



ARCHITECTURAL
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NORTH WATERLOO
REGION

NEWSLETTER

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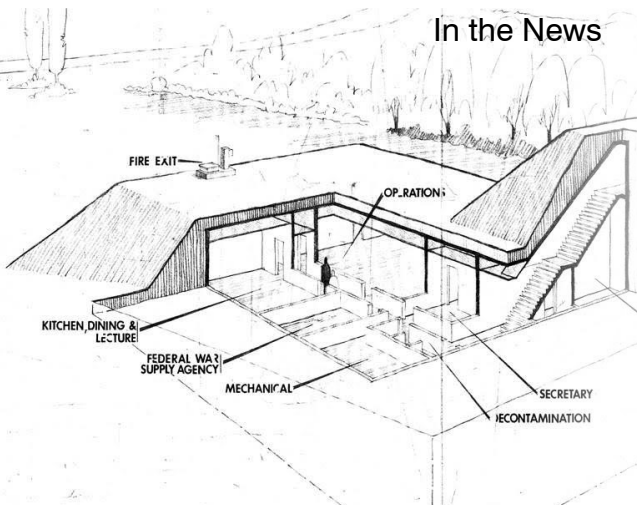
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Serving Kitchener, Waterloo, Wilmot, Woolwich & Wellesley Townships

Ontario Heritage Conference

June 16-18, 2022

This LIVE conference will take place in Brockville and the Surrounding Region.

The area is steeped in history with wonderful examples of historic architecture. More details can be found at the [Ontario Heritage Conference website](#).

Hope to see you there!



Welcome from President Marg Rowell

President's Report

Greetings to you all from ACO NWR Branch. We hope you came through the winter and are looking forward to spring. Hopefully, with the relaxing of Covid measures, we will soon be able to meet in person and perhaps go on a walking tour or bus tour.

Your Executive Committee continues to keep busy and has been monitoring developments in Kitchener as listed below.

22 Weber Street West, Kitchener

A public information meeting about the proposed high rise was held in March. The third Case Management Conference (CMC) took place on Monday April 4th. It consisted mainly of procedural items. A fourth CMC is scheduled for September 30, 2022 and the hearing is scheduled for March 13, 2023.

19 - 41 Mill Street, Kitchener

The houses were demolished to make way for the townhouse and apartment complex in January. No construction has started yet.

Belmont Village Condos

The City of Kitchener has approved a 10 storey building, scaled down from the 13 storey building that the developer wanted originally. Many people in the area were concerned that the development was out of scale with the neighbourhood. Others welcomed the increase in people who would shop in the nearby stores.

The Tallest Building in Kitchener

A 44 storey tower has been approved for the corner of Francis St. S. and Charles St. W. This will be the tallest building, so far, in Kitchener. It will be built on a parking lot site that was previously occupied by a red brick Edwardian style building. The building was demolished some time ago but it had been designated as a building of cultural heritage value.

Victoria and Park Towers

A multi-tower development is proposed for Park and Victoria Streets. The neighbours are concerned with the scale of the buildings and the increase in traffic and noise.

With the increase in people moving into these condos there are concerns about the lack of green space, the increase in traffic and the shadow effect of these buildings. We recognize the need for additional housing but we wonder if one and two bedroom condos are family-friendly.

events + talks

some opportunities for getting out
or attending virtually!

Ontario Heritage Conference

June 16-18, 2022:

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

Is the conference title a clever allusion to downtown Brockville's signature attraction? Joyous anticipation of finally being able to meet old and new heritage friends in person? A reference to stimulating, and sometimes challenging new ideas?

Whatever the reason conference organizers picked that title, tickets for the 2022 Ontario Heritage Conference, June 16-18, are going fast! Registration opened Friday April 8. Early bird rates (just \$265 for the two full days of sessions, lunches breaks, opening reception, gala dinner) end May 16.

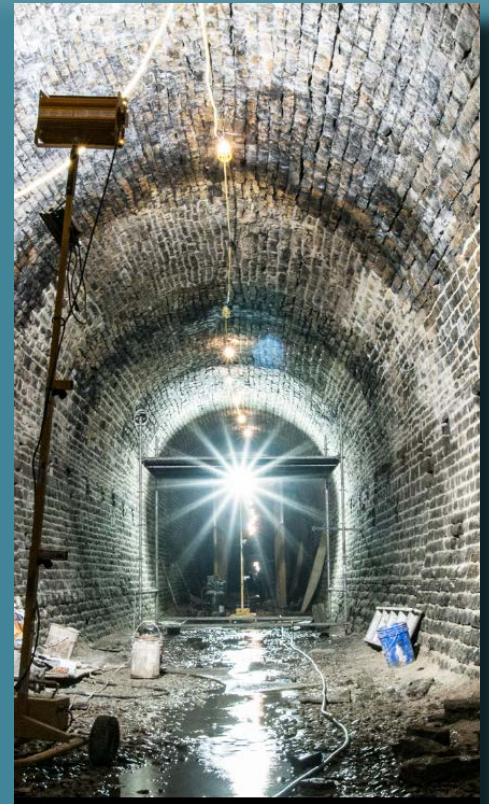
A look at the conference website <https://ontarioheritageconference.ca> reveals the program planners' insistence on meeting a variety of interests. There are architectural tours and pre-conference photography classes for those who want to glory in the Brockville area's stunning natural and built heritage. For people just beginning to work or volunteer in the heritage sector, there are sessions such as "Top 5 Things to Know Before Starting a Heritage Conservation District Study", "Recent Changes to the Ontario Heritage Act", presentations on Cultural Heritage Landscapes and the role of archaeologists in heritage conservation.

Seasoned conference-goers will find many sessions to broaden their knowledge and challenge their thinking e.g. "Success: Collaborate, Consensus or... Court Action: Here's What Works" and "Practical Lessons in De-colonizing and Diversifying Heritage." "Heritage in a post-COVID World" explores how individuals and organizations are managing the physical and ideological changes of the past two years.

As well, practical hands-on workshops in wooden window restoration and cleaning and restoring cemetery headstones will be offered. Both workshops have very limited capacity: early registration is a must.

Conference registration can be easily completed online, or, if you prefer, a paper form can be downloaded, printed and mailed.
Don't delay: register today!

- Kae Elgie, ACO NWR branch member and chair,
conference program committee



Repointing of the Brockville Railway Tunnel, Canada's oldest railway tunnel built in 1860. Photo source: brockvillerrailwaytunnel.com, Keith Hare

Endangered Bridges

article by Gail Pool

The region's geography is such that we not only have the Grand River to cross, but we also have a number of smaller tributaries (Nith, Speed, Conestogo and Eramosa), as well as creeks in many locations. Because the Grand River watershed is the largest in southern Ontario, it is not surprising that Indigenous peoples used the area for millennia. Indigenous heritage may be viewed as one centred on the water for many purposes, including travel, fishing and drinking. Water is a principal element in Indigenous prayers.

Settler populations also used these rivers for travel, fishing and drinking but also for powering various types of mills, including those needed to produce wood for many buildings. As roads were built from the late 19th century, bridges connected communities. By the early 20th century, the early wooden bridges were replaced by steel truss bridges. Concrete bridges came in the 1930s and we have many fine examples of both steel and concrete.

Without knowing it, I frequently walk over one of the oldest steel foot bridges, the Victoria Park Island Bridge. The original pond at Victoria Park was initially a small millpond for the Schneiders, but as the flow was reduced by up-creek developments, it was abandoned in the 1870s. When Victoria Park opened in 1896 with a much larger lake, it featured an island with an attractive bridge leading to the island where a bandstand was built which provided



On the Lake at Victoria Park. Photo: Gail Pool, Otterbein Collection

entertainment for many years. Three of the Victoria Park bridges have been replaced in recent years.

Most of the truss bridges were built between 1910 and 1930, although the earliest extant truss bridge, the Conestogo/Glasgow Street Bridge, was built in 1886. Many have been allowed to deteriorate and are now in poor condition. In Wellesley, the Chalmers Forrest Road Bridge (also known as Bridge No. 6) was abandoned and a barrier has been installed at the road leading to it for at least a dozen years. There is still no decision on what will happen next. Keep an eye out for any developments.



Black Bridge, Cambridge. Photo: Waterloo Region Record

If you read the local papers, you may have seen that accidents have put two truss bridges in even more danger. In Cambridge, the Black Bridge was constructed in 1916 with a pin-jointed, steel truss technique. An accident caused the bridge to be in danger from strong winds and it was closed. It is designated and is the only remaining steel bridge of its kind in the City of Cambridge. Fortunately, the city decided to repair the bridge.



Bridge Street Bridge. Photo: Gail Pool

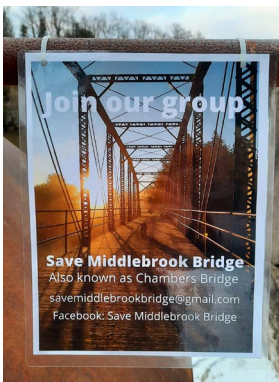
On February 2, 2022, a collision and fire closed the Bridge Street Bridge in Wilmot. A recent meeting of Wilmot Council suggested that the truss bridge be moved to Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve and donations are needed if the bridge is to be moved. The township plans to build a new multi-span bridge starting in June to support the heavy traffic on the road.

Woolwich Township is planning to convert the Winterbourne/Peel Street Bridge into a pedestrian/cycling only structure. I visited this bridge in April 2022 and spoke to a community member who was happy that the council decided to retain the bridge despite the major repairs that are needed. In this case, members of the community advocated for the bridge and the bridge will remain.



Community members gathered at the Middlebrook Bridge.
Photo: The Observer

Unfortunately, there was no such decision by Wellington Township for the Middlebrook Bridge (known locally as the Chambers Bridge). On February 22, 2022, however, councilors in a 4-2 split vote decided to spend \$720,000 to remove the bridge rather than the \$1.1 million to repair it for pedestrian use ([The Observer, March 3, 2022](#)). The options for removal or repair might depend on further community action. The group has over 200 followers on the [Save Middlebrook Bridge Facebook site](#).



Many in the community are undeterred and could use our support to save the bridge.

Join our group:
savemiddlebrookbridge@gmail.com
Photo:
Save Middlebrook Bridge | Facebook

RESOURCES:

- [Waterloo Region Historic Bridges](#)
- [Spanning the generations: a study of old bridges in Waterloo Region](#)
- [Historic Bridges](#) (there is an interactive map of Waterloo region bridges [here](#).)
- [Building Stories](#)
- [Historic Places Canada](#)

A comprehensive study of all bridges was undertaken in 2013, available at the Kitchener Public Library: *Arch, truss & beam: the Grand River Watershed heritage bridge inventory* prepared by Lindsay Benjamin, et al.



The Glasgow Street/ Conestogo Bridge.
Photo: Historicbridges.org

“So, is there other good news about the truss bridges?”

Yes, the Glasgow Street/Conestogo Bridge is listed on the municipal heritage register and so has some protection. It uses the Pratt truss technique developed in 1844.

Pratt truss system consists of multiple vertical members with diagonal braces inclined up from the center forming V-shapes, which in this case are accentuated by the gap in the middle. It was a mirror image of the Howe truss, which had appeared in 1840, with diagonals sloping down from the center forming A-shapes. The bridge is in good condition for its age and it is being repaired at a cost of \$1.2 million.

The steel span and single-lane bridges are “heritage moments” for local communities, but residents are faced with funding problems. Each bridge adds significantly to the heritage landscape of the area, not to mention their useful functions. The problem is that replacing them is more costly than demolition and the latter is often the road of least resistance. Engineering reports often say that removal is inevitable but then what cost is heritage? Can we gain tourism value from their restorations? Can we ensure the memory of earlier times and means of travel are retained? If we want to preserve the bridges, we need to think of innovative ways to fund their restoration. If some bridges no longer can support vehicles, perhaps they can be used as part of the Ontario trails system.

Finally, if you want to take a tour of some of the bridges mentioned in this article, you can download a Google Map to your phone [here](#). It is a limited set but even so, your tour will take a couple of hours.

Heritage Can Work with Development

article by Gail Pool with Frances Stewart

My wife Frances and I got involved in heritage restoration after retirement because we had the opportunity to fix up a 1903 Berlin vernacular house in Victoria Park, Kitchener. We needed information on how to properly restore our windows. The previous owner had photos of the house and so it was a great opportunity to do a good restoration of both the structural and decorative elements. So we joined the ACO.

However, since we often advocate for social justice, we saw many buildings going up near ours that did not serve the housing needs of working people. Rents in our neighbourhood were relatively low and often housed families on low incomes who came from different parts of the world. The median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Kitchener is \$1,500 but in the Victoria Park area, it is \$1,082. Rents are low and there is a viable heritage neighbourhood in Victoria Park.

We were conflicted! We were restoring a large single family house while many others could not afford a good place to raise a family. While we advocated for heritage preservation, it was difficult to hear people say that heritage conservation was contrary to housing needs. A recent study by the Social Development Centre of Waterloo Region confirmed that social displacement was taking place in the urban core because of a massive number of new developments in the region. It was clear that many of the developments also involved the demolition of heritage properties. In fact, some people have suggested that heritage preservation prevents affordable housing.



Image of 25 Mill Street before demolition. Photo: Gail Pool.



So the question is:

Does heritage preservation conflict with our responsibility to provide housing and the need for more density in the urban area while also preserving farmland?

The short answer is No! Heritage preservation does not conflict with affordable housing. The condos that are going up all around the downtown are not providing more housing for people who need it, rather they are displacing the low-income residents. Some have said that high rise buildings provide housing. True, but for whom? When heritage is demolished for a high-rise, it does not lead to any additional affordable housing. It displaces low-cost housing in older buildings. In some jurisdictions, a certain percentage of new housing must be below market value. For example, starting this year in Toronto, 5-10% of new housing units must be affordable for 99 years. There is no such regulation in our region.

In reflecting on the question of heritage vs affordability, there have been a number of developments where ACO has intervened where affordable housing was lost. The low-rise heritage buildings on Mill Street housed as many as 20 households. Yet, when the developers wanted to build a 12-storey building, they did not intend to provide affordable housing until they were challenged by the neighbours and other advocates. The 1886 home of Jacob Baetz, an important figure in Kitchener's history, has been demolished (see the article on Baetz in the ACO Newsletter Early Spring 2021). The home he built on Mill Street could have been incorporated into the development, but the developers refused. It is some consolation that the development now will provide much needed town houses for families who cannot afford a detached home. Even though heritage and lower income housing was lost, the current development

is preferable to the 12 storey condo units initially proposed. There is another issue, however. That is the assertion that heritage does not mean very much to the wider community. In trying to preserve heritage, advocates are seen as old fashioned, who hang on to the past and do not accept the reality of modern needs. Many people think that heritage advocates are elites who feel that the past overrides the housing needs of today and the future.

In reality, the real elites are those who invest in high rise developments -- usually small investors in real estate investment trusts (REITS). REITS are the money behind the developers and they frequently own a number of buildings. They fund these developments for profit, not to provide more affordable housing. Other investors buy condo units but do not live in them; as much as a quarter of the units are investments. Rather, they buy early in the development, rent the units and then sell later, again for profit. The Glove Box development on Victoria Street promised "affordable"

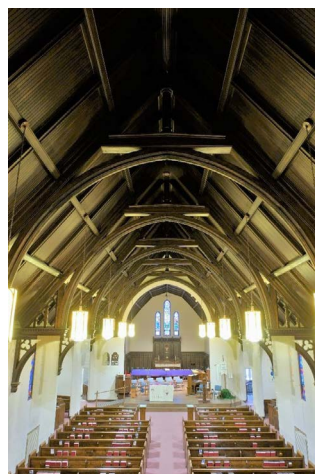
one-bedroom units in 2019 for \$250,000 and these now sell for \$500,000 to \$600,000. There are no mechanisms in our region to enforce low-cost units or to require that a development be rentals rather than condos. The very idea of an affordable condo is a false one. The cheapest one-bedroom unit anywhere in the region costs \$400,000 and then there are monthly condo fees, taxes and utilities that put these developments out of the reach of lower-income people.

We think that heritage can exist hand-in-hand with affordable living in this city. Here are two examples.



Historic Post Card of Victoria Public School. Image: rych mills.

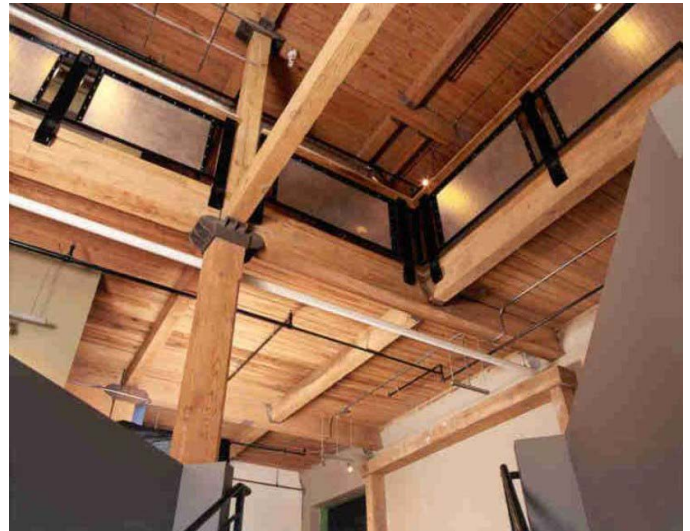
The Victoria Public School was at risk of demolition in the 1980s. Many people were opposed to its demolition because it had quality architecture and also because they had memories of attending the school. There were interventions from prominent politicians as well as mass demonstrations to oppose its demolition. It was built in 1910 by Jacob Baetz and was a school until 1989. The City of Kitchener bought the building in 1989 and renovated it, also adding new buildings on the site to create 100 affordable rental units. Many original interior elements were retained, including the stairwells and terrazzo floors. The heritage exterior has survived largely intact, from the foundations to the original slate roofs.



Images of St. Marks Church. Left, view of sanctuary by Karl Kessler. Right, view of church exterior by Susan Burke.

We need to advocate for other opportunities such as these. In particular, there are a number of churches that are at risk. Fortunately, there are good examples planned where churches are converted to affordable housing, such as St Mark's on King Street. [Indwell](#), an affordable housing organization will use the existing church structure and build an additional floor onto the church hall. ACO supported the conversion when it went before Heritage Kitchener in October 2020. The sanctuary will be preserved as multi-use/community space. The St. Mark's development will preserve heritage and provide affordable housing units.

Finally, investors can make money and still preserve heritage. For example, Allied Properties Real Estate Investment Trust owns the Lang Tanning Company and has kept that building intact – indeed the Trust has improved it. A number of tenants, including startup companies at Communitech, now occupy downtown spaces to do their innovative work. The same real estate trust owns the Google building on Breithaupt, which has a modern portion and a large older section. Allied Real Estate Investment Trust also owns the former Berlin Interior Hardwood Company factory – one of the first brick-and-beam factory conversions in downtown Kitchener at Victoria and Joseph.



The Lang Tanning Company images. Top: The Lang Tannery. Source: Doors Open. Lower: Coloured Lithograph of the Lang Tannery c.1900, Private Collection. Photo: Karl Kessler

The Berlin Interior Hardwood Company images. Top image: City of Kitchener, Statement of Significance. Lower image: Post and Beam detail of the interior. Image: City of Kitchener, Statement of Significance.

All of these buildings are on Kitchener's non-designated municipal heritage register. Designation would give them more protection. These are multimillion-dollar investments and the buildings have been modified so they can be used by companies to create new technologies that create wealth and taxes for our community while maintaining heritage and keeping our community a good place to live. In short, heritage, innovation and a dynamic economy can co-exist. It is not a choice between the past and the present. Heritage preservation has provided affordable housing, community services and spaces for the high tech businesses in the Waterloo region.

then and now...

snapshots in time with photographer Philippe Elsworthy

Laurel Creek and the Bethel Chapel on Laurel Street, Waterloo.

Both photos were taken from the Erb Street bridge over Laurel Creek, one in 1992 and the second in March 2021. I haven't discovered when the building was constructed, but the land was vacant on the 1942 fire insurance map.

My purpose in 1992 was to show the natural state of the creek where it emerged from its concrete canalization north of Erb Street. In 1971, I had worked for the City of Waterloo with a crew rehabilitating the creek, starting at Regina Street, where at that time the creek was in a fairly natural state, emerging from under buildings on King Street. Our rehabilitation work consisted of picking all sorts of garbage out of the creek and building stone-filled wire gabions in places vulnerable to erosion.

I have always felt that from both environmental and aesthetic points of view, that Laurel Creek in a somewhat more natural state, that is with trees and other vegetation on its banks, would be a great asset and attraction for the City. I know there are reasons for the replacement of trees by large blocks of limestone, but I remain unconvinced that it is an improvement.



Laurel Creek and the Bethel Chapel, 1992.



Laurel Creek and the Bethel Chapel, 2021.

Phil Elsworthy's newest collection of photos, *Through A Changing Landscape*, has just been published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press. Copies are available at Words Worth Books, as are copies of Phil's award-winning first book, *Evolving Urban Landscapes*, published in 2016. Watch for news of a June launch event for the new book.

MEG HQ | 3571 King Street East, Kitchener

Have you viewed on YouTube: [Waterloo Region Doors Open 2021?](#)

Here you will meet our Region's Cultural Services Director Helen Chimirri-Russell and Archivist Charlotte Woodley enthusiastically presenting an overview of MEG HQ, more intimately known as Waterloo County's 1966 Cold War Nuclear Bunker.

article by Jean Haalboom

So what's all this Bunker business?

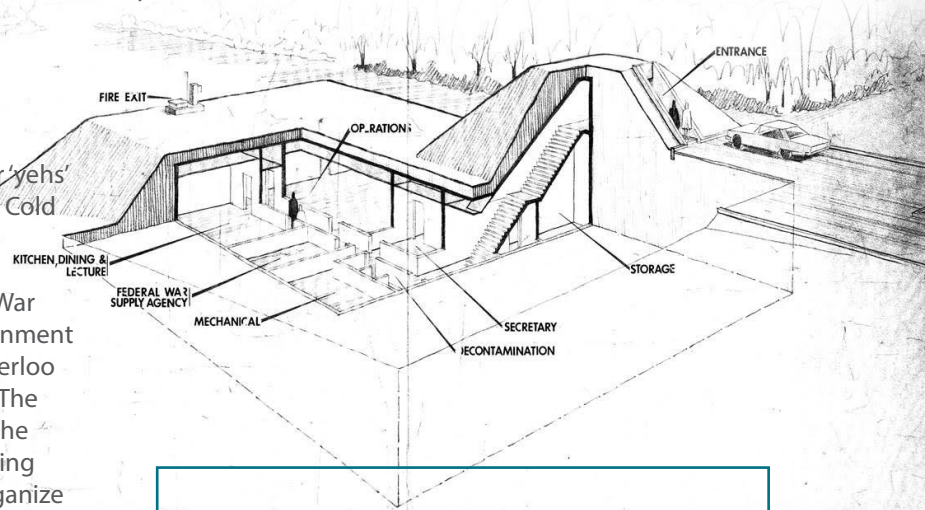
In the last year, residents have expressed their 'yehs' and 'nays' about spending money to stabilize this Cold War Nuclear Bunker.

The Region of Waterloo owns this MEG HQ/Cold War Nuclear Bunker. This Municipal Emergency Government Headquarters (MEG HQ) was built in 1966 by Waterloo County – before the Region of Waterloo existed. The need for emergency management originated in the 1950's when "the Federal Government began urging communities with populations over 10,000 to organize Civil Defense Groups due to the threat posed by the former U.S.S.R. Elected members from municipalities forming Waterloo County met to organize the Waterloo County Civil Defense Group." April 17, 1958 "By-Law #1463 was a By-Law to Establish a Civil Defense Committee for The County of Waterloo." In 1959, the Waterloo County Civil Defense Group was renamed the Waterloo County Emergency Measures organization. First locations associated with Emergency Services were 230 Arnold Street, Kitchener and its administrative offices at 20 Queen Street North, Kitchener.

Remember those times were those of the Cold War and nuclear threat era! A time of FEAR! FEAR from nuclear poisoning! FEAR from annihilation!

How did our County officials react? A municipal radiological survey conducted during 1963 confirmed that no buildings with sufficient Protective Factor against radiation were available. It was determined that a new building would be most economical for such purpose. The site chosen for the new building was the King Street East Kitchener location. It was sold for \$1.00 by the City of Kitchener to the Corporation of the County of Waterloo for Emergency Measures Organization for the County of Waterloo.

Image top right --
Drawing showing entry - 'Architect's Perspective Drawing - Webb Zerafa Menkes & Matthews, E.M.O.H.Q. Waterloo County, Perspective Drawing, July 1965, ROW 69-6/54/5 Region of Waterloo Archives, Kitchener, Ontario



Its purpose – operational headquarters, administration building, training centre for County Waterloo Emergency Services (Nuclear Attack).

Its type – 'mound-type' bunker – 50% of building constructed below grade, 50% covered with at least 2ft. (.6m) of soil.

Its size – 5500 sq.ft.

Its construction – concrete block construction with 10 inch thick concrete walls.

Its nuclear fallout protection – fallout factor of 500 (radiation dose inside the bunker, 1/500th of dose outside the bunker)

Its amenities – a well for water outside the bunker, a septic tank with weeping bed, power source; oil heat

Its interior – decontamination room, men's and women's dormitories, kitchen, lecture room, message control, typing pool, supply storage.

Architects – Webb Zerafa Menkes Matthews of Toronto (architects for CN Tower 1976, Royal Bank Plaza Toronto 1976, U of W Math Building)

Construction company – Ed Witmer and Sons Ltd. 1964



Bunker entrance view. Region of Waterloo Archives.

So what has happened to this Bunker? The Bunker was decommissioned in 1992 and taken over by Kitchener-Waterloo Rowing Club in 2003 until 2018. Result -- the grassy mound roof and protective waterproof membrane were removed! GONE! Now 2021. The Bunker cries out for stabilization; it needs its waterproof membrane and grassy mound redone!

What's left? The above ground 15ft. high concrete entrance hallway; from here, leading to the main floor lower level is the staircase. And the interior? Intact are the rooms for decontamination, supplies, lecture room/kitchen, male/female dorms, washrooms, and large open area for general use. What's left? Enough to tell a story to students and residents to learn about the Cold War Days in the County and Canada. With careful planning, a strong tourism strategy can be worked out for this cold war bunker.

March 29, 2022 was my first visit as a pedestrian to the site -- and with map in hand -- indeed, an eerie experience -- sure the 1.45 acreage is overgrown, abandoned, boarded up and sealed shut.

As we stumbled around the site, this secluded Bunker revealed itself not as a junker and not to be a sunker, but with a forgotten story waiting to be told during this renewed cold war era.

Let me know if you would like to explore the site this summer, subject to the Region's permission.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to Archivist Charlotte Woodley and to the members of the ARA -- Archaeological Research Associates Ltd/ Heritage Impact Assessment 30/11/2020 for background material in this article: to the Region's Cultural Services Department and Facilities for diagrams/sketches

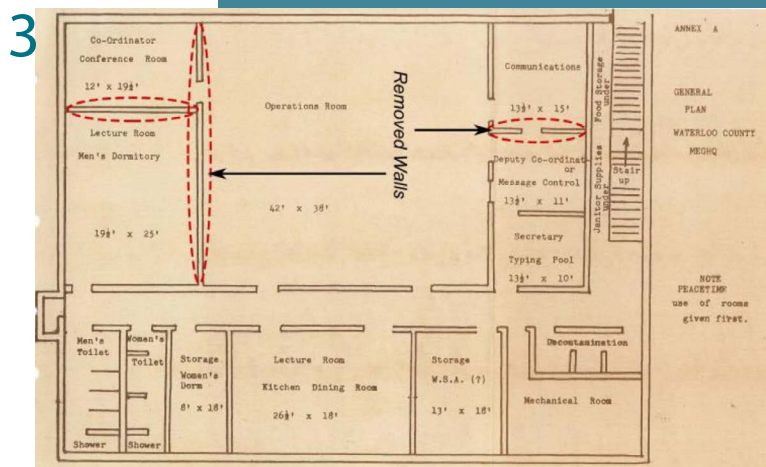
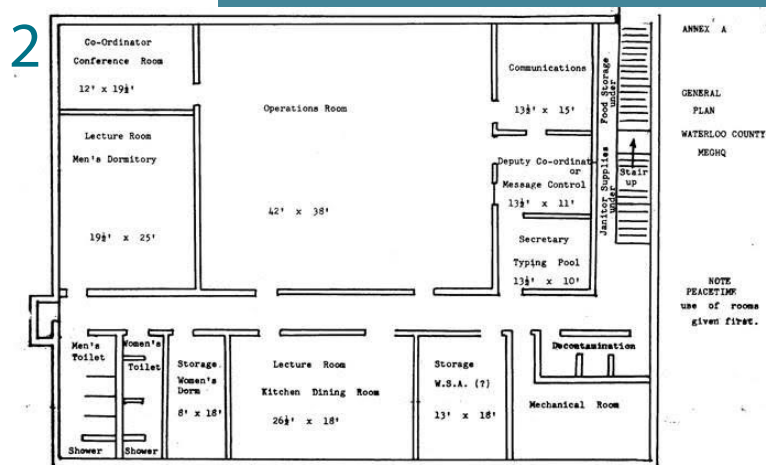
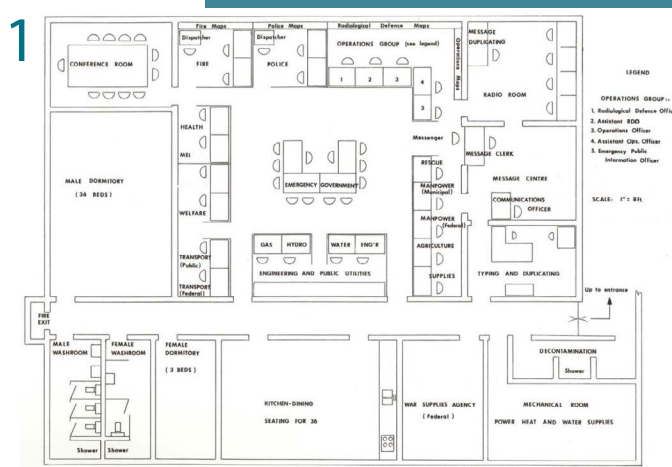


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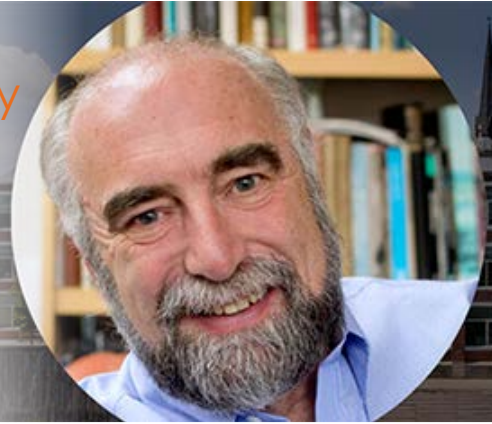
1 - Detailed floor plan indicating male to female ratio. There are 36 spaces for men and 3 for women. Source: MEG HQ-Freeport.ca. 1970, ROW 11-3/7/6, Region of Waterloo Archives.

2 - Floor plan showing the stair. Source: Region of Waterloo Archives.

3 - Image showing changes to the bunker interior when it was taken over by the Kitchener-Waterloo Rowing Club in 2003. Source: Time of Kitchener Waterloo Rowing Club' Region of Waterloo Archives.

Congratulations to the Region's newest recipient of the prestigious

Order of Canada Professor Rick Haldenby



The Order of Canada is one of our country's highest civilian honours. Its Companions, Officers and Members take to heart the motto of the Order: DESIDERANTES MELIOREM PATRIAM ("They desire a better country").

Created in 1967, the Order of Canada recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation. More than 7,000 people from all sectors of society have been invested into the Order. Those who bear the Order's iconic snowflake insignia have changed our nation's measure of success and, through the sum of their accomplishments, have helped us build a better Canada.

Details of Rick's distinguished career are well known to our membership...his countless honours and awards...his major contributions to the field of architecture made through his years at Waterloo's School of Architecture.

Rick credits this passion in large part to the legacy of distinguished architects, including both his father and grandfather, who impressed in him the importance of excellent architectural design and its influence on public life. It also fed his life-long love of modernist architecture which in turn has influenced his work within the public sector of the Region of Waterloo.

Since stepping down from the Directorship of the School of Architecture Rick has committed more of his time and energy to public education, specifically to the promotion of mid-century modern design with which the Region of Waterloo has been particularly well endowed.

Collaborating with the ACO in our public education initiatives, Rick has become a frequent speaker on the lecture circuit, presenting illustrated lectures to local museum and library audiences, forming part of expert delegations to municipal heritage committees and councils and serving as resource person for newspaper and magazine articles.

Through it all, Rick has emerged as the public face of modernist architecture and its preservation in Kitchener and the greater Region of Waterloo.

Rick's talents and achievements have been well recognized, officially acknowledged and now celebrated by the distinguished Order of Canada award. Today, his leadership has never been more critically challenged as Kitchener-Waterloo navigates this 'boom' period of unusual growth and development.

Article by Susan Burke. Image: uwaterloo.ca



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