



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Blair Nelson, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Planning and Growth Management

Meeting Date: April 13, 2026

Report: Designation of 123 Simcoe Street, Report IPGPL26-018

Subject

A report to recommend that Council consider the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee's recommendation that the property municipally known as 123 Simcoe Street be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the **Ontario Heritage Act**, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18 as being a property of cultural heritage value or interest to the City of Peterborough.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report IPGPL26-018, dated April 13, 2026, of the Commissioner of Infrastructure, Planning and Growth Management as follows:

- a) That the recommendation of the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (PACAC) that Council designate the property at 123 Simcoe Street as a heritage property under Part IV, Section 29 of the **Ontario Heritage Act** R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18 being of "cultural heritage value or interest" be received; and,
- b) That Council take the following actions to designate the property at 123 Simcoe Street as a heritage property under Part IV, Section 29 of the **Ontario Heritage Act** R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18 being of cultural heritage value or interest:
 - i. Serve Notice of Intention to Designate 123 Simcoe Street and provide public notice of that intention in a newspaper having general circulation in

the municipality as per the **Ontario Heritage Act** R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, s.31 (3);

- ii. Serve the owner of the property to be designated and the Ontario Heritage Trust with a Notice of Intention to Designate as per the **Ontario Heritage Act** R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, s.21 (3).

Executive Summary

- A report to consider PACAC's recommendation that Council designate the property municipally known as 123 Simcoe Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the **Ontario Heritage Act**, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18.
- The property at 123 Simcoe Street has been evaluated and is considered to be a property of cultural heritage value or interest to the City of Peterborough.
- The property owner has been notified of the PACAC's recommendation for designation of the property by a letter delivered by registered mail dated February 5, 2026.
- As of the writing of this report, the property owner has not contacted staff.
- Staff concur with the PACAC's recommendation.

Background

Under Part IV of the **Ontario Heritage Act**, municipalities may designate individual properties deemed to be of "cultural heritage value or interest" to the community, through the passage of municipal By-laws. The designation process strikes a balance between the interests of the individual property owners and the recognized need of the community to preserve its heritage resources. Heritage designation prohibits unwarranted demolition and controls alterations that might harm specific heritage features.

Designation may also make property owners eligible for preservation grants and tax relief and provides owners access to professional expertise and advice. Since 1975, Peterborough City Council has passed 154 individual designation By-laws, although this only represents a portion of the buildings in the city that are eligible for designation. The Planning, Development and Urban Design Division administers the designation program in partnership with the PACAC and the City Clerk's Office.

The PACAC considers the property at 123 Simcoe Street worthy of heritage designation as it meets two or more criteria outlined in Regulation 9/06 of the Act. A designation brief for 123 Simcoe Street was received by the PACAC at their meeting of February 3, 2026. The committee approved a motion that its opinion, that the property be

designated under Part IV of the Act as a property of cultural heritage value or interest, be forwarded to Council. Staff concur with the Committee's recommendation.

Short Statement of Reasons for Designation

123 Simcoe Street – The Peterborough Club

123 Simcoe Street has cultural heritage value as the first building in Peterborough to be erected exclusively for banking purposes. Built between 1857 and 1858 as the Bank of Montreal, the bank's first agent was prominent businessman Robert Nicholls, husband of Peterborough's most notable Victorian philanthropist Charlotte Nicholls. It was the Bank of Montreal until 1910 when it was acquired by the Peterborough Club, a private social club with a legacy of philanthropy. The Peterborough Club did not return to the building after a fire in 1991.

The building is an excellent early example of mid-nineteenth century Italianate-style commercial architecture. It is a rare surviving example of a mansard roof, which was added in the 1880s. Contextually, it is historically linked to its surroundings as a reminder of the area's commercial past. It was one of only two Victorian structures spared in the construction of Peterborough Square.

Analysis

Official Plan

The City's Official Plan provides a comprehensive and integrated framework that forms the basis of decision making with respect to the physical change of the City. The Official Plan applies to all land use planning decisions made by the City. The planning horizon of the current plan is to the year 2051.

Per Section 5.1.2a. of the Official Plan, the City may, by By-Law, designate built heritage resources, heritage conservation districts and cultural heritage landscapes of cultural heritage value or interest in accordance with the regulations and criteria established under the Ontario Heritage Act and implementing regulations.

Section 5.1.1a. indicates that it is the objective of the Plan that cultural heritage resources within the city be identified, conserved, promoted and enhanced and that development should occur in a manner which protects and complements the City's heritage.

Section 5.1.1b. indicates that significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes will be identified and conserved so that they continue to be experienced and appreciated by residents, visitors and future generations.

Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillar: Community & Well-being

Strategic Priority: Enhance the natural, recreational, sports, the arts, and cultural aspects of our community.

The work of the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (PACAC) and the Heritage Preservation Office directly addresses and works to enhance the cultural aspects of our community. The PACAC's work also strives to "demonstrate strong leadership in environmental stewardship by proactively addressing issues and challenges of climate change and the environment" through the preservation of heritage as a critical part of building climate change resilience.

Engagement and Consultation

The Ontario Heritage Act does not require the consent of a property owner for Council to serve notice of its intention to designate a property because the law provides for an owner to object and have that objection considered by the Ontario Land Tribunal. While the Act does not require a municipality to notify the owner that their property is being considered for designation, it has always been the practice in Peterborough to inform the owner.

This property is on a list of properties prioritized for designation that Council considered on March 17, 2025 in Report IPGPL25-015 and on August 11, 2025, in Report IPGPL25-037. The owner of 123 Simcoe Street was notified that the PACAC had prioritized the property for designation by letter on March 4, 2025. The owner was further notified of the PACAC's recommendation that Council designate the property by registered mail on February 5, 2026. This letter sought the owner's support or objection. As of writing this report, the property owner has not contacted City staff.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no budgetary or financial implications as the result of the recommendations of this report at this time.

Conclusion

The PACAC has recommended to Council the designation of 123 Simcoe Street as a property of cultural heritage value or interest. Staff concur with the PACAC's recommendation. This report advises Council of the PACAC's recommendation and seeks a Council decision regarding that recommendation.

Attachments

Appendix A: 123 Simcoe Street Heritage Designation Brief

Appendix B: Proposed Heritage Designation By-law for 123 Simcoe Street

Submitted by,

Blair Nelson, P. Eng.
Commissioner, Infrastructure, Planning and Growth Management

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Appendix A – 123 Simcoe Street Heritage Designation Brief

Heritage Designation Brief



The Peterborough Club

123 Simcoe Street

Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

2026

Heritage Designation Status Sheet

Street Address:	123 Simcoe Street
Roll Number:	040050254000000
Short Legal Description:	PT LT 1 S OF SIMCOE ST AND E OF WATER ST PL 1 TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH AS IN R597674 ; PETERBOROUGH CITY
PACAC Application Review Date:	February 3, 2026
Heritage Type:	Built structure
Designation Type:	Ontario Heritage Act – Part IV
Designation Brief Completion Date:	January 2026
Designation Brief Completed by:	Colin Walsh
Comments	

A. STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The subject property has been researched and evaluated to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990. A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets **any two** of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. Staff have determined that 123 Simcoe Street has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

The property has design value or physical value because it:

- i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method:**

123 Simcoe Street is an early example of an Italianate-style commercial building in downtown Peterborough. It was constructed in 1857-58 just as the style was gaining popularity in North America. It would remain a popular choice for commercial buildings until the 1890s.

- ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:**

This property demonstrates a high degree of craftsmanship in its built features executed to a standard of quality. Of particular merit is the mansard roof, now a rarity in the downtown.

- iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:**

There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.

The property has historical value or associative value because it:

- i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community:**

This property has direct associations with Peterborough's business community through the first two institutions to inhabit it: the Bank of Montreal and the Peterborough Club. At the time, the Bank of Montreal was locally managed by prominent local businessman and philanthropist Robert Nicholls.

- ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:**

This property yields information relating to the development of commerce and banking in Peterborough in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From being Peterborough's first purpose-built bank as the Bank

of Montreal to being a place of gathering for the business community as the Peterborough Club.

iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community:

This property does not demonstrate the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

The property has contextual value because it:

i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:

123 Simcoe Street supports the character of Peterborough's commercial downtown core.

ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings:

This property is functionally linked to its surroundings as a former financial institution in Peterborough's commercial downtown core. Historically, many banks and other institutions were centred around what was the town square opposite.

iii. is a landmark: O. Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2).

This property is a landmark in the downtown core due to its prominent location on a corner lot. Its distinctive architectural features, in contrast to the surrounding modern buildings, make it easily recognizable.

Design and Physical Value

The Peterborough Club building at 123 Simcoe Street has design and physical value as an early example of Victorian Italianate-style commercial architecture in Peterborough's downtown core. The style began in the United Kingdom in the early nineteenth century, pioneered by architect Sir Charles Barry, as a revival of the architectural vocabulary of sixteenth century Renaissance Italy. By the 1850s, it was gaining popularity in North America, around which time the Bank of Montreal was erecting the first purpose-built bank in Peterborough. The Italianate, and the related Renaissance Revival style, became a popular style for secular buildings needing to portray an image of dignity and reliability. Wealthy merchants and industrialists in mid-late nineteenth century Ontario utilized this style in their homes and businesses to evoke the residences of the burgeoning merchant class which emerged during the Italian Renaissance.



The original 1857-58 brick building consists of three bays along Water Street and three bays along Simcoe Street. The front bays on the lower level are large with semi-circular tops and heavy cut stone arches, alternating, radiating voussoirs with keystones and quoins on the side surrounds. A later addition added two bays to the south and two to the east, as well as, notably, a mansard roof. The upper level windows on the addition are now oriel windows.

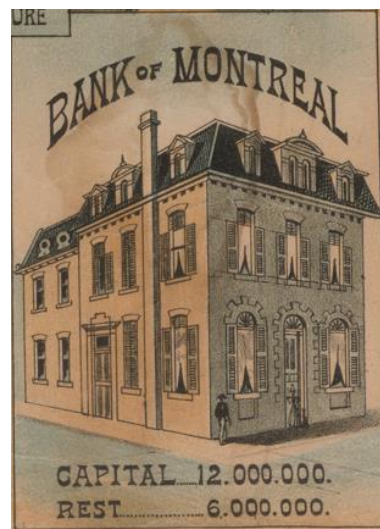
The mansard roof is one of few remaining in the downtown core with a mansard roof. Mansard roofs were popular decorative features on commercial buildings in the 1880s, when this one was likely added. In Peterborough, the Bank of Toronto Building at 400 George Street North, the Cox Block at 431-437 George Street North and the Cluxton Block at 399 George Street North all had large decorative mansard roofs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As styles changed, the former two had their roofs removed and the latter building was demolished completely. This specific roof has three dormers on the west façade. The two outer dormers are pediment shaped with semi-circular windows. The middle dormer is Victorian segmental in shape and contains paired semi-circular windows, said to be a distinctive feature of Peterborough architecture. There is no mansard third storey on the south addition. The base of the mansard is finished with a boxed cornice and decorated frieze.

Historical and Associative Value

The land on which the subject building was constructed has a long history of precontact use by Indigenous communities due to its proximity to the Otonabee River and Jackson Creek. Its location is close to the end of the Chemong Portage, a significant travel route for Indigenous people of this area since time immemorial. Post-contact, the Crown erected Government House on this site in 1825.

Government House was a log dwelling which served as Peter Robinson's residence and office as he oversaw the settlement of 2,204 Irish immigrants to settle the area.

The present structure was completed in 1858 at a cost of \$12,000 as the Peterborough branch of the Bank of Montreal. It was the first purpose-built bank in Peterborough. The Bank of Montreal was founded in 1817, making it Canada's first formal bank. The bank had opened its first branch in Peterborough in 1852, with Robert Nicholls as the first agent.



Robert Nicholls was born in 1812 in New York City, moving to Peterborough in 1832 to establish a dry goods store. Initially unsuccessful, he sold the business to William Hall and returned to the United States. In 1851, he returned to Peterborough with his new wife Charlotte Jane Jackson and entered into a partnership with Hall. Charlotte and Robert Nicholls resided in the large Greek Revival house at 415 Rubidge Street known as the Grover-Nicholls House, today home to the Masonic Lodge. The couple had no children and upon Nicholls's death in 1883, Charlotte inherited her husband's estate, estimated at over \$493,000. Mrs. Nicholls became one of Peterborough's most prominent philanthropists, funding the construction of St. Andrew's Presbyterian (later United) Church and the YMCA. She purchased Moira Hall for use as Peterborough's first hospital. When it proved insufficient, she funded the construction of the purpose-built Nicholls Hospital and donated it to the City with an endowment to run it which sustained the hospital until the 1930s. After her own death in 1890, she left funds in her will for the establishment of Jackson Park, Nicholls Oval and Inverlea Park.

The Bank of Montreal remained in this building until 1910 when it moved across the street to the former premises of the Ontario Bank, which the Bank of Montreal had absorbed in 1906. BMO replaced this building with a modern building in 1960 and remained until 2019.

After the bank's departure, the building became the home of the Peterborough Club. The Peterborough Club was founded in 1873. It was modelled after a British gentlemen's club, a private social club where prominent men would gather to discuss business and politics. The first such clubs opened in the West End of London in the seventeenth century. The first club in Canada, Montreal's Beaver Club, opened in 1785. Though modelled on these clubs, the Peterborough Club developed into a place for all business and professional people to meet and became a noted benefactor in the community. Women were admitted as full members in 1984.



In the 1970s, this building and Market Hall were the only Victorian structures spared in the two-block span cleared for the construction of Peterborough Square. The mall's anchor store, Eaton's, was constructed adjacent to the clubhouse.

In May 1991, a fire deemed to be arson caused an estimated \$250,000 damage to the building. Much of the interior was destroyed including meeting rooms and the dining room. Historic portraits of past presidents and the club's historical records were also destroyed. The club did not reopen.

In 1994, the nightclub The Trasherteria opened at this address. Known affectionately as "The Trash", many nationally renowned groups and artists played the venue including Fiest, Sloan, and Jordan Knight of the New Kids on the Block. The Trasherteria closed in 2012, and the building has housed restaurants since.

Contextual Value

The subject property has significant contextual value as a contributing property to the commercial character of Peterborough's downtown core. Located at the heart of Peterborough's downtown, it maintains and supports the commercial character of the area through its function, massing and form.

As Peterborough's first permanent bank, it contributes to our understanding of the area's commercial character, as many other banks established premises nearby. The Ontario Bank, later Bank of Montreal, opened diagonally across, and the Bank of Commerce and Bank of Toronto opened further up the opposite block. Its longstanding associations with the Bank of Montreal, the Peterborough Club and subsequent nightclubs and restaurants make it a well-known building in the community.

The building is one of few remaining historic structures facing Water Street south of Simcoe Street, allowing it to stand as a landmark structure amongst its modern surroundings.

"The short statement of reason for designation, including a description of the heritage attributes along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief constitute the "Reasons for the Designation" required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Heritage Designation Brief is available for viewing in the City Clerk's office during regular business hours."

SHORT STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

123 Simcoe Street has cultural heritage value as the first building in Peterborough to be erected exclusively for banking purposes. Built between 1857 and 1858 as the Bank of Montreal, the bank's first agent was prominent businessman Robert Nicholls, husband of Peterborough's most notable Victorian philanthropist Charlotte Nicholls. It was the Bank of Montreal until 1910 when it was acquired by the Peterborough Club, a private social club with a legacy of philanthropy. The Peterborough Club did not return to the building after a fire in 1991.

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SUMMARY OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES TO BE DESIGNATED

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations and the roof including all façades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction materials of wood, brick, stone, plaster parging, metal and glazing, their related building techniques, and landscape features:

Exterior Elements:

- Two-storey brick construction
- Mansard roof
- Dormer windows with decorative surrounds
- Chimney
- Cornice
- Dentils
- Moulding
- Inset bays
- Oriel windows
- Fenestration
- Founded windows
- Rusticated surrounds on doors and windows

Appendix B - Proposed Heritage Designation By-law for 123 Simcoe Street

The Corporation of the City of Peterborough By-Law Number 26-[by-law number]

Being a By-law to Designate Certain Properties in the City of Peterborough Under the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18 (123 Simcoe Street)

The Corporation of the City of Peterborough by its Council thereof hereby enacts as follows:

That the hereinafter described properties be and are hereby designated to be of historical and architectural value or interest pursuant to the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18, for the reasons hereafter stated:

123 Simcoe Street – The Peterborough Club

PT LT 1 S OF SIMCOE ST AND E OF WATER ST PL 1 TOWN OF
PETERBOROUGH AS IN R597674 ; PETERBOROUGH CITY

Reason for Designation

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Heritage Attributes

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- Moulding
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- Oriel windows
- Fenestration
- Founded windows
- Rusticated surrounds on doors and windows

By-law passed this day of , 2026.

Jeff Leal, Mayor

John Kennedy, City Clerk