



Photo Credit: Mishel Shogolev

Building Preservation

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It is important to preserve both formally and informally recognized culturally-significant buildings within communities.

National Trust for Canada, n.d.



Photo Credit: Town of Stonewall
Figure 1: Stonewall Town Hall, currently active. Located on Main Street.

The preservation of culturally significant buildings is an essential component of maintaining North American town identities. Often, small towns are rooted in historically significant structures (e.g., churches). These structures are preserved to facilitate employment, education, and social activity (Figure 1). However, not all buildings valued for their cultural importance are formally recognized by governments as valuable to preserve (Government of Manitoba, 2008, 2017). It is essential to support varying initiatives to preserve ageing or deteriorating buildings. The National Trust for Canada (n.d.) writes that towns must maintain culturally significant buildings of value to residents regardless of their heritage status. This is because preservation as a whole can contribute to both physical and social regeneration efforts within communities (Nyseth & Sognæs, 2013). Heritage committees in the United States and Canada recognize building preservation benefits in small towns (e.g., tourism, local economic development, placemaking). As a result, some of these committees now use preservation as a catalyst for their larger main street revitalization goals.

Strategic Planning

The Canada National Trust has determined a list of actions that municipalities can take to initiate main street revitalization (National Trust for Canada, n.d.). One of the strategies suggests the creation of a vision or action plan. In collaboration with Scatliff Miller Murray, the Town of Stonewall, Manitoba, developed a Strategic Plan to guide its council and administration for 2020-2025 (Town of Stonewall, 2020). The strategic plan consists of five development strategies, including one that aims to improve community identity. As a town that takes pride in its historical legacy, heritage preservation is already at the forefront of importance for Stonewall’s development. The new goals for the town aim to protect its heritage assets and promote its Main Street as a focal point of identity. This initiative is driven by economic, cultural, and social opportunities. The plan identifies that investment into Quarry Park and new heritage status designations are a high priority. Meanwhile, it identifies storefront restoration as a medium priority. Finally, the plan discusses who will lead these initiatives towards completion and what types of collaborations it will involve.

The Town of Carberry, Manitoba, has also published a strategic document to inspire heritage preservation initiatives. The plan was devised in collaboration with Bridgman Collaborative Architecture (Heritage Manitoba, 2008).



Photo Credit: Heritage Manitoba

Figure 2: Façade design elements.



Photo Credit: The Seton Centre

Figure 3: Implementation of a canopy, goose lamp, and fixed wall sign within a museum façade in Carberry, MB.

However, unlike the Town of Stonewall that focuses on several development strategies, the Town of Carberry focuses specifically on heritage preservation through design (Figures 2 & 3). The Carberry Downtown Heritage Conservation District Guidelines means to inspire future restoration of downtown buildings. Additionally, the document reiterates the importance of material authenticity in restoration for the maintenance of historic character. Overall, the strategy connects heritage preservation to other revitalization opportunities. These opportunities discuss how historic buildings can contribute to the transformation of town districts into historic streetscapes.

Funding and Grants

Another action identified by the Canada National Trust is fundraising support to restore culturally significant buildings (National Trust for Canada, n.d.). In 2018, the Town of Kentville, Nova Scotia, in partnership with the Kentville Business Community, established a Façade Improvement Program (Kentville Development Corporation Ltd., 2016). The program outlines that all non-residential buildings located within the town's urban core are eligible for assistance through this grant. The grant encourages the preservation of the town's unique architectural style (Figure 4). It also outlines that façade improvements could translate into the enhancement of vibrancy within streetscapes. The program offers a reimbursement of up to 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per approved property. The improvements can be made to windows, signage, siding, awnings, doorways, lighting, and accessibility. To support this grant, Kentville's Development Corporation released a Façade Design Manual to assist applicants to properly qualify for the program through a range of design and material recommendations.

Restoration of ageing structures may range in funding needs. Small towns have a limited budget and less ability to invest in historic buildings with significant structural problems. In such scenarios, regular maintenance could prevent buildings from deteriorating to such an extent. Historic New England (2020), a heritage conservation committee in New Hampshire, created a Preservation Maintenance Fund Program to provide smaller grants to historic building owners for maintenance. Small towns can take a similar approach and provide opportunities for minor repairs. By recruiting town residents as volunteers,

The renewal of historic properties attracts new businesses/ residents and increases property values in surrounding neighbourhoods

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, 2002.



Photo Credit: Kentville Business

Figure 4: Re-construction of a building façade in Kentville, NS.

Sackville is Made for Walking
Experience Sackville on a human scale. Our walking tours offer so many ways to experience our town up close and personal. Grab a guide and get going.



Photo Credit: Town of Sackville

<p>🕒 2-3 HR 📏 4.5 KM 🏠 URBAN</p> <p>Downtown Historical Grab our Historic Sights and Sounds of Downtown Sackville and a Walking/Cycling Tour of Historical Middle Sackville pamphlets.</p>	<p>🕒 4 HR 📏 7 KM 🏠 URBAN</p> <p>Sackville Arts Walk This 4-hour walking tour of Sackville's cultural highlights encompasses public art, cultural institutions, buildings of note, and much more.</p>
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Figure 5: Tourism initiatives in Sackville, NB.

maintenance can be made affordable.

Branding and Marketing

The Town of Sackville, New Brunswick, marketing strategy displays the consideration made in developing its brand. The document states that historical tourism is difficult to brand because people are interested in doing things rather than just seeing things (Town of Sackville, 2020). The town's administrators understood that most successful branding promotes experiential components to tourism. As a result, the town's website now advertises its interactive historic walking tours (Figure 5). It also encourages visitors to stay for longer so that they could experience local amenities. By branding itself as a historic town with varying touring options, Sackville increased its tourism economy. The result of such an initiative not only helped its local economy but also allowed further investment into historic buildings.

**9 in every 10
Canadians
value heritage
preservation
initiatives**

National Trust for Canada, n.d.

Final Thoughts

The House of Commons has released a document promoting Canada's heritage preservation (Schulte, 2017). The document acknowledges that historical places in rural areas face challenges because property owners have fewer means to subsidize maintenance (Schulte, 2017). However, the funding of rural historic places within Canada is only part of the issue at hand. As the National Trust for Heritage discusses, unlike the United States, Canada does not have a 'heritage first' initiative (National Trust for Canada, n.d.). Due to this, the Province of Manitoba does not have a complete inventory of historically significant buildings, causing an underrepresentation of historical value within rural Manitoba (Figure 6). Evidently, preservation can be used as a catalyst for further urban revitalization (Regeneration Works, n.d.). However, to initiate a preservation movement, it is essential to note that each town's abilities vary depending on their building stock, stock condition, and funding. As mentioned within this document, strategic planning, funding/grants, and branding/marketing can be implemented to different scales and adapted to suit each town's needs. As a result of promoting building preservation, towns can enhance their economic well-being. Ultimately, economic well-being may lead to further opportunities for revitalization.



Figure 6: Historic Sites of Manitoba interactive map only displays heritage status sites.

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