



Heritage News

Central Okanagan Heritage Society
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City of Kelowna Heritage Grants Program (CoKHGP) projects that recently received a grant for conservation work:

339 Bernard Ave—Old Sutherland Store (window conservation);
757 Lawrence Ave—Meikle House (porch and stair conservation);
2024 Pandosy—Dunn House (new heritage colour paint scheme)

A Hundred Years of Warmth and Charm:

The Thompson House gets a new lease on life

Shona Harrison and her family are looking forward to a warm and cozy winter in their new old house.

"They work!" says Shona as she points out the decorative and sturdy looking hot water radiators that sit beneath the numerous windows in the historic Thompson house on Richter Street. "I just love that radiant heat."

And she just loves this house.

"I have been coveting this house since 2008," she says.

The third time is the charm, apparently. And now that the house is hers, she is hard at work restoring it from top to bottom, indoors and out.

Most recently used as a kind of boarding house, the house, built in 1910, seems as solid as a block of the granite that was used to build St. Michael's church across the street. The fir floors barely squeak and the walls don't lean. The timbers and beams in the basement look ready to stand another century.



The windows are mostly intact. Even the storms and screens.

And what windows they are. Each bay - there are six of them! - has double-hung leaded glass windows designed in an understated repeating gothic arch pattern.

The sheer number and size of the windows, fill this old house with light.

Kitchen windows however, present a challenge. Utilitarian sliding glass windows were installed at some point in the long life of the house, possibly to let in more light. Replacing them with custom windows that reference the age of the house, and also sit in approximately the right place, requires detective work. Was the lath and plaster interrupted there? Or there? Was there a pantry at some time in the past?

The kitchen renovation has been drafted to include all the modern conveniences as well as lots of heritage charm. The door between the kitchen and the dining room was carefully removed along with the wood casement and trim. This allowed for the installation of a contemporary stainless steel refrigerator and will be carefully reconstructed and reinstalled once the kitchen is complete.

The footprint of the kitchen will remain as it was, even as the space is reconfigured for modern family life.

A small powder room beneath the backstairs will once again be home to a pedestal sink. It's original to the house and Shona has sourced the trades people to repair and re-glaze it. Right now the sink sits on the living room floor among other pieces that will be retrofitted and repaired and put back together.





"I decided to do it right," she says about some of the expensive and time consuming projects she's undertaking to bring the house back to life.

A fireplace, discovered beneath a false front wall in the parlour that will become Shona's study, needs new old bricks so that it can once again be a real fireplace. Local bricks from Kelowna's early days are on the agenda of course. A fireplace insert with an art deco motif that is part of Shona's collection of heritage "finds" will fit perfectly.

Shona, a UBCO professor and dedicated COHS member, is a keen student of heritage buildings. She undertook the restoration of a house of similar vintage in Victoria and is well-acquainted with the potential for

surprises, both good and bad, in a project like her current labour of love.

"I'm having such a fun time," she says with unflagging enthusiasm. "I think I missed my calling."

A particular object of affection for her in this house, is the built-in bookcase behind the stairwell on the second floor. The glass sliding doors are likely the originals and there is art nouveau wallpaper lining the back of one side. It was love at first sight for the professor.

Like many houses of this vintage, this one has architectural detail to spare, from the window and door casements to the design of the main staircase.

Elegant, open and simple with banisters, balustrades and newel posts all in remarkably good condition, the staircase is a prime indicator that the architect and owners wanted this house to be "modern." Like the house itself, the staircase is without Victorian or Edwardian frills or flourishes and feels surprisingly contemporary.

While the front hall makes a style statement, the backstairs, designed for utilitarian purposes (probably for the maid) is narrow and enclosed.

The small room at the top of those stairs was likely the maid's. Shona has incorporated the small space to increase the size of the original bathroom. Like the kitchen below it, the bathroom will have glamour touches and lots of modern conveniences. Also, like the kitchen, its design and decor will be in keeping with the age and style of the house.

Hexagonal "penny" tiles in white with black accent tiles have been installed recently. The popular again tiles give an authentic heritage feel to the space. A claw foot tub is destined for the bathroom as well.



When the kitchen ceiling was removed, a four-inch thick concrete slab was revealed, installed no doubt, over a hundred years ago to keep the original cast iron tub from crashing through the floor boards into the kitchen below.

The house, quite literally, is made of sturdy stuff. The verandah that encircles the front of the house, though, has a certain delicacy. As does the small upper balcony. It's a harmonious house. Pleasing to the eye. And while it's been hidden by overgrown hedges and trees at the perimeter of its half-acre lot for many years, Shona has plans for a white picket fence. The house will soon be ready for its close-up. And maybe for another hundred years.

Julie Cosgrave is a Kelowna freelance writer who writes about decor and urban design. She also is a CoKHGP committee member.



What is a Heritage Register?

*“A community heritage register is an **official listing of properties** identified by a local government as having heritage value or heritage character. Inclusion on a community heritage register **does not** constitute heritage designation or any other form of permanent heritage protection.”* (Heritage Conservation: A Community Guide, Heritage Branch, 1996)

In the late 1970s-1980s, many communities created heritage resource inventories in response to the development pressures on heritage buildings by unprecedented growth and the subsequent loss of many heritage buildings. Heritage Inventories attempted to include all the sites and buildings (natural and built) that were older than 50 years and deemed to have historical and/or architectural importance in a community. This was meant to be a comprehensive list, with each resource undergoing an evaluation process to determine if it was Class A (most significant) to Class D (least/not significant). **Kelowna’s Heritage Resource Inventory**, completed in 1983, included over 300 Class A, B and C buildings.

In 1994, the Local Government Act, along with community growth and public interest in the conservation and revitalization of heritage buildings and sites, allowed for the creation of local heritage registers in BC. The City of Kelowna has 210 buildings currently listed on its heritage register. Each registered property has a Statement of Significance (SOS) that summarizes its heritage value and the character defining elements (CDE). These properties can be accessed on the City of Kelowna website at: www.kelowna.ca/iHeritage/Scripts/

Properties listed on a heritage register may be considered to have sufficient heritage value to warrant preservation actions by the municipality in the future. Inclusion on the heritage register does not give any formal protection to a building and/or site and is NOT the same as heritage designation. The register is a way to review and monitor proposed changes to properties that have heritage value. By properties being listed on a heritage register, owners are given fair notice that the heritage status of their buildings may affect future development options for their buildings.

Inclusion on municipal heritage registers, such as in Kelowna, may also benefit from incentives. These **include: Heritage buildings listed in the Kelowna Heritage Register may be eligible for variances to the City’s Zoning and Subdivision Bylaws.** This allows the City to consider providing property owners, on a case-by-case basis, with incentives and bonuses such as increasing density, relaxing height and setback restrictions, relaxing parking restrictions, and allowing appropriate adaptive re-uses. In return for these incentives, the property owners would agree to retain and protect the listed properties. Properties that are designated heritage (municipal heritage designation bylaw) may not be altered or demolished without approval of the local city council.



Since 1991, Kelowna has had an incentive program for heritage register properties. In 2008, the Kelowna Heritage Foundation was revamped into the City of Kelowna Heritage Grants Program (COKHP). The Central Okanagan Heritage Society (COHS) manages this program for the City of Kelowna. The program was created to recognize the value of heritage in the community by providing financial support to

owners of heritage properties. The program promotes the conservation of residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural heritage. **Grants assist with a portion of the costs incurred in maintaining the building’s exterior including the foundation.** Only buildings listed on the Kelowna Heritage Register are eligible to apply for grants from the program. All granting decisions are made by a committee of community volunteers with heritage expertise.

Lorri Dauncey, Manager City of Kelowna Heritage Grants Program

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Confessions of a Heritage Addict

Woke up, got out of bed, dragged a comb across my head.....went downtown to buy a house, but had to check it with my spouse. Got the place, added a porch, changed the proportions, and planted a garden where the driveway used to be. Settled in, liked the place, but did not feel secure. Some other idiot could build an apartment block across the street or worse yet - next door!



Fortunately for us, a most timely decision by the BC government in 1994, saw new legislation passed. The *Heritage Conservation Amendments Act*, enabled municipalities to establish by-laws protecting and celebrating places of historical significance as they deemed appropriate.

The lobbying soon began at Kelowna City Hall and the Abbott Street and Marshall Street Heritage Conservation areas were formed in 1998. Building design and contextual changes in these areas now needed a public review process and city council approval. Great news! Finally we were feeling more secure from rapacious land development around us. That got us wondering if our home had a story - the plain Jane, four-square, two-storey prairie-style house, with stucco siding, built in the mid 1930's. According to Bob Marriage, a resident historian, the neighbors laughed out loud during construction as "nobody built two-storey homes around here".

So....needing a new roof and paint-job we thought "let's see if the City Heritage Register aficionados are interested in our house and maybe we can get a heritage grant to help us out with the work we need to do". Upon the city doing their investigative research, conducted by Don Luxton and Associates, there indeed was a story for our old house! A.I. Dawson, the owner and builder of the house, was a fruit cannery superintendent, just when the Government of Canada passed new legislation to enhance the fruit industry. In order to ship fruit to the Canadian prairies where people were starving from the Great Depression and the dust bowl periods, refrigerated railway box cars were shuttled to the Okanagan. Agriculture and house construction were booming in Kelowna when most everyone else in the country had lost almost everything or had almost nothing!

That was the "hook" that gave our house historical significance. Not the design nor the ornamentation, but the context in Canada and the Okanagan during its construction. What an unusual and unexpected reason to gain heritage register status for our plain old two-storey house.

Consequently we got the grants, painted our house with Benjamin Moore's true colors for Western Canada and re-roofed using historically appropriate western red cedar shingles.



Now 80 years later, in the A.I. Dawson House, life is still perfect. We live in a heritage house, in a heritage neighborhood AND we can't get heritage out of our blood. It's addictive, continually providing pleasures. However, there is a negative side effect to heritage addiction. **The supply must last, so let's not lose any more heritage homes due to demolition.** After all, once the supply is gone, the withdrawal will be long and painful for the entire community.

*Respectfully submitted by co-dependents Pat Munro and Peter Chataway, 368 Cadder Avenue.
Peter is a CoKHGP committee member.*

