
*new*HOMES

Awards: Giving new life to city streets

Restore, renovate, re-invent

Antonia Morton
looks at the results
of Ottawa's Architectural
Conservation Awards.

There are three categories: Restoration, in which a heritage resource is returned to its original form, materials and integrity; Adaptive Use, in which a building is modified to contemporary functional standards while retaining its heritage character; and Infill, in which an older building is added to, or new construction is done within a historic context.

In each category, there's one award of excellence and a number of certificates of merit. "This year there were 22 applications, an unprecedented number," says Lucy Corbin, chair of the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee which administers the awards.

"In past years the judges have all got together in one van and travelled around, viewing the projects in one fell swoop. But this year there were just too many entries for that."

Least in scope of the Certificate of Merit winners—but demonstrating the positive impact that a relatively small restoration can have on a streetscape—was the rebuilding of a tumble down double porch on a pair of Lowertown heritage homes, undertaken by first-time entrant Denys Builds Designs.

"It was a dramatic transformation," Paul

Denys says. "Before, the veranda was in disrepair and painted all in black." Most of the aesthetic elements of the structure were there, he says, but hidden by the poor state of the wood and paint.

"We replaced about half the porch wood, and highlighted it with a contrasting colour scheme—hunter green with moss green accents on the filigree trim. It's really dynamic now, makes the house come alive again."

"It's just this kind of small residential restoration project that the city is trying to encourage," says Stuart Lazear, senior heritage planner with Ottawa's Department of Urban Planning and Public Works. "Sure, it's great to have big \$10-million jobs like the Memorial museum, but we like to see little jobs done with craftsmanship and pride as well."

Mr. Denys has an obvious passion for restoration. "It's a real labour of love, trying to remain true to the nature of what was built before, but combining it with new technology to preserve it for the future," he says.

"There's a lot of embodied energy in older buildings, and that's what makes them so timeless."



Above: Complete restoration of Bolton Porch. Below: Before the renovation work has begun.

