



**City of Kingston
Information Report to Council
Report Number 15-232**

To: Mayor and Council
From: Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Paige Agnew, Director, Planning, Building & Licensing Services
Date of Meeting: April 21, 2015
Subject: Heritage Resource Centre Pilot Project

Executive Summary:

This report is to provide Council with an update regarding the Heritage Resource Centre pilot project and to outline the move of the Centre to a more prominent and easily accessible location in the Marketview Wing, main level of Kingston City Hall, on a long term basis. The main purpose of the Heritage Resource Centre moving forward will be to make staff and resources available to improve education and customer services related to Kingston's cultural heritage.

This initiative will continue to be led by the Planning Division but with increased support from the Cultural Services Department. This will enable the Centre to provide an expanded range of resources and programming to support increased awareness of Kingston's cultural heritage and its tangible, intangible and natural assets. Any necessary budget implications will be addressed through existing budget envelopes.

Recommendation:

This report is provided for information purposes only.

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Options/Discussion:

On January 8, 2013, Council approved the following motion:

“WHEREAS the City of Kingston is committed to our cultural vibrancy; and

WHEREAS heritage has and continues to play a vital role in promoting Kingston’s culture and economy; and

WHEREAS protecting heritage is an important component of our sustainability model;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff be requested to develop a plan for Council’s consideration to establish a heritage resource centre, with features of this resource centre to include; staff offices for current and future staff, space to be used as an educational facility, ability to be open to the public with set hours, features to assist applicants through the approval process, and space for committee meetings; and

THAT staff report back to Council after consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee no later than May 2013, including the budgetary impacts; and

THAT consideration be given to the former Portsmouth Town Hall, at 623 King Street, as a potential location.”

Further to staff Report Number MHC-13-009, a recommendation endorsed by the Municipal Heritage Committee was approved by Council on May 21, 2013 as follows:

“THAT the establishment of the Kingston Heritage Resource Centre, as recommended in the Kingston Culture Plan, within Kingston City Hall as a one-year pilot project to include heritage planning staff and services and educational space for the consolidation of heritage related community resources be approved; and

THAT staff be directed to consider the development of interpretive programming for Kingston’s cultural built heritage as part of the pilot project for the Heritage Resource Centre and in relation to the Kingston City Hall National Historic Site Cultural Heritage Management Plan; and

THAT staff be directed to report back on the operations of the Kingston Heritage Resource Centre subsequent to or slightly prior to the completion of the one-year pilot project in consideration for the establishment of a permanent Heritage Resource Centre in Kingston City Hall.”

The Heritage Resource Centre (the Centre) opened in December 2013 as a pilot project led by the Planning Division with a \$10,000 budget to provide for moving the heritage offices from the main floor of City Hall to the lower level. In this preliminary form, no specific operating budget was assigned to provide for either advertising or promoting the Centre. Former Mayor Mark Gerretsen celebrated the opening of the City’s Heritage Resource Centre by presenting resident Helen Finley with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of her contribution to the protection

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of built heritage and the creation of the Centre. Attendance at the opening on December 9, 2013 indicated much support by the community, with approximately 80 people in attendance.

Since the opening, the Centre has been the location of a wide range of meetings, including meetings of the Communications and Education Working Group and the Historic Properties Working Group, which are working groups set out under the Municipal Heritage Committee mandate. Many other meetings regarding a wide range of matters are held in the Centre as the room has also continued to function as the Shoal Tower meeting room in City Hall. The initial phase of the Heritage Resource Centre project, as led by the Planning Division, was intentionally focused on the built heritage of the City and the surrounding region. The intent was that future expansions would incorporate a broader range of the City's cultural heritage and build on plans to allocate more space within Kingston City Hall to interpretive and educational purposes.

The City of Kingston currently has over 1,200 designated and listed heritage properties and additional heritage conservation districts are being considered. Presently, there are three heritage conservation districts with the recently approved Old Sydenham Heritage District Conservation area.

Requirements identified in previous staff reports included the following:

- Need for a management plan for the Centre to consolidate community resources, to establish the educational programming and enhance existing volunteer programming.
- An evaluation of staffing implications associated with any new initiatives.
- Interpretive programming related to Kingston's built heritage and cultural heritage as well as the visitor experience as described in the Kingston City Hall National Historic Site Cultural Heritage Management Plan that is still pending.

In 2014:

- October Talk: Jennifer McKendry – 'Researching Heritage Properties' – 40 in attendance.
- 853 views in 2014 on the City Heritage Resource Centre web page.
- Periodic inquiries regarding both private and City properties.
- Many positive verbal comments, as well as those written in the guest book for the Heritage Resource Centre.

In 2015:

- January Talk: Dorothy Farr – 'Architectural Terra Cotta in Kingston' – 40 in attendance.
- February Talk celebrating Heritage Week: Dr. Brian Osborne – 'International, National, Local Heritage: Quo Vadis?' – 35 individuals in attendance and a recording posted to the City website for broadened public awareness.
- March Talk: Peter Gower - World War 1 Driving Tour.
- 146 views on the City Heritage Resource Centre web page in January and February, 2015, demonstrating an increase in the usage made of the website, and an indicator that

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increased usage is relative to additional and current information being made available on the site.

Public foot traffic to the Heritage Resource Centre has been limited given its original location and the fact that it has not been incorporated as part of the City Hall Tour Program; however, those who have found their way individually, particularly those in the educational field and those in meetings at the Centre for various reasons, are pleased to see the resources that are available. Word is spreading on a gradual basis that the Centre holds a good selection of built-heritage related resources available. The catalogue currently includes nearly 300 books, reports and other published materials available to the public, as well as a wide range of old maps of the City and its surrounding area.

Moving forward, the Planning Division has been in discussions with the Cultural Services Department to develop a number of suggestions to guide the future use of this Centre:

- As the Centre is in the heart of downtown heritage, it provides customer service for the people who own heritage buildings concentrated in the core of the City. This provides a place to receive information about *Ontario Heritage Act* applications for alteration, for public inquiries and applications related to commemoration projects (as recommended in the forthcoming Kingston Commemoration Strategy) and for meeting with staff from Planning, Building & Licensing Services and Cultural Services.
- Expanded displays interpreting local built heritage and cultural heritage more broadly.
- Expanded educational efforts, led by the Planning Division, but also incorporating newer initiatives such as the 'Beyond Classrooms Kingston' program that provided an alternative learning environment for local Grade 4 and 5 students.
- Volunteer programming can be expanded so visits to the Centre can be integrated into City Hall tours for people who visit during the tourist season.
- As a central location for handouts and posters regarding City policies and guidelines on heritage renovations.
- Coordinated location for City-led heritage events, including the development of a digital heritage calendar, as well as pamphlets for visitors to the City and new residents.
- Management of reference material as an access point for printed and digital information.

Related Web Site

It has also been identified that the Heritage Resource Centre needs to be supported by a robust online presence through the City of Kingston website. Such a portal already exists and has had material added to it over the past number of months. An analysis of the monthly summary of web traffic, provided through Strategic Communications, has confirmed that usage of the information located at www.Cityofkingston.ca/residents/heritage-conservation/resource-centre has increased over time. Materials from the Heritage Resource Centre Talks are added when the speaker agrees to have the materials made available and these kinds of resources need to be expanded.

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Existing Policy/By-Law:

Recommendation Number 54 of the Kingston Culture Plan (approved in 2010) directed that Cultural Services, in consultation with representatives of the heritage community, report on the details and feasibility of establishing a Heritage Resource Conservation Resource Centre in Kingston City Hall. This work was taken on by the Planning Division in 2013 given the ready availability of resources related to built heritage and it is proposed that the Planning Division and Cultural Services Department work collaboratively to expand the scope of the Centre in a new, higher profile location within Kingston City Hall.

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

Not applicable

Financial Considerations:

The planned move and associated space planning and renovations will be covered through existing capital budget envelopes.

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Colin Wiginton, Cultural Director, Cultural Services Department

Paul Robertson, City Curator, Cultural Services Department

Exhibits:

Not applicable