



# LANDMARK WALK

# Landmark Walk

This walk provides an overview of the history of Stratford and introduces some of the significant landmarks and architecture in the area.

**Approximate time: 45 minutes to 1 hour.**

**Begin your walk at the Visitor Information Centre located on York Street. Proceed to the Millstone, located near the dam.**

**1 Millstone.** This marks the site of the first sawmill (1833) and the first grist mill (1834) beside it, built by John Sebring for the Canada Company, at the south end of a new dam. A huge waterwheel supplied the power.

**2 The Dam.** This was first constructed of logs to create the Mill Pond for waterpower, and has been rebuilt many times since. The Avon River flows into the Thames River downstream several miles. It was renamed the R. Thomas Orr Dam in the 1960s, in honour of R. Thomas Orr, a prominent citizen and one of the founders of the parks system. As a point of interest, at 1,200 feet above sea level, Stratford has the highest elevation in Southwestern Ontario.

**3 Surveyor's Shanties.** The first survey party (from Goderich), consisting of about 15 men, erected two simple log shelters, which became temporary living quarters for travellers and squatters. During the cholera epidemics in the 1830s, these surveyors stopped people from travelling out of Stratford to help prevent spreading the disease. The log shelters apparently stood where the swimming pool is now situated.



**WALK ACROSS THE DAM AND UP THE DRIVEWAY. CROSSING WILLIAM STREET, WALK UP THE STONE STEPS TO ST. JAMES CHURCH.**

**4 St James Church.** This is the official church of the Crown and is the third church building on this site. Built in 1870, the tower was added in 1905. Beside this lovely Early Decorated Gothic style church is God's acre, a cemetery used between 1844 and 1871. The gravestones, including one of the Sargint family (owner of the Shakespeare Inn), a brother and his son, have been laid flat to reduce deterioration.

**DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION ACROSS TO 46 MORNINGTON STREET.**

**5 Built in the 1860's, 46 Mornington** is a Regency cottage that includes an older structure to the rear dating from the 1850's. The slate roof is original and the building features dichromatic brick work and contrasting buff brick gables. Note the orange-red brick, which indicates the earliest brick used in Stratford and dates from the 1850s- the 1870s.



**TURN TO YOUR RIGHT AND PROCEED EAST ON HAMILTON STREET.**

**6 Judge Lizars' House, 11 Hamilton Street.** This building apparently sits on the SW corner of the first Perth County Court House foundation wall. This earlier Perth County Court House was opened in 1853 and faced the river with the jail at the rear on Elizabeth Street. It was in this house that Robina and Kathleen Lizars wrote the Canadian classic "In the Days of the Canada Company", in 1896.

**FOLLOW HAMILTON STREET TO WILLIAM STREET AND PROCEED WEST TOWARDS THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS.**

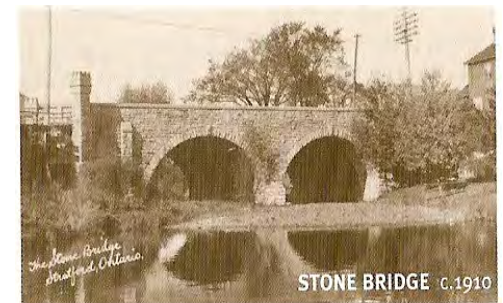


**7 Dutch Memorial.** This memorial was a gift from the Netherlands after WWII, as a token of appreciation for Stratford's hospitality to seven hundred free men of Dutch birth who came to Stratford to form a battalion. After the occupation of Holland by Nazi armies, Canada invited free men of the world to use Stratford for a military training base. Queen Juliana of the Netherlands came four times to see them. Their Caserne or barracks was a former furniture factory on Trinity Street. For this reason and that of the participation of the Perth Regiment in the liberation of Holland in 1945, there is a close bond between our countries. The pair of hands symbolizes Canada's support; the dove is symbolic of the Netherlands.

**CONTINUE SOUTH TOWARD THE STONE BRIDGE**

**8 Provincial Plaque.** This provincial plaque is located near the site of the surveyors' shacks. Details of early Stratford, including its past as a centre for railways and motive power shops are featured.

**9 Stone Bridge.** This stone bridge was built in 1885, the year that Stratford officially became a city, and is the only double-arched aqueduct road bridge in North America still in use for automotive traffic. Its limestone blocks came from St. Marys, a nearby community sometimes referred to as "Stonetown." It was intended to be a triple arch, but the river was too narrow.



**PROCEED BACK TO THE HURON STREET TRAFFIC LIGHTS TO CROSS AND CONTINUE TO THE SHAKESPEAREAN GARDEN ENTRANCE**

**10 Shakespearean Gardens.** Opened in the 1930s, these gardens contain a sculpture of Shakespeare designed by Cleve Horne (Canadian), commissioned by the Sons of England Lodge in Stratford, who collected money for years beforehand. Interestingly, as did the Inn, the river and the town's name, this bust of Shakespeare arrived in 1949, prior to the Stratford Festival. The gardens rest on the site of Dufton's Woollen Mill. All that remains of the building is the chimney, which is now a bird tower. At one time the gardens had every plant mentioned in Shakespeare's plays. The original roses were a gift from Queen Mary, who had also donated roses to the garden in Stratford-Upon-Avon in England.

**LOCATED BESIDE THE SHAKESPEREAN GARDENS IS THE PERTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE.**

**11 Perth County Perth County Court House** was designed by London architect, George F Durand and was constructed in 1886. For a detailed history of the building, please refer to Walk 1, Stratford's Historic Downtown

**12 Perth County Court House Lawn.** During the Coronation year of King George VI in 1937, several oak trees from Windsor Castle grounds were planted in Canada. The only one to survive in Stratford stands in front of the Perth County Court House and is now only ½ to 1/3 its mature size. Its acorns are sterile, as it has no tree with which to cross-pollinate. The first permanent building was a house put up in 1833 for J.C.W. Daly, the Canada Company agent. It sat on the Perth County Court House lawn and a cairn now marks the site.

**13 First Log School.** A stone on the Library lawn marks the site of this building, which opened August 7, 1843. It was dismantled and moved in 1855 for a new brick schoolhouse. The Library Board acquired the site after the second school, Central Public, was demolished in 1917.

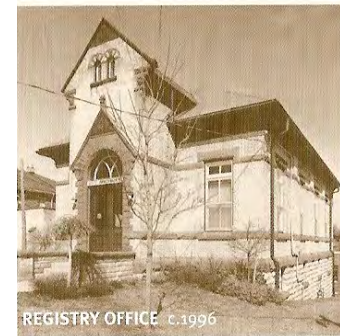
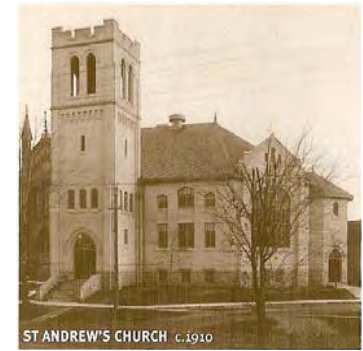


**14 Stratford's Carnegie Library.** The Stratford Public Library is one of the oldest Carnegie Libraries in Ontario. It opened on September 19, 1903 without the donor's name over the door and without ceremony of any kind as town residents were opposed to using "blood money" donated by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. The building was constructed with Neo-Classical features and the original front door was located on the St. Andrew Street side. Additions changed the front entrance and an adjacent wing to the original structure. In September 2003, a centennial anniversary was held officially recognizing the building's significance.

**CONTINUE PAST LIBRARY TO THE CORNER OF BIRMINGHAM AND ST. ANDREW STREETS.**

**15 St Andrew's Church.** This is the oldest church site in Stratford, on land obtained from the Canada Company in 1838. The present building is an amalgam of two buildings

**16 Jail and Registry Office.** These buildings were built with materials similar to the Perth County Court House. The jail, designed by George F. Durand, architect of the Perth County Courthouse, was completed in 1886. There have been three hangings in the courtyard. The last somewhere around 1956. By the early 1960s Canada abolished capital punishment. The Registry Office was completed in 1910 and designed by local architect, T. J. Hepburn, who was instructed to match the Perth County Court House and jail. The Registry Office is now the home of the Stratford-Perth Archives.



**PROCEED BACK TO COURTHOUSE AND CROSS AT WALKWAY TO ONTARIO STREET DIRECTING YOUR ATTENTION TO THE NORTH SIDE.**

**17 The Mill Block and York Street.** The Mill Block is the oldest business block in Stratford. **4 & 6 Ontario Street and 55 Ontario Street** were constructed during the 1850s, with the buildings in between replacing original structures during the 1880s and later. Built on a natural cliff, the back of the Mill Block is York Street, which is exactly one storey below. During the 1980s, York Street became a boutique area transforming the original delivery service entrance area for Ontario Street stores into a boutique and restaurant shopping area.

**18 Ontario Street.** Most of Stratford's core buildings were built between 1870 and 1900 of local brick.

**CONTINUE EAST ON ONTARIO STREET TO THE ERIE STREET INTERSECTION**

**19 54 Ontario Street.** This is one of the oldest commercial blocks in Stratford, dating from 1855. It was originally Woods' Albion Hotel with soft red brick and small paned windows. It has been remodelled by various occupants but retains its Neo-Classical entrance.



**CROSS ERIE AND DOWNIE STREETS. AT THE CORNER OF ONTARIO AND DOWNIE STREETS, DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO FESTIVAL SQUARE LOCATED ON DOWNIE STREET.**



**20 Festival Square.** This complex consists of the Gordon Block (1893/4) and the Idington Block (1885), which has been restored both on the exterior and the interior. The building received an award from Heritage Canada in 1979. For a more detailed history of Festival Square, please refer to Walk 1, Historic Downtown Walk.

**DIRECTING YOUR ATTENTION FURTHER SOUTH ON DOWNIE STREET YOU WILL SEE STRATFORD'S CITY HALL.**

**21 Stratford City Hall.** This building opened in 1900 replacing a splendid structure destroyed by fire in 1897. For a more detailed history of the building, please refer to Walk 1, Historic Downtown Walk.

**AT DOWNIE STREET, CROSS TO THE NORTH SIDE OF ONTARIO STREET.**

**22 Shakespeare Inn and Shakespeare Square.** The first permanent building, an inn, was located at this site and was operated by the Sargint family. In 1832 Thomas Mercer Jones, a director in the Canada Company, gave a portrait of William Shakespeare to Inn owner, William Sargint. The Inn soon became known as "Shakespeare's Inn", the river tributary was dubbed the Avon River and thus Stratford appeared on maps. The space to the west was public land called Shakespeare Square, for markets etc.

**PROCEED TO YOUR IMMEDIATE LEFT**

**23 Freeland Fountain.** Please refer to the historical plaques situated to the right and left of the fountain.

**24** By 1834, surveyor John MacDonald created the town plan. The geographic centre of town was the point where the four townships met, not far from **55 Ontario Street**. The Huron Road when surveyed from Goderich southeast made a 120-degree bend at this point. The original stake (geographical centre of Stratford) at the bend was driven 66 feet from the northwest corner of the Gordon Block. MacDonald designed four main roads radiating from that point. Three are named for the Great Lakes to which they lead – Huron, Erie and Ontario.

**PROCEED DOWN THE STEPS BEHIND THE FREELAND FOUNTAIN**



**25 Perth Regiment Memorial.** The first local militia was formed in 1866 when the Irish Fenians in the USA decided to capture Canada and give it to the USA. The force eventually became a regiment named after the Country of Perth. It was disbanded in 1964.



**CROSS AT YORK AND ERIE STREETS.**

**26 Stratford War Memorial.** This sculpture, originally located on Erie Street, was designed by W.S Allward (1876-1955), noted sculptor, who also created the monuments in Peterborough, Ottawa and Vimy Ridge in France. This work was completed in 1922 and features the classical theme of right versus might.

**27 Bandshell and R. Thomas Orr Plaque.** Look to the east to see the Bandshell, which was constructed in the 1930s. The Bandshell replaced an octagonal shaped bandstand which was originally located on Erie at Ontario Streets. To the right of the bandshell is a provincial plaque honouring R. Thomas Orr for his foresight to create a park system.



**THIS CONCLUDES YOUR LANDMARK WALK.**

## 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 a 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.*