relate and apply the knowledge that they acquire through social studies and the study of history and geography to the world outside the classroom."<sup>18</sup> Most of the real world outside those classrooms, however, is being overlooked as the natural environment takes precedence.

Finally, a push to make an impression on young people's understanding of the built environment would encourage a sense of social responsibility and promote social cohesion and community commitment in the future. Young people are more likely to be influenced by their teachers to get involved with issues within the community if they are taught the stewardship principles from a young age.<sup>19</sup> Elementary education has been used to promote new attitudes in the past; for example, the introduction of recycling as a household waste solution and the awareness

created about the health risks of smoking. Children can have a substantial impact on their parent's level of knowledge and commitment.<sup>20</sup> A push from a younger generation toward community stewardship could completely transform the way in which residents examine the built environment and the significance of local heritage.

## ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

When we look at the Ontario elementary curriculum, we see a focus on environmental education highly devoted to the understanding of natural systems and very little about the built form. That being said, there are opportunities within the existing social studies framework to incorporate a local heritage component into lesson plans. Currently the topics taught in grades three, four and six social studies embody elements of heritage and citizenship. The goal of this subject is to "help students develop an understanding of connections between the past and the present, of interactions between various cultural groups in Canada, and of the rights and responsibilities of citizens."<sup>21</sup> The second strand of social studies deals with Canadian government and world connections. Fundamentally this topic is intended to teach students about their local communities before diversifying into regional, provincial, national, and international perspectives. It teaches students the similarities and differences about urban and rural environments and how communities interact with each other. These lessons represent the fundamental integrated knowledge modules that students will require to be active and informed about the changes to the built environment.

In the history and geography curriculum for grades seven and eight, teachers focus on the development of Canada from the

seventeenth century to the beginning of the 1900s. Students gather an understanding of the political, social, and economic variations within the development of the country and the effect these changes had on the settlement and expansion of the nation. As a result, these concepts are applied to the study of Canadian geography and the effect physical patterns have on human activity and lifestyles. Within the specific expectations of students in these classes, the Ministry suggests that students formulate questions on environmental issues, for example: "What role does an environmentalist play in the planning of an urban environment?"<sup>22</sup> Once again, while the Ministry demonstrates their commitment to create sustainable environmental awareness, this awareness is seldom focused on the urban environment where most students live. Potentially the classes could easily pull elements of history and geography together to enhance an understanding of neighbourhood heritage. While there is presently little interest in applying these changes at the school board level, in 2003 the Ministry of Education modified its curriculum development process to allow cyclical review on a yearly basis.<sup>23</sup> The Ontario Ministry has opened doors to create changes to the state of heritage education and we assume that there are similar opportunities in other provinces. This is the first step toward taking the initiative to create changes. External to the efforts of the education sector, the opportunities for partnerships with the heritage community are vast.

The Ontario Heritage Trust facilitates an annual Heritage Week celebration to recognize the impact that built heritage has on the community and citizens. During the Heritage Week, local historical societies organize events and promote awareness within local districts. The London Heritage Council, for example, created

especially youth-oriented events such as concerts, games, and festivities.<sup>24</sup> By involving teens there is the opportunity to encourage their active participation through volunteering. When the Ministry of Education and Training established the Ontario Mandatory High School Community Service Program, the goal was to create "awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play in supporting and strengthening their communities."<sup>25</sup> To date the program has led a majority of students to develop a strong and consistent commitment to volunteering if their experience is positive and if a prolonged volunteer commitment to one organization is established.<sup>26</sup> Young people also have the opportunity to be recognized for their commitment to the field of heritage. Both the Architecture Conservancy of Ontario and the Ontario Heritage Trust offer reward programs to acknowledge the commitment youths have made in the field of heritage conservation.

While steps have been taken to target teens outside the classroom, local organizations have not taken actions to collaborate with schools and teachers to include heritage activities as part of the curriculum. In the past, the Heritage Canada Foundation (HCF) has produced teaching resources for school boards across the country; however, it was felt that these books were too costly and took up too much staff time to produce and the initiative was discontinued.<sup>27</sup> While they recognize that a program that would allow children to think about the built environment would be extremely powerful, the lack of revenue potential has prevented them from renewing the process. Finally, due to the national nature of the HCF, there are reservations about how much they can change provincial curricula while maintaining consistency across the country.<sup>28</sup>

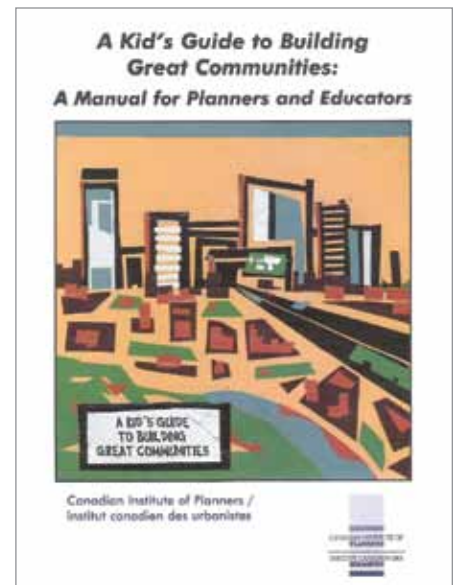


FIG. 2. THE INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS' GUIDE COULD BE IMPROVED WITH THE INCLUSION OF MORE MATERIAL ON HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

## LEARNING FROM THE LEADERS

Both within and beyond the Canadian context, it was discovered that many school boards, non-governmental organizations, and community organizations have taken initiatives to promote heritage conservation appreciation amongst students. At present there are many small-scale initiatives within regions to teach students about individual heritage sites. These efforts often generate most of the visitor population to these sites from school boards and their primary purpose is to educate students. Examples within the Southern Ontario context include Fanshawe Pioneer Village in London, Joseph Snider Haus in Kitchener, Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Black Creek in Toronto. These sites focus on early settler history which, while important, is a very minimal selection of Canadian heritage. Furthermore they only examine case-by-case examples and not the larger heritage context. Some are in fact constructed sites, not actual evolved



FIG. 3. IOWA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEBSITE BANNER FOR THE PRAIRIE VOICES HERITAGE EDUCATION ONLINE TEACHING RESOURCE KIT. | [HTTP://WWW.IOWAHISTORY.ORG/EDUCATION/INDEX.HTML](http://www.iowahistory.org/education/index.html).

neighbourhoods. They are essentially “heritage petting zoos.” Students need to be able to investigate the neighbourhood scale and the places in which they live and spend most of their lives.

### A KID’S GUIDE TO BUILDING GREAT COMMUNITIES

There are opportunities to learn about one’s own neighbourhood in other forms. The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) released *A Kid’s Guide to Building Great Communities: A Manual for Planners and Educators* to provide lesson plans that fit within existing curricula in order to efficiently teach students about community development and planning in general terms.<sup>29</sup> The manual was created in collaboration with CIP accredited planners from across the country; however, Ontario planners were not included. While providing evidence of how the lesson plans would fit in classroom activities, there was no effort to identify the diversity of communities across the country. Instead, communities were described in general terms and lacked the understanding of the sense of place created by spatial contexts. Very few of the activities provided within the guide made any reference to heritage preservation, and those that did generated only a vague understanding of how communities began and how they evolved over time. There were question

about the marketing approach of this guide and whether or not teachers have found it to be useful in teaching students about planning if even only in the most general sense. The manual was a good idea and perhaps subsequent versions can address some of these shortcomings.

Examples found in both the United States and the United Kingdom have the potential to be used as models for heritage education in Canada.

### THE HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PRESERVATION ARTS

In New Jersey, a study was undertaken within the local conservation and architecture sector to determine if there was a need for skilled trade’s people. The results quickly showed that the developing field needed educated and interested people to contribute to projects. The High School for the Preservation Arts was founded in 2000 to give students an opportunity to view traditional subjects with a significant focus on historic preservation to study creation, preservation, and interpretation of artefacts.<sup>30</sup> While this school’s particular focus does not relate directly to planning and heritage, the same principles could be applied to employment opportunities in renovation and adaptive reuse of the built form. More than half of the value of construction in Canada is presently

devoted to renovation as distinct from new building. The average age of a skilled bricklayer in Canada is fifty-eight. Why are we not training young people for these lucrative jobs?

### THE NATIONAL TRUST

In the United Kingdom the National Trust offers a range of site excursions and school events, which it publicizes to schools and the public alike. The Trust offers a diversity of topics related to history to discover, including genealogy, natural preserved areas and ecosystems, and recognized buildings, parks and landscapes significant to the nation’s development. The focus of these programs is to promote out-of-classroom experiences in the places that are discussed in the school. In partnership with an organization called Learning Outside the Classroom, the National Trust suggests that these experiences can assist in motivating students to learn.<sup>31</sup> The focus of the National Trust within the UK is on facilitating field trips and learning in the environment; however, similar to the Canadian experience, the National Trust has focused on the natural environment. While providing opportunities to visit heritage properties, it offers greater opportunities for the natural environment than opportunities to explore the greater urban framework.

### NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Like the UK program, the United States National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) relies on the advantages of learning outside the classroom to teach students about the environment. What it does differently is combine the out-of-the-classroom approach with lesson plans, activities, and in-class resources related to the existing curriculum framework to teach students about heritage.

These resources are all available online with free access for students, teachers, and the public alike. The NTHP believes that by motivating students to explore their community, talk to people, and look at the landscape, a better understanding of how and why the built environment developed can be generated. The Trust provides resources for teachers and updates these lessons frequently to offer diversity in case studies. One example posted in the month of November 2009 suggested that students write a history of local buildings and changes that a community has seen over time by examining secondary sources.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, the Trust has found that teachers are feeling the pressure to align activities to state standards. The NTHP suggests that “preservation activities can be tied to almost any aspect of the history or language arts curriculum [...] and is a great way to teach civic engagement through participation.”<sup>33</sup> These resources allow teachers to spend less time preparing detailed lesson plans and supply guidance on how the lessons can be most efficiently conducted. Finally, one of the most unconventional resources the NTHP offers is a free self-operating blog service called the “Preservation Blackboard.” This service allows teachers to share ideas with fellow educators within their school district and across the country alike. One of the only resources of its kind, this service is affordable and offers an easily accessible and adaptable solution for teachers to consult.

### Prairie Voices

In America, at a state level, Iowa has demonstrated that heritage can be implemented on its own. *Prairie Voices* was published in 1995 to describe the content of historical and cultural heritage in the state and it acts as a users guide for

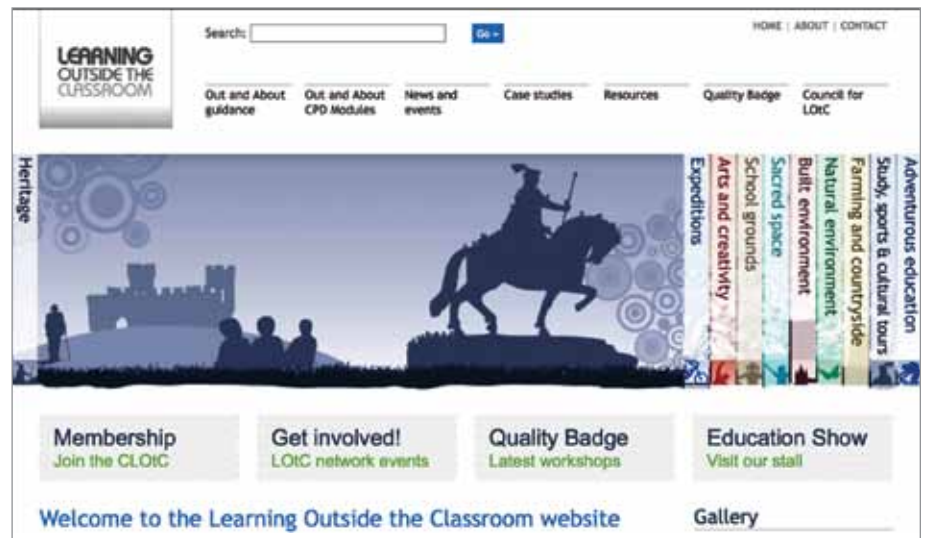


FIG. 4. ELEMENTS FROM THE UK NATIONAL TRUST WEBSITE FOR “LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM.” | [HTTP://WWW.LOTC.ORG.UK/](http://www.lotc.org.uk/).

educators. When crafting the guide, the state felt that there were three principles that justify the teaching of local heritage. Firstly, students can follow the “living-learning” approach and study a portion of history close at hand and easily accessible. Secondly, students typically find local history more interesting due to the direct effect on their lives and the places in which they spend their time. Finally, in teaching the fundamentals of local heritage, an understanding of history can be applied more easily to the wider content of social studies.<sup>34</sup>

The general concept of the guide was to produce three umbrella topics to teach segments of heritage to varying age groups. Each “generalization group” was enhanced with lesson plans and procedures for teachers to use. Of most significance to the built environment were *Generalization I: Buildings and artefacts as resources in explaining the history of a community* and *Generalization III: Documents as resources in explaining community history*. The former was subdivided into sections such as architectural styles, skilled handcraftsmanship, and

transportation trends, and the effect they have on community changes.

The guide also highlights specific elements of history and local heritage that should be taught in order to give students a thorough appreciation of heritage conservation. An exploration and analysis of housing is encouraged in grades three to eight to create an understanding of how types of shelter, construction, design, and styles are selected based on the local climate, topography, available building materials, and resources. Students develop an understanding of how the complexity of houses changes and architecture evolves to reflect the social and economic patterns of a time period.

Simultaneously, students examine the development of their communities, from the time of aboriginal occupation, the founding of frontier towns, to the current economic state. An exercise entitled *Discover Your Neighbourhood* allows students to familiarize themselves with the primary features and land use patterns that occurred within early communities and the required information that

planners utilize, based on the characteristics of buildings and neighbourhoods.<sup>35</sup> On a smaller scale, students are also encouraged to explore single historical sites. *Prairie Voices* recommends a local site that demonstrates not only a classical Victorian residence but also teaches students about the roles of personalities from the past. Most communities in Canada have access to similar historic sites but much can be learned from ordinary neighbourhoods.

At a larger scale, students in elementary schools can investigate how their towns, villages, and cities were prepared and planned by settlers. The original severing, surveying, and land claims can still be noticed in growth patterns and development within urban areas. Similarly, trends such as large lots, mature vegetation, location of main streets to transportation routes, and key interaction centres such as churches, schools, and municipal buildings can all be explored to create awareness and understanding of significant heritage elements of a neighbourhood.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Good decision-making concerning the planning, management, and conservation of our built environment depends on adequate and accurate knowledge. It is lamentable that a reasonable level of understanding does not appear to exist in many of those currently charged with such decisions: members of planning tribunals such as Ontario's Municipal Board and many local councillors. While it may be too late for those people, architectural conservationists should be looking to the future and focusing more on good public education to instil an enhanced appreciation of the built environment in the decision-makers and citizens of the future. Heritage is, after all, a long-term affair.

One effort that will be worthwhile is to ensure that built heritage environment awareness is part of the common school curriculum. While the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, and hopefully other provincial education departments, have laid the foundation for teaching students about the built environment, drastic improvements are needed. With the opportunity to revise and make changes to the curriculum regularly, the heritage sector would be well advised to make common cause with school boards and teachers to push for specific architectural heritage principles to be taught. There is a home for such material in the Ontario social studies and history/geography curricula. There are many good models for what these study modules might look like, some of which have been explored above.

Collaboration between school boards, neighbourhood associations, planning departments, and local, provincial, and national heritage organizations can act as catalysts to heritage resources for a new curriculum. At present there is very little interaction between stakeholders as regards the segments of heritage that need to be taught to young people. If this closed-circuit operation continues, an additional generation will lose the opportunity to understand the importance of heritage and preservation tactics that can be implemented.

It is unfortunate that the Heritage Canada Foundation abandoned the production of school-targeted education materials and resources largely because it was too expensive. The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the US, the UK National Trust, and even the Iowa State Historical Society have demonstrated that publishing and operating costs can be greatly reduced with new online technologies. While Heritage Canada also cited

provincial curricula differences as a constraint, coordinated programs would be possible using the model of the Heritage Places Initiative, a Parks Canada program that negotiated a common approach to historic site documentation among all the provinces and territories and set national guidelines for conservation.<sup>36</sup>

There are always huge challenges facing the advocates of heritage and architectural conservation. There are site-specific crises almost weekly, battles to be fought to save national historic sites from destruction by our own government, regionally significant buildings demolished by municipal governments, and local properties threatened by unsympathetic owners and developers. But if ignorance of the importance of heritage value is the main underlying cause of grief, then education is finally the only remedy. If current decision-makers are the problem, then teaching future decision-makers is the solution.<sup>37</sup>

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36. In the case of the National Standards and Guidelines for conservation, the federal government worked with each of the provinces and territories to establish a uniform approach that all agreed to. A similar process could establish a country-wide standard for school curricula that was not imposed by the federal government, who does not have responsibility for education, but that would be agreed to by the territories and provinces.
37. Since this research was conducted ICOMOS Canada has produced an excellent new teaching guide focused on industrial heritage. This provides a great example of material that can be promoted to Schools, School Boards and Ministries of Education.
 

*Student kit*  
<http://canada.icomos.org/documents/ICOMOS%20April%2018%20KIT%20students%20ENrev.pdf>  
<http://canada.icomos.org/documents/ICOMOS%2018avril%20TROUSSE%20enseignant%20FR.pdf>

*Teacher's kit*  
<http://canada.icomos.org/documents/ICOMOS%20April%2018%20KIT%20teachers%20ENrev.pdf>  
<http://canada.icomos.org/documents/ICOMOS%2018avril%20TROUSSE%20enseignant%20FR.pdf>