

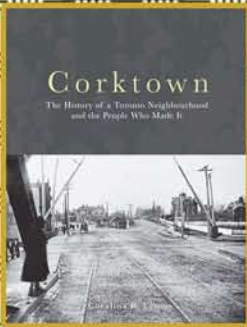
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# Corktown's changing landscape

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Imagine a city with no buildings older than 100 years, where any edifice built before this time would be torn down.

In 1963, a CJBC (CBC) radio discussion considered whether to preserve or demolish Old City Hall. Controller William Dennison opposed destroying the building because its visual presence was an integral part of the city's past. Architect Harry Cole did not agree. "Rubbish! Saving Old City Hall would be like saving a baby's diaper. The city's too young to have a past worth preserving. Let's have a competition to design a new building to take the place of the city hall." Adding to the discourse, a member of the League of Women Voters offered a compromise, "Let's keep the clock tower because it closes the vista up Bay Street, but let's demolish the rest of the building."

This snippet of discussion is enough to indicate that in decisions whether to designate, list or demolish an old building, one will certainly hear a variety of opinions. It took another ten years for Toronto's Old City Hall to be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, ending thoughts and discussions regarding its demise.

Having the opportunity to see heritage buildings and hear stories behind them pleases

residents and visitors to our city. Unfortunately, many local structures go up in smoke before they are even heritage listed. For instance, the Davies Terraces are now completely destroyed following two fires, one in April 2018 and another in June of this year. Consequently, the story associated with Robert Davies Terrace on the south side of Queen Street East and the Dominion Brewery, on the north side, is forever fractured as the Davies Terrace were never listed as heritages.

But had these properties been designated, they might have qualified for heritage grants that facilitate the maintenance of historic structures thereby enhancing local streetscapes. Two recent surveys by the Corktown Residents and Business Association found that most who live in or near Corktown regard its heritage as an integral part of the community.

Thus, if we value the physical characteristics and stories associated with our communities, property custodians and local stakeholders should take steps to preserve these important components of our local and national heritage. Information regarding the Inventory of Heritage Properties is readily available on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register webpage, along with an interactive map that helps to clarify whether a property is listed or designated. If this topic is of further interest to you feel free to contact me at: [corktownhistory.com](http://corktownhistory.com)