

Homes

Walking tours offer intimate look at market's heritage

By Marjorie Gillies
Citizen staff writer

An intimate look at what's happening to some of the Byward market's most historic buildings will be provided Sunday as Heritage Ottawa conducts two different guided walking tours of the city's first business centre.

Since 1961 the National Capital Commission and private renovators have revived the neighborhood by rehabilitating dozens of 19th century buildings from the area's colorful past.

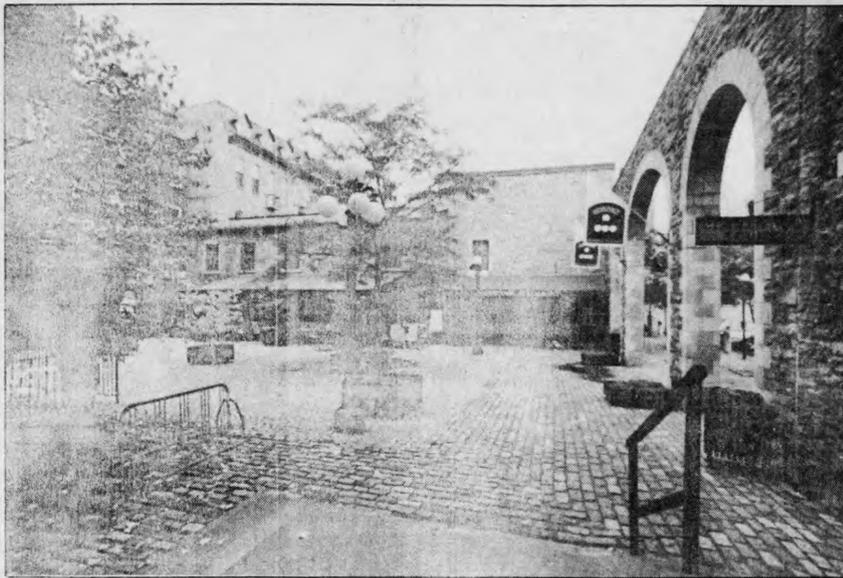
Fine stone and brick facades remain, but the interiors have been modernized to meet the most discerning tastes for office and apartment space.

Eytown's rowdy taverns and saloons have vanished, replaced by bistros and good restaurants. Family homes built by the community's first craftsmen as display pieces for their skills have been adapted to contemporary use as restaurants, galleries and specialty shops.

Today, former stable and delivery yards are elegant courtyards. And everywhere new buildings, engineered in glass, steel and brick, blend with heritage design to bring vibrancy to a community that was once the heart of the city's blue collar society.

Both 80-minute Sunday tours start from the George Street entrance to the Byward Market building at regular intervals between noon and 4 p.m.

Each tour, accompanied by a guide who will explain the main features along the route, presents a different aspect of the market area and provides an overall view of what heritage planning can do



Clarendon Court at George Street and Sussex Drive



Tin Court between Murray and Clarence streets

to preserve and adapt old buildings.

The farmers' market building, surrounded by produce stalls, is the focus of a tour along George, Byward, Clarence and York streets.

The market building, a red brick structure designed on the basilica plan and built in 1927, followed three previous markets destroyed by fire. Major alterations to its design were made in 1977 by the city.

The market area was the hub

of local commerce from the time construction began on the canal, and it retains a lively business environment, with meat, poultry and fish shops, grocery stores and bakeries.

A portion of the Mile of History ceremonial route along Sussex Drive will be viewed during the second tour. This tour winds through the streets and courtyards between George and St. Patrick streets.

Here a fascinating mix of ornate Victorian and Edwardian ar-

chitectural styling is evident, with recent rehabilitation adding charm and dignity to a route most visiting dignitaries see.

Clarendon Court at George Street and Sussex Drive best illustrates how a heritage building can be adapted to new use. Today it is a complex of fashion boutiques, art gallery and restaurants surrounding a cobbled courtyard.

Effective use of an original housing facade is evident at Tin Court, a cobbled park between

Murray and Clarence streets, where the pressed iron facing that tinsmith Honoré Foisy added to the front of his Guigues Street house in 1905 hangs high above Le Castor's courtyard café. The facade was rescued by the NCC when Foisy's house was demolished in the 1960s.

Also on the tour is the former Institut Canadien-Français, built in 1897 as a cultural centre, which now houses GuadalaHarry's restaurant and the York Street Theatre.

On George Street people will see the former Ottawa Wine Vault Company, which was built in 1907 and renovated in 1984 as studios and exhibition space for the Ottawa School of Art.

Only 200 more tour tickets were available as of Friday. Tour tickets are available by calling 745-0551, and may be picked up at the Fraser Schoolhouse at 62 John St. Proceeds from the \$3 tickets will support Heritage Ottawa programs and activities.

Repairing vinyl floor best left to expert

QUESTION: The patterned linoleum on my kitchen floor is about four years old and is now starting to lift along the seam that runs across the middle of the floor. How can I re-seal this?

ANSWER: Although some linoleum is still imported from England, it is rarely used in homes today and only available in solid colors (the so-called "battleship" linoleum). Almost all of the sheet flooring installed in homes in the last 15 years or so has been vinyl, and that is probably what you have. The edges of the seam will have to be peeled back and all dirt removed from the floor underneath. Then a special adhesive must be spread on the floor about three inches on either side of the seam and the edges pressed back in place with a weighted roller. With some types of vinyl flooring a solvent and special applicator can be used to weld the edges together for an invisible waterproof seam.

As you can see, all of this requires skill, experience, special tools and some knowledge about the different types of flooring materials and the proper adhesives to use with them. I don't recommend it as a do-it-yourself job, but there are lots of experts around who know how to do it. Contact two or three flooring companies that work with sheet vinyl.

QUESTION: Water is leaking into the basement of my 14-year-old back-split house, and I have received three different suggestions as to how to stop it:

1. Dig down outside, replace the weeping tile and waterproof the foundation wall.
2. Drill holes in the top of the wall and pump a sloppy concrete mix into the hollow cores in the concrete blocks.
3. Dig a trench around the edge of the concrete floor inside the basement and install drain tiles leading to a sump pump. Which is best?

ANSWER: The basic problem is that the drainage around your foundation wall is not working properly, but we don't know why, so No. 1 is the best answer. Dig down and find out, then fix it. Number 2 will do nothing to correct the poor drainage. Number 3 is a cheaper alternative to No. 1. Don't worry about what is wrong with the drainage; just install new drainage inside the house to relieve the water pressure. This often works but a sump pump isn't the most pleasant thing to have in your basement. Comparing costs may help you make up your mind. Before you decide, get several bids on the two different solutions.

QUESTION: We built a Western red cedar deck at the back of our house this summer and would like your advice on what finish to apply. You recently gave the formula for a treatment that would help to retain the natural color of the siding; would this be suitable



You wanted to know
Harris Mitchell

for use on a wood deck too?
ANSWER: That formula contained a small amount of pentachlorophenol wood preservative, which is not recommended for surfaces that may be walked on with bare feet, particularly little bare feet. As I have been saying for many years, the best finish for a cedar deck is no finish at all. Cedar needs no protection from the weather, and many people feel that it looks best when it is allowed to develop its distinctive and very attractive natural driftwood grey color. This also has the advantage of requiring absolutely no maintenance.

QUESTION: The black mortar between the red bricks has bleached out to a light grey on one side of my house. Is there a paint I can apply to restore the color? I know this would be a tedious job but I have a lot of patience.

ANSWER: The lightened color is more likely due to a deposit of white mineral salts, or efflorescence, on the surface of the black mortar. This can be removed by wetting the wall and then brushing the mortar with a solution of one part muriatic acid to ten parts water. Use a stiff brush and a hose to clean the mortar after the acid treatment.

If this does not restore the color you can apply an exterior latex paint tinted with lamp-black. Find a color sample at a paint store that is a close match for the mortar and have them mix a litre for you. That should be enough to do the whole job.

QUESTION: I spilled some cooking oil on my concrete patio and my efforts to remove it only spread it around. I'm afraid. What should I use to get rid of it?

ANSWER: Buy about half a pound (225 grams) of powdered white chalk from a hardware store. Mix this with enough petroleum solvent (Varsol, Shell Sol, etc.) to make a paste. Spread this on the oil stain about a quarter of an inch thick and cover it with polyethylene film or plastic food wrap held down around the edges with masking tape. Leave for a couple of hours, then remove the plastic and let the paste dry thoroughly to draw the dissolved oil up into the chalk. When you brush this off, most of the oil will go with it. Repeat as necessary.

Letters for Harris Mitchell can be sent to The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Ottawa, Ont. K2C 3M4. For a personal reply, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Weaving and spinning took much paraphernalia

With all the work involved in creating yarn to clothe our ancestors, it's a wonder they didn't opt for romping around in their birthday suits.

Moreover, the paraphernalia required to make the raw materials pliable for weaving was extensive; one had to wind, unwind, wind again and unwind some more.

Of course, you needed a spinning wheel, but then the well-equipped spinner also needed a click reel, a niddy-noddy, a swift, carders, wool winders, woven baskets to hold the wool or flax, swiveling knives and a bobbin winder.

Reels and niddy-noddys were used for winding the finished yarn into specific lengths, called a skein. This exact quantity was necessary for washing, dyeing or storing.

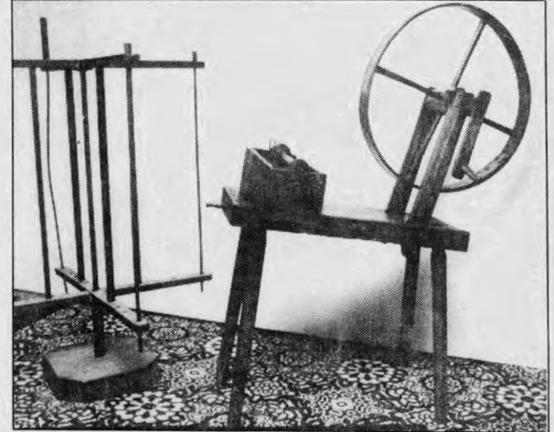
There were two styles of reels, the wrap and the windmill. The former consisted of a



Antiques
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rotating shaft fitted with four arms and a handle for turning. The windmill version stood vertical and often came equipped with a toothed-gear counter, which made a loud snapping noise when the rotations equalled a skein length. Most reels were hand-crafted on the homestead. (A more comprehensive look at reels and winders was contained in this column, July 23, 1983).

In any case, the single strand of yarn was removed from the spinning wheel using a winder or a reel. While this may have been the desirable form for weaving, knitting required a stronger, heavier yarn. There-



Swift, left, and bobbin winder

fore, a gadget called the swift was the major player in unwinding the skein to its final form.

Swifts probably exhibit the broadest spectrum of design expression of any of the spinning tools. Some were very primitive stump and branch gadgets, while others were fashioned

from the finest woods or ivory.

The bobbin winder is a special accessory that has close family ties to the spinning wheel. As a matter of fact, many were made from retired spinning wheels. They were used primarily to unwind skeins onto weaving bobbins, which are longer than those used for spinning.

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