



# London Region Branch Newsletter

Fall 2015

[www.acolondon.ca](http://www.acolondon.ca)

## A Letter from our President....

Heritage in London is alive and well! We are always very concerned to take our message of conservation out into the community, and this has been a busy Spring/Summer. ACO board members recently participated in the 'Active History' conference at Western University, conducted walks through Victoria Park area for Doors Open (in fact Sylvia Chodas has led four walks this summer - two for Museum London), hosted tours of Grosvenor Lodge at the Doors Open event, organized and led a very successful 'Steel Wheels' bus trip with a strong railway theme to stations to the south: St Thomas and Port Stanley.

And of course our Geranium Heritage House Tour in Old East London in June was a great success and attracted well over 400 people.



London Roundhouse

We plan for other similar events coming up next year, which many of you will know is ACO London's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we will have some surprises in store - so please keep watching our forthcoming newsletters! And, if you haven't done so already, please key into ACO London's fabulous Facebook page which will keep you abreast of all sorts of 'heritage happenings' in London and region - thanks to our very hardworking Social Media board member, Sandra Miller.

On the other side of our Heritage coin - the political and municipal one - we have participated in debates around conserving buildings on Talbot St., and in particular we are now involved in discussions to save Camden Terrace, 479-489 Talbot St. This is ongoing - but we may need people to come to City Hall and swell our ranks to save this important row of heritage buildings for the future citizens of London.

On a more positive note, two buildings in London have been awarded the prestigious ACO provincial's award for successful adaptive reuse: the former railway Roundhouse on Horton St. (many of you may remember it as 'Great West Beef' restaurant) now operated by Ellipsis Digital Systems and the Chisholm building at 142 Dundas St. (formerly 'Grandma Lee's'), which is now the Hassan Law Offices. These two initiatives are superb examples of what can be done to make historic buildings live again in today's world. We are very proud that London will be so well represented at the ACO's November Awards Ceremony.



Camden Terrace

I'm please to note too that we have a new Newsletter editor, Benjamin Vazquez, heritage advocate from Old East London. Welcome aboard Benjamin!

I hope to see many of you at our future events and activities, and don't forget - we are always looking for volunteers - so come out and join us!

Maggie Whalley  
President, ACO London Region Branch

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the President .....	Page 1
A Letter from the Editor.....	Page 2
Geranium Heritage House Tour 2015 ..	Page 2
Mid Century Modern Heritage.....	Page 2
Architecture in Photos .....	Page 3
ACO Chatham-Kent .....	Page 4
ACO Stratford/Perth County .....	Page 4
ACO St. Thomas-Elgin .....	Page 5
ACO Ingersoll .....	Page 7
Upcoming Events .....	Page 8

## A Letter from the Editor...

Welcome to the slightly redesigned ACO newsletter. After several years of dedication to the publication, Sharon Lunau has moved on to serve as our newest membership secretary. I've stepped in to fill the void, at least for coming few issues.

You'll notice a few new features.

A new feature is reports from the surrounding branches. Far too often it seems as though our regional ACO branches live in silos, working sporadically with the provincial organization, but working with one another far too infrequently. To that end we've invited the ACO branches in Chatham, St. Thomas, Ingersoll and Stratford to give us an update on the activities they're engaged in, many of which contain deeply heartwarming stories of recent heritage success. At the same time we're expanding our calendar to include built heritage events across the London area.

Colin Duck of Vintage London Ontario has agreed to offer up a photo collection related to built heritage every issue. This issue relates to London's railway stations, which span a variety of architectural styles and more than a century of construction.

And our very own Sandra Miller will be writing a column to help draw Londoner's attention to their rich mid-century modern heritage.

Finally, in future issues of the newsletter I want to introduce a "letters to the editor" column, offering the general population of London a chance to weigh in on heritage issues that affect them.

Of course, the standards are still here. There's our calendar of events - your social calendar for the coming year, naturally. There's a message from the ACO's president. There are reports from recent ACO events - this time the recent and astoundingly successful Geranium Walk in Old East Village.

If you have comments on the new newsletter, would like to submit a letter to the editor for December, or would like to contribute a column or feature of your own, feel free to contact me at: [benjaminavazquez@gmail.com](mailto:benjaminavazquez@gmail.com)

Happy Reading

*Benjamin A. Vazquez, U.E.  
Newsletter Editor*

## 2015 Geranium Walk

The 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Geranium Heritage House Tour took place on Sunday June 7<sup>th</sup> in Old East Village, winner of the 2014 "People's Choice - Great Neighbourhood Award" sponsored by the Canadian Institute of Planners. The village's welcoming atmosphere, well-preserved heritage houses and tree-lined streets provided a lovely setting for over 400 tour participants as they explored the history and architecture of Old East. The tour began at Lorne Ave. Public School and included homes on Dufferin Ave., Lorne Ave., Ontario St., and Queens Ave. Refreshments were provided in the school gym by members of the London Clay Arts Centre, a local business and arts hub.

As always, ACO London appreciates the support we receive from the homeowners who so generously agreed to open their doors, from the army of volunteers who act as tour guides and from those who buy tickets to the GHHT, our major fundraiser.

If you missed this year's tour and would like to purchase a copy of the tour booklet for \$5.00, contact Tour Chair Sylvia Chodas at [schodas@hotmail.com](mailto:schodas@hotmail.com)

*Sylvia Chodas.*



*897 Lorne Avenue*



*Tour-Goers Janet Wombwell, Benjamin Vazquez, Cindy Hartman, Sylvia Chodas*

## London's Mid-century Modern Heritage



This Prairie-style Modernist home in Old South was built for prominent Londoners Muriel and Hyman Ginsberg. Mr. Ginsberg was the owner of the Victoria Tavern Hotel whose parents began the SoHo business as a grocery store. The unique home was designed by London architect Charles H. Gillian whose work included the Greyhound Bus Station (1949), Highland Country Club (1959), and Victoria Hospital School of Nursing and Residence (1961). Built of brick with signature Modernist elements such as expansive windows, flat roofs, and a massive chimney, the open-plan interior had unusual features such as a terrazzo floor with in-floor radiant heating and double kosher kitchen.

*Sandra Miller*

**11 Wellington Crescent - Ginsberg House (1949)**

## Architecture in Photos - London's Railway Stations



Grand Trunk Railway Station (c 1885) - Built in 1853 for the Great Western Railway on York St., east of Richmond St., when it first entered London. It became the property of the Grand Trunk Railway when the two railroads amalgamated in 1882.

Source - Western University Archives - [www.lib.uwo.ca/archives](http://www.lib.uwo.ca/archives)



Burwell Street Station (c 1930s) - Built in 1858 at Burwell St. & Bathurst St. Former London station of the Grand Trunk Railway, constructed pre-amalgamation with the Great Western Railway.

Source - Canada Science & Technology Museum CN Collection - [imagescn.techno-science.ca](http://imagescn.techno-science.ca)



Michigan Central Station (c 1890) - built in 1887 at the SE corner of Clarence St. & Bathurst St. Closed as a passenger station in 1915.

Source - [www.londonpubliclibrary.ca](http://www.londonpubliclibrary.ca)



CPR Asylum Station - Built to serve the London Asylum for the Insane. Adjacent to the main entrance drive up from Dundas St., east of Highbury Ave.

Source - [www.trainweb.org](http://www.trainweb.org)



Canadian Pacific Railway Station (c 1959) - built in 1893 on Richmond Street between Piccadilly St. and Pall Mall St. Used as a passenger station until 1971

Source - [www.trainweb.org](http://www.trainweb.org)



Canadian National Railway Station (c 1940) - built in 1935 to replace the previous Grand Trunk Station on York St., east of Richmond St.

Source - [www.canada-rail.com/](http://www.canada-rail.com/)



CN Station (c 1968) - Built in 1962/63 at the SW corner of Clarence St. & York St. to replace the previous CNR Station located just to the west nearer Richmond St. on York St.

Source - Canada Science & Technology Museum CN Collection [imagescn.techno-science.ca/](http://imagescn.techno-science.ca/)

Colin Duck

## ACO Chatham-Kent

The small Chatham-Kent branch of the ACO was formed almost 7 years ago in response to the loss of Ridgetown's 1876 Erie Street United Church. Since then we hosted the 2010 Ontario Heritage Conference as well as the first Heritage Symposium for Realtors & Insurance agents (partly sponsored by the London branch).

We are pleased to have some recent success in the fight to save our architectural heritage and open spaces.

Built circa 1840, one of Ontario's earliest inns - known as the Sicklesteel-Newkirk house after the two early settler families who, over the generations, owned and maintained it with a strict eye for its heritage value - was recently threatened with demolition, requested by the new owner. An appeal to Chatham-Kent Council to issue an "Intent to Designate" on the listed building was not only defeated but the building was ordered taken off the list and a demolition order approved. Happily an "angel" has been found who is planning to move the house to a new site, restore it and possibly open it to the public.



*Sicklesteel-Newkirk House*



*The Kent 1875 Interior*

A 19<sup>th</sup> century decommissioned Baptist church has been carefully restored. Now named *The Kent 1875* (after its year of completion), the two storey building opened in August as a centre for concerts, weddings, and special events in Chatham.

The Ridge House Museum in Ridgetown, an 1875 middle class family home which has been a museum run by Chatham-Kent since 1975, had been closed for over a year after mould was found in the basement and lead was suspected in the exterior paint. This summer it reopened after mould was removed and an access ramp re-built to code. It will shortly have its exterior cleaned and repainted.

Marlee Robinson  
Acting President, ACO Chatham-Kent

## ACO Stratford/Perth

ACO Stratford/Perth County's signature historical plaque program continues to help citizens and tourists connect with history of the community by identifying with a plaque the date built and the first resident for residential, commercial and other properties built pre-World War II. Today we have more than 145 on display with 14 to be researched. Fortunately, we have four more members on our research team. On April 20, 2015, an unexpected motion to demolish all but three bays of the GTR/CNR Locomotive repair shops was narrowly deferred for a week. A week later council voted 9-2 to reject the Riversedge Development proposal for the site, and entertained new public presentations that urged preservation of the shops. After a lengthy debate, the matter was again deferred, this time to a special meeting of council in May.



*Grand Trunk Shops, No Date*

At that meeting a compromise motion by the mayor in which the fire damaged portion of the building and roof (approximately 40%) was to be removed passed by a vote of 10 to 1. The City of Stratford would ask for proposals for the adaptive re-use of the remaining 75,000 square feet. ACO Stratford/Perth County was consulted and appraised of the motion

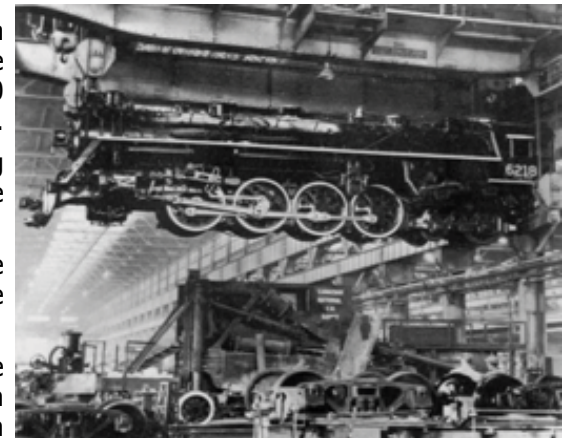
of Mayor Mathieson beforehand.

Council later reversed itself again and a motion was passed to send out a Request for Proposal for the adaptive re-use of the GTR shops building before any demolition takes place thus providing a developer with options. 75,000 sq. ft. of the building must, however, be retained in any development proposal.

The deadline for proposals will be 4 months after the RFP is sent out. According to the Chief Administrative Officer it take up to two months for the RFP to be completed and it will follow a template sent by Heritage Canada.

Installation of a security fence around the structure, in accordance with the former Chief Building Officer of Stratford, began on August 18 and today we are still waiting for the city to issue the Request for Proposal.

Our branch has been approached by Powerline Films to sponsor a video on the GTR shops which will give a history of the shops and feature interviews with people who worked in the building including the last living woman who was on the WWII all woman repair crew.



*Grand Trunk Shops, No Date*

Carole Huband  
President, ACO Stratford/Perth County

## ACO St. Thomas-Elgin

Updates from the St. Thomas-Elgin ACO:

One of our members - Nancy Mayberry - is taking the lead on an inquiry into the Alma College chapel and why it has not been protected from the same fate (a fire) that destroyed the actual college building.



*Alma College Chapel - 1956 - Source: Elgin County Archives*

We are trying to find out if the heritage bylaw from 1994 still exists. This is all complicated by the fact that the owner is now a numbered offshore company and that it is challenging to find someone at city hall who can answer our questions.

With our beautiful new walk/bike trail from downtown to Parkside High School the dereliction of the chapel is very obvious as one passes the Alma property.

Otherwise our group has been giving out yearly awards as does London to owners of private homes as businesses as well as to municipalities for the preservation of heritage properties in Elgin county.

The On Track organization in town is raising money toward saving the Michigan Central Railway Trestle over Sunset Ave.

## On Track St. Thomas

On Track St. Thomas is a community economic development agency formed in 1994 to improve the economic health of St. Thomas through the redevelopment of its deep railway heritage assets. Included was the purchase and rehabilitation of the iconic CASO station on Talbot Street.

In 2012 the group launched a public fundraising effort and purchased the 1930's era Michigan Central Railroad Bridge over Kettle Creek, along with some 4km of associated rail bed. With tracks already removed, the group decided to redevelop the site into Canada's first Elevated Park,



*MCS Bridge under construction, 1929 - Source Elgin County Archives*

some 95 feet above the valley. A full engineering study has been done, along with a Heritage Assessment Report. At present, On Track is undertaking a Management Master Plan for the project under the direction of urban design firm Peter J. Smith Company of Fort Erie Ontario. That report is due in late October. Following that, On Track plans an international design competition for architects and further fundraising campaigns to help kick start construction.

All reports are available on our project web site, [www.elevatedpark.ca](http://www.elevatedpark.ca)

Serge Lavoie



*CASO Station, Postcard, No date - Source: Canada Southern Railway*

## ACO Ingersoll

Greetings neighbours! We are ACO Ingersoll, the newest Architectural Conservancy Ontario branch to join the family back in May 2015 at the Ontario Heritage Conference. It's a pleasure to be amongst such fine company. We are very pleased to contribute to this month's ACO London Newsletter and know there is much we can learn from you and other branches.

So how did we get started you ask? Well, we are a small group of about 6 active local citizens who, through an online Facebook page, came together with a common concern for and interest in preserving the Ingersoll Carnegie Library. Here in Ingersoll the town motto is "Our Heritage, Your Future", but we truly believe it's high time the town recognized that our heritage is our future.



*Ingersoll Carnegie Library, Left: c. 1910 Right: 2015*

Our Carnegie Library, built in 1910, has graced Charles Stree in downtown Ingersoll for 105 years and provided an important focal point for the community to the present day. The library is one of 125 built in Canada by a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation and one of only 95 still standing in Ontario. Owned by the Town of Ingersoll, the Carnegie Library is little different than it was on its first day of operation and , up until December 2014, it was being used as a meeting place for a local community group for young people. However, the inevitable passage of time has taken its toll on the building. This past year the Ingersoll Town Council was informed that the building was no longer safe for occupants and that at least \$400,000 of repairs were required to remain in use - a hefty bill for a small community like ours.

Concerned about the future of this building, we banded together to let people know we care and we want to help come up with a plan to save it. Nowhere is the phrase "landmarks not landfill" more appropriate than in Ingersoll where we are currently battling against development of a mega landfill which intends to bring garbage from Toronto. Led by our Branch President, Christina Eus, we are working hard to win the confidence of both the Town Council and the local community. Since May, ACO Ingersoll members have been busy with historical research, consulting with engineers and heritage experts, fundraising, doing community outreach and developing an action plan.

If you would like more information about branch activities consult our website - [www.acoingersoll.com](http://www.acoingersoll.com) - or our Save the Ingersoll Carnegie Library facebook page or contact Branch President Christine Eus at [christinaeus@gmail.com](mailto:christinaeus@gmail.com). We look forward to hearing from you and would appreciate any wisdom ACO London and other branches might be able to impart.

Christina Eus  
Branch President, ACO Ingersoll.

---

**The London Heritage Scholarship  
Applications must be submitted  
via email to [info@acolondon.ca](mailto:info@acolondon.ca)  
to the attention of the London  
Heritage Scholarship Committee  
no later than 12:00 noon of Friday  
December 18, 2015  
For more information visit  
[www.acolondon.ca](http://www.acolondon.ca)**

**Architectural Conservancy Ontario  
- London Region and Heritage  
London Foundation  
9<sup>th</sup> Annual Heritage Awards  
Program - Call for Nominations**

Deadline for nominations is Friday  
December 18, 2015

Please submit nominations to:

ACO-HLF Awards Committee

Email: [info@acolondon.ca](mailto:info@acolondon.ca) or

[info@grosvenorlodge.com](mailto:info@grosvenorlodge.com)

Mail: Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western  
Road, London, ON

Fax: 519-645-0981

For more information visit

[www.acolondon.ca](http://www.acolondon.ca)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Feast of St. Nicholas Luncheon at the Historic Elsie Perrin Williams Estate.**

**Monday December 7, 2015 & Wednesday December 9, 2015  
12:00 noon - 2:00pm**

**Cost \$20.00**

A traditional festive luncheon graciously provided by Culinary Catering followed by a talk on the work of Heritage London Foundation and the history of the Elsie Perrin Williams Estate. Piano music by Peter Clements.

For further information please call (519) 432-6620

### **Children's Christmas Party December 13, 2015**

**Eldon House  
1:00pm to 4:00pm**

**Cost: \$6.00**

Sunday, December 13, Drop in between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. Children will experience the spirit of Christmas past, by playing games, making crafts and treats, and visiting with Father Christmas! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Groups of eight or more are requested to arrive at 3:00 p.m. Cost: \$6.00 (incl. HST) per person.

For further information please call (519) 661-5169

### **Victorian Christmas November 28, 2015 to January 1, 2016**

**Eldon House  
12:00pm - 5:00pm**

**Cost: By donation**

Enjoy the sights and scents of the Victorian Christmas tradition and experience the beautiful holiday decorations of the past.

For further information please call (519) 661-5169

### **Carson Library Centennial Celebration**

**Saturday, December 19,  
1:30-4:30pm**

Activities, displays of photos and other items, learn more about the history of the Library and the community. Refreshments.

### **Historic Sites Plaque Unveiling Monday, December 14, 4pm**

**London Public Library Board's Historic Sites Committee & Aeolian Hall** invite the community to the unveiling of the Library's 71st Historic Plaque at Aeolian Hall (main floor) in recognition of the establishment of the East Branch, London Public Library's first branch library.

### **Sunday Afternoon Tours December 20, 2016**

**Eldon House  
1:00pm to 4:00pm**

**Cost: By Donation**

Sunday, December 20 at 1:00, 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. Enjoy a 50-minute guided tour of Eldon House with a costumed historical interpreter who will provide an in-depth history of the house and the Harris family who lived there. Cost: by donation

For further information please call (519) 661-5169

### **New Year's Levee January 1, 2016**

**Eldon House  
1:00pm to 4:00pm**

**Cost: By Donation**

Friday January 1, 2016, drop in from 1:00 to 4:00pm. Celebrate the New Year with a visit to Eldon House and enjoy musical entertainment in the elegant drawing room. Exchange greetings and gather with friends for hot cider and treats in the Interpretive Centre.

For further information please call (519) 661-5169

### **Architectural Conservancy Ontario - London Region and Heritage**

**London Foundation  
9<sup>th</sup> Annual Heritage Awards**

**Thursday February 18, 2016  
7:00pm**

**at the Church of the Ascension  
2060 Dundas Street East  
London, ON**

For further information visit [www.acolondon.ca](http://www.acolondon.ca)

## *ACO LONDON BRANCH COUNCIL*

**President** Maggie Whalley  
**Past President** Genet Hodder  
**Vice-President** Vacant  
**Treasurer** Anita Frew  
**Recording Secretary** Mike Bloxam  
**Membership Secretary** Sharon Lunau  
**Newsletter Editor** Benjamin A. Vazquez, U.E.  
**Newsletter layout / Web Site** Marty Peterson  
**Communication & Social Media** Sandra Miller

**Representatives to Urban League LACH** Marlyn Loft  
Maggie Whalley

**Members-at-Large** Bob Porter  
Benjamin Vasquez

**Heritage Scholarship** Kyle Gonyou  
Nancy Irons- Murray  
Mike Lunau

**Next Gen:** Vacant

**Advisors on the Executive** Janet Hunten  
Anne McKillop  
Don Menard

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

**Program Chair** Arthur McClelland  
**Geranium Heritage House Tour Chair** Sylvia Chodas  
**ACO/ HLF Heritage Awards Restoration Grant** Marlyn Loft  
Don Menard

### **Architectural Conservancy of Ontario - London Region Branch**

c/o Grosvenor Lodge  
1017 Western Road  
London, ON N6G 1G5

Telephone: 519.645.2845  
[www.acolondon.ca](http://www.acolondon.ca)

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2015** was included with the January 2015 newsletter. Please download the form at [www.acolondon.ca](http://www.acolondon.ca) and return it along with your cheque to our Membership Secretary as soon as possible.

Individual - \$35 Household - \$40  
Student - \$12 Associate Member - \$45