



INTRODUCTION TO ARCHITECTURE
IN STRATFORD

Introduction to Architecture in Stratford

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Stratford's history began in 1832 when the Canada Company surveyed the area known as the Huron Road and included a settlement named after Stratford on Avon, England. As with any newly established settlement, a gristmill, water source and general store were required to encourage a healthy beginning to a new community. Perth County settled relatively late compared to eastern Ontario. Houses and buildings were constructed initially of wood because of the abundance of trees for building materials. When the railway boom occurred starting in 1856 it was easier to transport bricks and other building materials to Perth County. By the 1870s when the Grand Trunk Railway shops located in Stratford, brickyards were located throughout the area.

The earliest brick used was an orange-red colour. This brick is very soft and can be damaged by painting or sandblasting. Many of these houses date from the 1850s and there are several examples of this early brick throughout the walks. Walk Number 1 features 46 Mornington Street and Walk Number 4 features 16 Norman Street. Many of the early red brick homes in Stratford are Regency Cottages. They are identified by their steeply pitched hipped roof, centre hall plan and the use of neoclassical features such as sidelight windows and decorative corner brick called quoins.

When the Grand Trunk Railway shops located in 1871, Stratford's population literally doubled overnight. This resulted in the use of the buff or white coloured brick, which was made locally, and in Perth County. It was during this period that Gothic houses, beginning with the Ontario Cottage and the Ontario House, become prominent. Gothic structures are typically identified by the use of gables with decorative wood trim or bargeboard on the roofline. Spear like wooden finials project above the roofline and create the impression that the element of gothic architecture deal with features that point upwards. Gothic is usually identified with churches but is also common for residential buildings.

During the next twenty years the Gothic style evolved and included later additions such as triple gabled houses, Ontario houses turned sideways and other variations. Gothic house floor plans begin with the balanced centre hall plan format and by their decline, the buildings were asymmetrical. The bargeboard or decorative wood trim remains an important identifying feature.

Stratford's economy underwent another boom when the furniture factories began in the 1880s under the impetus of George McLagan. With this increased productivity came another need to accommodate people as soon as possible. The buff-coloured brick was used in the early Italianate phases and a deep red brick was introduced during the early 1890s. Early Italianate home plans were asymmetrical or L-shaped designs followed by 2 1/2



storey structures and other variations. Key identifying features of this style apart from the shape are the use and prominence of brackets under the eaves line and the introduction of bay windows, which can be located on one or two storeys. The brackets are usually replicated on the bay windows.



Queen Anne Revival Style houses became popular beginning in the late 1880s and lasted until about 1900. These houses featured different architectural appointments from different styles so it was not uncommon to see gables and bargeboard together. More importantly was the use of fish scale shingle, which decorated the a-shaped pediments on the veranda or gable details. Again, Queen Anne Revival houses had an evolution as the years progress. Late Victorian buildings such as the Perth County Perth County Court House or the Stratford City hall are both excellent examples of later Queen Anne Revival Houses showing the contrast of materials, textures, colours, architectural features and the prominence of decorative chimneys- some of which are functional. Queen Anne buildings also have many windows- usually different shaped.

Following the Queen Anne Revival style were Edwardian houses, constructed during the early 1900s to about 1914. With these houses came large, majestic buildings and the use of neoclassical details such as triangular-shaped pediments, columns and other features. About 1905 a neoclassical revival movement occurred and the introduction of round-arched Romanesque windows began as well as the addition of large verandas complete with a rounded gazebo-like section. Edwardian Classicism was also a style that was important around this time period. The houses are two and a half storeys in height with the top gable being an a-shaped pediment complete with fish scale. This pediment extends over the top storey, unlike the Queen Anne Box where the 2 1/2-storey house has a pediment that is off to the side of the building, again adorned with fish scale.

Queen Anne houses used the later red brick as well as a white brick, manufactured locally but harder than the buff-coloured brick from the 1870s. Edwardian Classicism also used both colours and by the 1920s, the rug brick is used. This included red and black brick, which was very popular until the 1930s.

Copybook houses started with the Italianate buildings in the 1880s. The premise was that designs and specifications for houses began to appear in building magazines allowing contractors to build houses without the need for architects. This style continued into the 1930s and during the walks you will see many similar buildings. The only difference is the reversal of the front door and stairway, which means the floor plan, has been reversed to allow for variation of the designs.

Welcome to Stratford.

Enjoy its ambience, its architecture and its history.



ARCHITECTURAL VOCABULARY

The following terms are provided to assist you in making your strolls around Stratford more interesting and enjoyable. Space does not permit us to point out the features of all buildings you may pass and picking out the details on your own will make the experience more complete.

Baluster – A carved column or upright post supporting a handrail.

Bargeboards (vergeboards) – The ornamental boards, often fretted, hanging from the edge of the protective gable or verge of Gothic Revival buildings. Often called “gingerbread” detail.

Batten – A strip covering a joint between vertical boards, as in “board and batten”

Bay – (a) A compartment or division of a façade usually indicated by an opening such as a door or window (b) A projection, as in a bay window.

Bracket – Any overhanging member projecting from a wall, to support a weight, generally formed with scrolls or volutes.

Corbel – A masonry projection on the courses of a wall, each course projecting slightly beyond the next below it. Intended to carry the weight of the cornice, it is often decorative.

Cornice – Horizontal moulded projection at the top of a building.

Coursing – A continuous horizontal row of brick or stone in a wall.

Cresting – Ornamental finish along the top of a wall or roof.

Dentil – Small rectangular block, similar in effect to teeth, found in the lower part of a cornice.

Dichromatic brickwork – Brickwork laid in two colours, also called bichromatic.

Finial – Ornamental terminating on an apex of a gable, pinnacle, spires, etc.

Frieze – The part of a cornice below the fascia board and soffit, flat on wall surface, sometimes highly decorated

Gable – The triangular portion of a wall, between the enclosing lines of a sloping roof.

Headings – The area immediately over a window or door.

Keystone – The central wedge-shaped stone of masonry arch.

Label – A door or window moulding extending part way down the sides.

Lintel – A horizontal length of stone, iron, timber or reinforced concrete, carrying the weight of the wall above a window or door.

Oriel Window – An upper floor bay-window supported by corbels.

Palladian Window – A window in three parts, the centre section larger and arched at the head, the smaller sections on either side having squared heads.

Pediment – The triangular area above a portico or window or door.

Pilaster – A rectangular feature in the shape of a pillar but projecting only about one-sixth of its breadth from a wall.

Portico – A small porch with pillars supporting a roof.

Quoins – The accentuated members of a corner, often formed of stone, but also fashioned of brick, appearing to bond the corners of a building.

Sidelights – Glass panels on either side of a door.

Transom – The rectangular member and sash above a window or door.

Verandah – An open portico, gallery or balcony, usually roofed, along the outside of a building

Regency Style – One of the earliest brick house styles in Stratford popular from the later 1850s to the early 1870s.

Gothic Revival Style – Features include gables, finials and the decorative wooden bargeboard or ornate gingerbread gable trim, popular in Stratford 1871 – 1890s

Second Empire Style – Identifiable by its third storey which is a mansard roof with dormer windows and Italianate brackets.

Italianate Style – Features include asymmetrical shape, two storey structure, protruding bay windows and prominent, ornate brackets.

Queen Anne Revival Style – First style to have a broken roof line (different heights). Emphasis is on contrasting building materials and colours, architectural features and windows. A prominent feature is the fish scale or wood shingling which appears on the top storey of residential buildings.

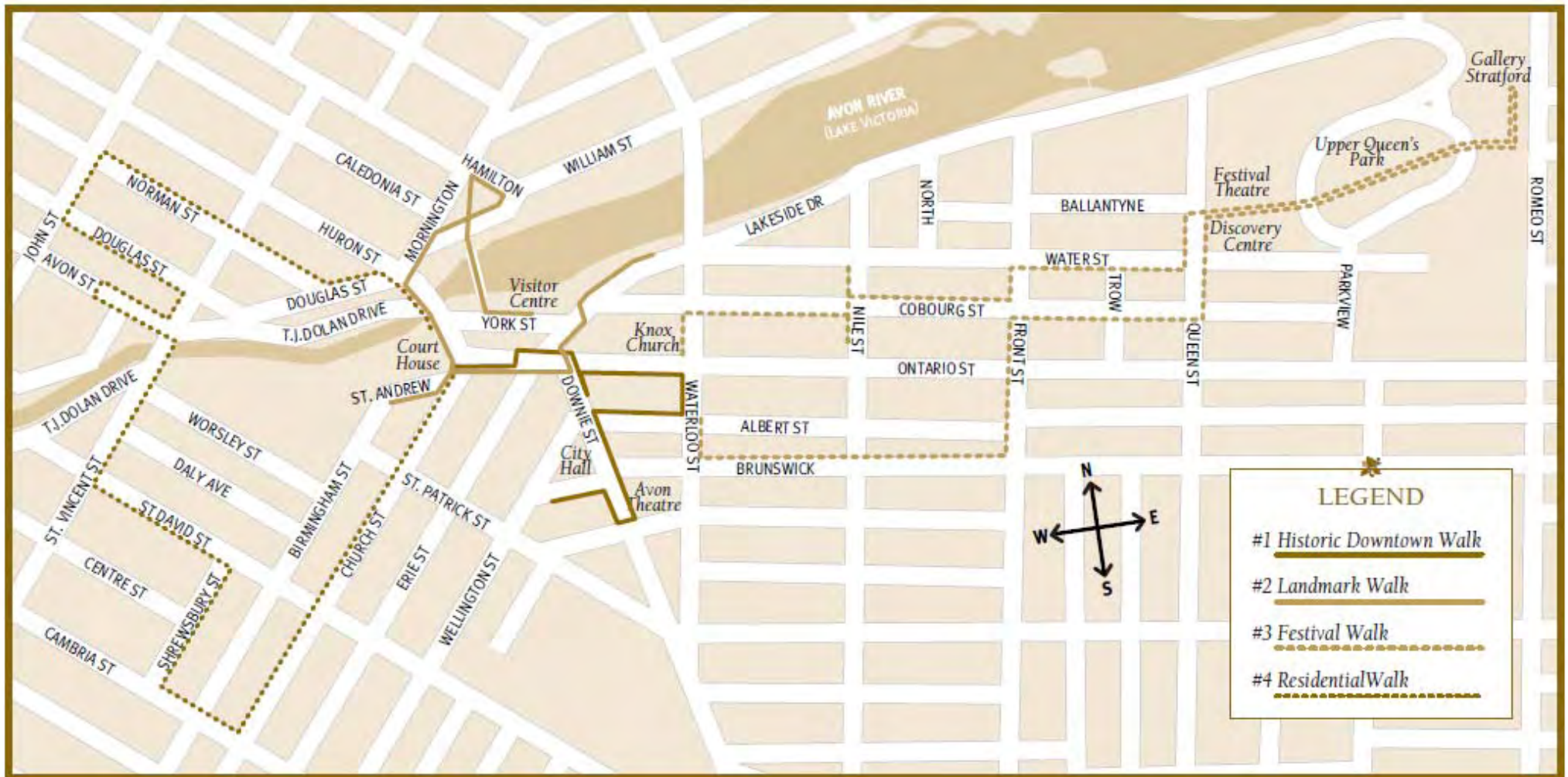
Queen Anne Box Style – Working man’s home, post WWI until the late 1920s. Features include an ab-shaped pediment with fish scale and a boxlike structure.

Edwardian Revival Style – Named after King Edward I, features include Neo-Classical lines, pressed tinwork or cornice work adorning under the soffits.

Jacobethan Style – Combination of Jacobean and Elizabethan architecture. Features include large bay windows, round-arched doorways, brick and stone with wooden work.

Foursquare Style – Based on the work of American architect, Fran Lloyd Wright, square in structure and very simplistic in design, popular during the 1920s-30s

STRATFORD STROLLS MAP



The contents of this historical walk were originally developed by the Perth County Historical Foundation and the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (Heritage Stratford). The information has been revised and updated by the Stratford-Perth Archives in partnership with Stratford Tourism.