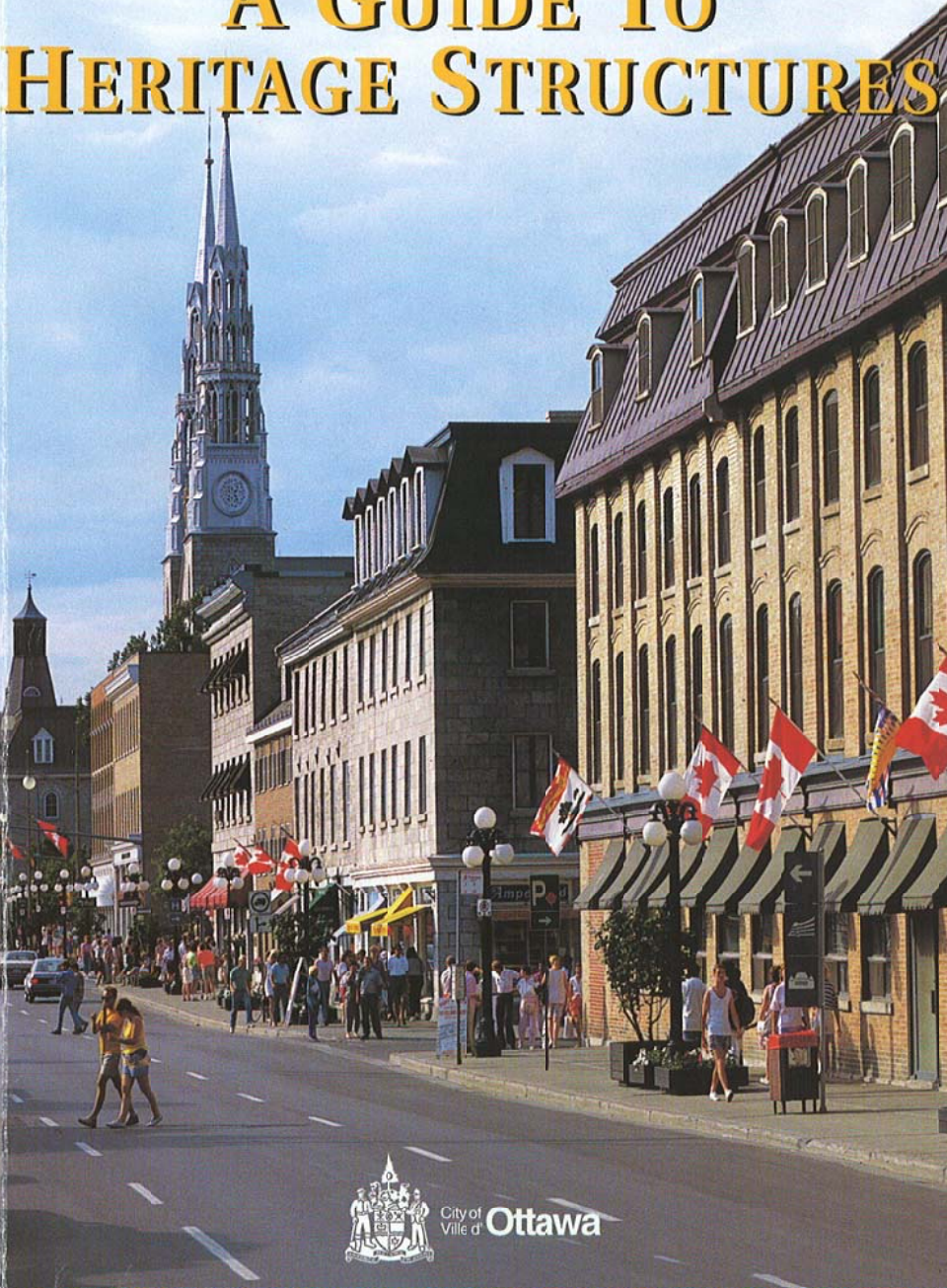


OTTAWA

A GUIDE TO HERITAGE STRUCTURES



City of
Ville d' **Ottawa**

PREFACE

Ottawa's Past: A Key to its Future

Ottawa is an intriguing city. It blends a fine location at the confluence of two rivers, a picturesque federal parliamentary precinct commanding a view of these historic waters below, and a collection of neighbourhoods and special places richer and more plentiful than a city of this relatively small size would normally boast.

The finely woven fabric of Ottawa's historic districts, and their often bawdy beginnings, are a complementary counterpoint to the city's federal institutions. Herein lies part of Ottawa's charm. This mix forms a delicate balance—and one that is worth maintaining. The buildings and streetscapes, neighbourhoods and landscapes that define Ottawa and its evolution over the last two centuries embody a collective memory and meaning that is lacking in most cities today. Conserving this heritage character, while enhancing vitality and modern utility, is the key to retaining Ottawa's unique sense of place.

Today, maintaining that sense of place is even more important to all of us—not simply to foster pride in our city nor to respond to the concerns of a narrow, architectural conservation interest group. Today, the heritage character that is a keystone of the city's charm now equates to economic prosperity. Ottawa's past has become its future, because our top economic engines—the tourism and high-tech sectors—rely on Ottawa's singular heritage character for their success.

High-tech companies now compete globally to attract the best and brightest. A city's quality of life is therefore a high-priority requirement for fostering the critical mass needed in a major technological centre. Ottawa's heritage character gives the city a significant advantage in the quality-of-life competition.

In addition, tourism and convention consumers are now demanding serious cultural interest and meaning in their destinations. Historic Ottawa provides just the right setting for the other facilities and entertainment that make the city a prime tourist draw.

Therefore, it is imperative to support initiatives that promote, protect and enhance the city's architectural and urban heritage resources, both as part of a sound economic strategy and as a way to maintain Ottawa's desirability and intrigue. Not only will we be preserving this city's heritage for future generations; we will also be enabling future Ottawans to compete in a global economy. By conserving the past, we are helping ensure Ottawa's future.

Mark Brandt
Chairperson
Ottawa LACAC, 1997-98
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Case Study OTTAWA'S INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Mark Brandt



City of Ottawa Archives

Mill complex, Rideau Falls

After a quarter century of activity by the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) and other heritage groups, Ottawa is catching up to mainstream attitudes across Canada: we now realize our industrial heritage is significant and important to preserve. Indeed, there is a growing international movement aiming to preserve Industrial Age heritage by saving its monuments and honouring the memory of people who toiled there.

The industrial exploitation of forest and water resources of this region played a key role in the founding of Ottawa. The most significant industrial heritage here is inextricably linked to these resources and to the rivers at whose confluence Ottawa is situated. In the 19th century, the industrial districts of Chaudière-LeBreton and Rideau Falls-New Edinburgh bracketed the commercial

heart of the town with extensive industrial operations and their associated workers' residential enclaves. Unlike Rideau-New Edinburgh, the Chaudière-LeBreton area has a number of heritage industrial structures still in operation today.

The Fleet Street Pumping Station (1874-75) and Aqueduct (1872-74), Ottawa's ambitious first waterworks, were designed by Thomas Coltrin Keefer, one of the continent's top hydraulic and civil engineers. The design incorporates a 750-metre-long open channel or aqueduct arcing through LeBreton Flats from an Ottawa River intake above Chaudière Falls and following a natural depression whose solid rock was further excavated for the purpose. Five stone-arch bridges were also built to carry roadways over the aqueduct.



Before the waterworks were built, the city of 22,000 took its water from individual wells or carriers who delivered water door to door. Fear of large-scale urban fires eventually propelled the city into approving the project, originally designed in 1859.

The unique system uses pumps driven by water that is gravity-fed through the aqueduct; the water is then let back into the Ottawa River through a tailrace. A second, enclosed aqueduct, built in 1912, eventually decommissioned the original channel, which recreational white-water paddlers use today. The extraordinary hydraulic power system is significant for its place in industrial history. It has proven its long-term worth, as it provides pumping for no energy cost and continues to serve as part of the region's water supply system.

The Fleet Street Pumping Station has been upgraded and renovated numerous times over the last 125 years. Originally a one-storey building with an iron-crested mansard roof in the Second Empire style, the limestone structure was enlarged to two flat-roofed storeys in 1899 to accommodate the increasing requirements of a rapidly growing city. The original

turbines and pumps were replaced in the 1930s and '40s. The 1970s and '80s saw significant restoration and improvements in the headworks structure, stonework, roofing, windows, doors, mechanisms and landscaping. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada placed a plaque on the building in 1977, honouring Thomas Coltrin Keefer.



115 Holmwood Avenue

Following efforts by LACAC, the pumping station and the open aqueduct were designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 1982. In 1983, those involved in conserving the facility earned a City of Ottawa Heritage Award of Excellence.

With its well-conserved, heavily rusticated stonework, articulated quoined pilasters, bracketed cornices, and arched and keystone windows, the pumping station is today a fine architectural example of the industrial Italianate style. Its excellent condition makes it a fine example of Ottawa's heritage conservation efforts as well.

Beyond the success story of the waterworks, there is another, larger tale of industrial heritage conservation emerging from LeBreton-Chaudière: the Victoria-Chaudière islands and falls area. This area of intensive



Lumber yards at Chaudière Falls, showing suspension bridge

City of Ottawa Archives



19th-century industrial development carries a heritage pedigree of the highest order. It tells a story of entrepreneurs and their brilliant means of exploiting the water resources of the Ottawa River and Chaudière Falls, and the lumber resources of the Upper Ottawa Valley.

The first to arrive, in 1800, was Philemon Wright, founder of Wrightstown (today's Hull). By 1802, he had built the first sawmill and gristmill. In 1806, he made global industrial history by navigating a raft of lashed-together logs and sawn boards through rough waters to Quebec City, creating a European export trade.

When Colonel John By arrived in 1826, he recognized the importance of connecting the south shore of the Ottawa River to Wrightstown. So his first act was to build the Union Bridge (forebear of the Chaudière Bridge), the first overland link between what is now Ontario and Quebec. In 1851, Ezra Butler Eddy arrived and eventually became one of the world's leading manufacturers, with his many mills, plants and generating stations at the Chaudière. By the turn of the century, the Chaudière area had become the hydraulics and sawmill "capital of Canada."

At its peak at the end of the 19th century, the entire site was covered with industrial operations. It was the economic engine of the region. Today, it is a shadow of its former self, but there are more than 30 buildings, structures, archeological remains and natural sites of historic significance that help tell the story of this cultural landscape. They include the nos. 2 and 4 generating stations (1891 and 1900), stone powerhouses that are still in

operation; the Thompson Perkins Mill (1842), the oldest surviving stone grist and sawmill in the area, now a restaurant; the Carbide Mill (circa 1890-1900), a large stone mill built by Thomas ("Carbide") Willson; and the Ottawa Electric Railway Steam Plant (1914), a large structure overlooking some dam and powerhouse ruins, now a mountain climbing and skateboard facility.

In today's fiscal and political climate, preservation happens through successful interventions that support real contemporary needs and economics, respect original architectural meaning, and create a wide variety of new uses that fit well into the heritage structures and spaces. A stroll through the Chaudière area shows that it has just that potential.



City of Ottawa, Communications Centre

Industrial development at Chaudière Falls

Perhaps the greatest challenge for LACAC at the dawn of the 21st century is to ensure that this most significant heritage district and cultural landscape is preserved and redeveloped in a manner that respects the major resources it offers.

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