



City of Edmundston, New Brunswick

Municipality Demonstrates Restoration Viability

- Municipality links the past with the future through innovative technology.
- Restoration of a community treasure has helped develop community pride.

“It was the best way we could find to combine our heritage with today’s needs. This is why we did the restoration and incorporated our tourism bureau in the infrastructure.” Réal Gervais, Chief Administrative Office, City of Edmundston

Restoration of a provincial historic site by incorporating innovative technology helped the City of Edmundston, NB preserve the Edmundston Canadian Pacific Railway Station, a transportation landmark in north western New Brunswick during the first half of the 20th century. An example of successful adaptive reuse, the restored CPR Station demonstrates the economic viability of restoring a heritage building with new technology, in this case a geothermal heating system.

Constructed in 1929-30 to plans produced by the office of the CPR's Chief Engineer in Montreal, the CPR Station was built as part of an ambitious project to link the St. Lawrence Valley to the Port of Saint John by crossing north western New Brunswick. The CPR considered Edmundston an important rail station location and quickly replaced the former station building on the same site that burned in 1928.

While many other stations of the era are made of wood, the Edmundston Station’s custom design and high quality materials including red brick, concrete, stone and wood reflect the railway’s importance in this region in an era of great prosperity. Because of its historic significance and architectural qualities, the CPR Station was designated a Heritage Railway Station in 1992 under the federal Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act.

After many years of non use, the New Brunswick Railway Company, part of the Irving group of companies, donated the CPR Station and adjacent land to the City of Edmundston in 1998. At that time, the Province of New Brunswick designated the building as a Protected Historic Site. With the primary goal of restoration of the building with its historical and architectural value, the City undertook an economic impact study to determine the development potential. While the building is ideally situated as a tourist information centre, retired CPR workers and the community also cited the need for an interpretation centre to explore the historical and social importance of the railway to the Madawaska region.

The historical elements were retained as much as possible in the restoration of the exterior and interior fabric of the building. The original asbestos roof shingles were sealed and covered with a safe facsimile. Interior doors were reused, the original window trim repaired, and new glazing and sashes installed that meet today’s efficiency standards. The municipality determined that implementation of a geothermal energy system to heat the building as well as using City employees for carpentry and other restoration work would reduce restoration and operating costs.



Through the expertise of a local engineering firm, a geothermal heating system consisting of water drawn from three wells and circulated through a closed loop system was developed to replace the original coal-fired furnace. This technology reduced the need for insulation in the walls and ceiling allowing the original lathe and plaster to be retained.

With funding support from the federal and provincial governments as well as the local historical society, the City restored the heritage building and is securing to its long-term viability. In June 2007 the restoration was completed and the Station returned to its former role of receiving the public, now as the municipal tourism office serving the region.



Before restoration



After restoration – exterior



After restoration - interior

Tools Used for this Project

- Funding of \$35,000 by the Province of New Brunswick's Built Heritage Program, Heritage Branch, Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport
- More than \$200,000 was saved by using City of Edmundston employees for carpentry and other restoration work.
- Working with City staff, Consulting Engineers Roy Consultants provided expertise on the geothermal system and Architect David Foulem advised on reconstruction issues. Work was undertaken in line with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*

The Project by the Numbers

- Financial support of \$529,000 by the Government of Canada through ACOA
- Financial support of \$447,000 by the Municipality of Edmundston
- Financial support of \$95,000 by the Province of New Brunswick
- Financial support of \$5,000 by the Société Historique du Madawaska

Municipal commitment to heritage demonstrates economic viability

- Development of community pride in a local historic place
- The restored Edmundston CPR station, now a focal point in the community, is a regional tourist information centre and the office of the municipal tourism department



- Presentation of a railway heritage installation at the Edmundston CPR Station that was launched in late fall 2007 is the first in a series of interpretative projects planned for the building.

Project Contacts

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