



Linking the Old University Neighbourhood to the City of Guelph since 1897

# Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association Inc.

## Spring Newsletter June 2013

Edited by John Campbell, Secretary, OUNRA

### Old ladies in sensible shoes?

*Perception and reality in heritage work*

Susan Ratcliffe,  
President, The Architectural Conservancy of  
Ontario

Heritage advocates are often considered as "old ladies with grey hair wearing sensible shoes and smelling of talcum powder", and dismissed as artsie leftist types who hate business, are against progress, threaten jobs and property rights.

That's the old story.

According to Terry O'Reilly, host of CBC's popular show *Under the Influence*, "One of the most difficult tasks marketing can undertake is to change a perception. People treat perceptions like possessions, and don't give them up easily." I'd like to kick those old perceptions out the door with my sparkly, spiky heels, and discuss the present reality of heritage advocacy.

Heritage is not just about preserving old buildings per se, but also about giving a community a sense of place and distinctiveness, combating the "Geography of Nowhere" plague that is homogenizing many cities in southern Ontario. As Gertrude Stein said, "There is no There there." Stand at the corner of Clair Road and Gordon Street and you could be anywhere in North America; stand at the corner of Water Street and McCrae Boulevard and you can only be in Guelph in the Old University Neighbourhood.

On or near this corner are the Gow Bridge, one of only ten stone bridges left in Ontario, McCrae House, the House of Heads and the weathered stone walls along the river, all of which create a "sense of place" and evoke a reservoir of meaning in this community. As you walk along the Speed River, or labour up the Gordon Street hill, you know you are in a neighbourhood like no other in the city. The area's heritage gives it uniqueness and a special meaning that is certainly worthy of preservation.

The reality of heritage is more than just sentiment; it has clear economic benefits and is a valuable resource for

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, 2013 June 19

7 pm

Guelph Community Christian School Gym  
195 College Ave. West

President's Report - John Gruzleski  
Treasurer's Report - Roy Allingham  
Election of Officers and Members-at-Large for 2013-14

Guest Speaker - Susan Ratcliffe  
President, The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario  
(see article this page)

Councillors' Corner - Report on Council Activities

the city. A report (Canada's Historic Places, 2005) outlined some of those benefits:

- **Heritage conservation encourages heritage tourism.** Heritage tourists tend to include multiple destinations on their trips, spend 60% more and stay 60% longer than non-heritage tourists.
- **Heritage conservation enhances property values.** The value of historic properties, especially within historic districts, appreciates at rates greater than the local market overall and faster than similar non-designated properties. Across Canada, heritage buildings have performed much better than average in the marketplace and the price of heritage houses has been less affected by cyclical downturns in property values.
- **Heritage conservation creates jobs.** Conservation efforts create well-paying jobs in skilled labour, design and promotion, having a ripple effect on local economies. Ongoing conservation of historic places ensures that these jobs will be secure for years to come.

Just as the perception of heritage advocates conjures up images of sensible shoes, the perception of heritage buildings is that they are too old, expensive to repair, falling apart,

dangerous, too small, too dirty, and huge energy guzzlers - and should all be demolished as they stand in the way of progress to a new, greener world. These perceptions are indeed very far from reality.

The new reality is that "the greenest building is the one already built". As the Canada's Historic Places report says:

Heritage conservation helps to reduce reliance on new materials, environmentally unfriendly building materials and energy intensive production of new building materials. Heritage conservation encourages the re-use of existing building materials by extending the life of a building and its components, or rehabilitating damaged building materials.

Saving one downtown building is equivalent to recycling 1,344,000 pop cans by preserving the embodied energy in that building. The reality is that heritage is Sustainability, embodying the best of the 3Rs - Reuse.

So, let's all put on our dancing shoes, kick up our heels and celebrate our unique, beautiful and valuable heritage resources.

*Note from Sylvia Watson of the OUNRA executive:*

*Tour Title: Brooklyn and College Hill*

*When: June 16th and Oct 6th*

*Time: 2-4 - meet at McCrae House*

*Cost: \$5/person (does not include entrance to McCrae House)*

## **Guelph Community Orchard Project – 2013 Update**

Jill Gill

On September 15, 2012, the ground-breaking planting day for the Project was well attended by the community, helping to plant fruit and nut trees,

enjoying music, speeches and a barbecue. There was also an informative workshop on care of fruit trees and a tour of the Harcourt, Guthrie Park and the Guelph Community Christian School orchard sites.

This spring we have been enhancing the Harcourt orchard site with thornless blackberry bushes, ground-covering strawberry plants, etc. Still to be planted are more native pollinator plants to provide food and habitat for an amazing range of insects to pollinate the fruit crops we will eventually harvest. Moritz Sanio, of Trees for Guelph has made many suggestions such as oxeyed sunflower and wild bergamot.

We plan to build an arbour in the northeastern corner of the property to welcome passersby using the pathway from Forest Street. Arctic Kiwi plants will be trained up the trellised sides of the arbour.

Over at the Guelph Community Christian School site, the orchard now has a total of 2 pears, 2 paw-paws, 3 apples, 3 plums, 2 dwarf cherries, 15 serviceberries; 6 elderberries, and many smaller plants. Some funds for the most recent plantings came from Metro food stores. Students and parents have mulched and built a story circle. A local manufacturer donated packing crates to use as garden boxes. Carrot Cache donated money for water troughs which will catch water off the roof.

During 2013 we will be welcoming the members of Kortright Presbyterian Church to the Orchard Project. They will be planting fruit and nut trees at their location on Devere Drive, with a possible fall celebration on site to mark the first anniversary of the Guelph Community Orchard. Further details at a later date..

We thank the folks in the neighbourhood who have taken an interest in this project and appreciate the support and positive feedback we have received.

### Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association Membership Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  I am willing to deliver some Newsletters

**Annual membership is \$20.00 per family. Please make cheques payable to OUNRA. Bring form to the meeting or deliver to Roy Allingham, 18 Mary St., N1G2A7. Thank you for your support.**

## President's Letter Newsletter, May, 2013

Greetings to all of our neighbours in Old University. Spring finally arrived after a rather long winter that ended in the ice storm that was nature's way of pruning our trees. The winter and spring have been relatively quiet in our neighbourhood. The St. Patrick's Day celebrations were pretty calm compared to some in the recent past. Perhaps the cooler weather had something to do with it, but I also credit the proactive approach being taken by the University, the Guelph Police and City by-law officers. Needless to say, your Residents' Association has expressed its sincere thanks to them for excellent work. We continue to work through the Town and Gown Association and directly with the University of Guelph to ensure our neighbourhood remains one in which young families, renters and seniors continue to live in harmony.

A major part of our role as a neighbourhood association is to be up-to-date and to comment on building developments in the neighbourhood. OUNRA was a participant in the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing in late February into the development of the property located at 180 Gordon Street. While we support development of this contaminated and abandoned site of an old garage and gas station, our view is that the development proposed is too large for the site and not respectful of the adjacent Marianne's Park and the riverside location of the site. As a participant, we were able to present our views. Lisa Mactaggart, the main author of our statement, made an excellent presentation to the Board which issued its decision on May 10, 2013. The developer is required to increase the setback to Marianne's Park from 1.5 metres to 3 metres and to reduce the number of units in the development from the 11 approved by the City to 10. The Board did not overturn the encroachment into the 30 metre river setback or the configuration of the driveway to align with Water Street.

Those of you who have been active members of OUNRA for some time know that we carefully check all applications to the Committee of Adjustment from properties in our area. Interestingly, the number of these applications has decreased markedly since the fall. We have made statements on only three since our last general meeting in November. Many past applications dealt with the creation of accessory apartments or parking variances associated with accessory apartments. Of course, six or eight months do not a trend make, but it is possible that the rate of creation of accessory apartments in our neighbourhood is decreasing.

OUNRA has been concerned for many years with the issue of safety and quality of rental accommodations in Old University, especially given the large number of students who rent within our neighbourhood. City Staff prepared a

preliminary report on a licensing plan for rental accommodations. The report was presented at a February meeting of the Planning, Building, Engineering and Environmental Committee of City Council. OUNRA appeared as a delegation to support the licensing report, however, the Committee chose not to send the report to City Council for a decision until a cost-benefit analysis was completed by the city staff. We will keep a close watch on this issue which will likely surface again in the next few months.

Your Executive Committee meets monthly. If you should ever wish to meet with us to discuss a particular issue just let me know a bit in advance in order that we may schedule you into the meeting agenda.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at our AGM on June 19. A happy and safe summer to all.

John Gruzleski  
President, OUNRA

### **REGISTERING TO SPEAK AT COUNCIL MEETINGS**

At its April 29th meeting, City Council decided to change the long-standing policy allowing people to register to speak and/or submit written comments by noon on the day of the council meeting. The new policy requires people to register to speak and/or submit written comments by 9 a.m. on the Friday prior to the council meeting (this applies to all Council meetings and to Council Committee meetings).

The Old University Neighbourhood Residents Association sent a letter to Council opposing the change to the existing policy on the grounds that it would make it more difficult for residents to participate in the process.

A compromise offered by Councillor Bob Bell would have retained the policy that allowed delegates wishing to speak at council to register by noon on the day of the meeting. It failed on a 6-6 tie vote. Both Ward 5 councillors voted against allowing same-day registration for verbal presentations.

The Mercury published the story in the following article:

<http://www.guelphmercury.com/news/local/article/926521--guelph-councillors-put-brakes-on-last-minute-council-delegations>

## Who's on the Executive?

We are your neighbours working together to protect and enhance the quality of life in our community. If you want more information or would like to participate in neighbourhood organizing call or write one of the people on the list below.

President	John Gruzleski	519-829-3225	j.gruzleski@sympatico.ca
Vice-Pres.	Dick Chaloner	519-823-9601	nrchaloner@hotmail.com
Past Pres.	Daphne Wainman-Wood	519-780-2622	daphne@taloarchitect.ca
Secretary	John Campbell	519-763-9771	johnnandaileen@rogers.com
Treasurer	Roy Allingham	519-829-2406	roy.allingham@sympatico.ca

## Members-at-large

Mark Bailey	519-836-7788	mark@otimultimedia.com
John Caron	519-821-8894	caronjd@albedo.net
David Josephy	519-821-8293	djosephy@uoguelph.ca
Lisa Mactaggart	519-821-7371	lmactaggart@sympatico.ca
Judy Martin	519-829-3596	judymartin@rogers.com
Katrina Martin	519-998-1352	kmarti02@uoguelph.ca
Bruce Ryan	519-766-9684	bryan@uoguelph.ca
Tony Smith	519-836-3898	tony.smith37@sympatico.ca
Peter Stonehouse	519-836-9841	aastonehouse@bell.net
Sylvia Watson	519-780-5328	sylviarwatson@gmail.com

*The following article is by Moritz Sanio, who lives on Echo, works for the Grand River Conservation Authority and does a terrific job all over town as the Trees for Guelph Coordinator.*  
(msanio@grandriver.ca) Ed.

### **"I wish we had done this decades ago!" (long-time residents around Hugh Guthrie Park)**

This year the area dedicated to native plant communities in Hugh Guthrie Park has doubled thanks to the efforts of Trees for Guelph and its dedicated partners including the City of Guelph, McNeil Consumer Healthcare, the Grand River Conservation Authority, and volunteers from our community such as Cornerstone Christian School, John F. Ross C.V.I., University of Guelph's Geography students, Guelph Urban Forest Friends and the neighbours.

The all-native plantings are designed to accommodate the unrestricted use of the baseball field and limit the need to install the snow fencing every year. Another coincidental benefit of planting native Ontario species of wildflowers, shrubs, and trees in the park besides the improved aesthetics, is the creation of habitat for our indigenous pollinators, song birds, insects, rabbits, toads and other wildlife. In a few years, the trees will provide much needed shade in the park and along sidewalks. As gardeners begin to explore native

alternatives in their own yards, this collection will serve as a mini arboretum supporting more than 75 species thriving in an urban environment. In future, the plantings will provide native seeds of species that are hardy in Guelph.

The 2012 planting was surprisingly successful with a 95% survival rate. This is largely due to the neighbourhood bucket brigade that watered weekly during last summer's drought and the excellent skills of our gardening community. Hopefully we will have more rainfall this year than last, but rest assured the plants will do well with a little neighbourhood TLC.

As a tribute to Victor Chanasyk, a former Dean of Landscape Architecture at the University of Guelph and community resident as well as a native plant lover, there will be a noticeable presence of Eastern redbud (*Circis canadensis*) in our Park. Seeds to grow your own will be available in several years when they mature and flower freely at the same time as the serviceberries.

Expect more plant diversity in this new addition to City parks. Keep up the good work, others are watching and getting ideas. Stay tuned as Trees for Guelph continues to engage the community in improvement of the Park and neighbourhood. After all, community engagement is what Guelphites do.