

# Perth County Courthouse Preserving an Architectural Gem

Perth County Courthouse has had on-going repairs and significant restoration work over the years, keeping the building useful as well as beautiful.

Looking ahead to the courthouse's 100th birthday in 1987, renovations began in 1980. Years of work went into the project which included cleaning the exterior brick, repairing the tower, stripping the interior woodwork and painting and wallpapering inside. A sample of the original burgundy paint on the exterior trim work was discovered under the eaves and matched to return the building to its original appearance. Nine new 19th century style chandeliers were installed, five in the main floor hall and four in the top floor hallway. Layers of floor wax were scraped from the mosaic tile floor in the main hallway, returning it to its original appearance. On Saturday, May 7, 1987 there was an official ceremony to celebrate the centennial of building followed by public tours and birthday cake. Perth County Warden Jim Spence, assisted by past Warden Cam Thompson, unveiled a wood engraving of the courthouse for the basement boardroom.

In 2003, to honour the County's 150th anniversary, a courtyard was added outside of what is now the main public entrance near the parking lot. Benches commemorate each municipality. Warden Annabell Thomson, Ontario Lieutenant Governor James Bartleman, Stratford Mayor Karen Haslam and St. Marys Mayor Jamie Hahn were on hand to mark the occasion.

The spire of the tower was replaced in 2009. **2**

By 2014, it was clear that the slate roof needed to be replaced. 70,000 pounds of hand split, shaped and tested slate was brought from a quarry in Quebec. Experts, who had previously worked on the roof of the Parliament building in Ottawa, were hired to do the painstaking task of removing the original slates and installing the new ones. They called the Perth County Courthouse a testament to craftsmanship – reporting that the tongue and groove wooden roof desk, complete with square nails hand-made by 19th century blacksmiths, was in almost pristine condition. **3**

2003



In 2020 renovations were made to the lower level of the building to improve accessibility and customer service. A central reception desk was created with accessible service desks and automated door openers added to the controlled entry point. Floor-level wayfinding was added, assisting all customers entering the building including those with visual impairments. **1**



2009

COURTHOUSE RENOVATIONS: Recreating the workmanship of the past



Stratford Metal Products metal fabricator Tom Newton works on the component pieces that will form the decorative accent of the Perth County Courthouse finial. Fashioned from lead-coated copper, the new piece is a nearly exact copy of the previous finial, which had deteriorated over decades. The inset above shows its removal in September. SCOTT WISHART The Beacon Herald



It took 70,000 pounds of slate to cover the roof



2021

2009



**2**

2014



**3**



**1**



2020

Scan the QR Code for an in-depth look!

