



## County of Brant Council Report

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**To:** The Mayor and Members of County of Brant Council  
**From:** Kelly Bernstein, Library CEO  
**Date:** May 23, 2023  
**Report #:** RPT - 0247 - 23  
**Subject:** New Main Library and Bawcutt Centre Project Design Concept  
**Purpose:** For Approval

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### Recommendation

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That the concept design for the Main Library and Bawcutt Centre be approved;

That this project be approved for construction, subject to site plan and zoning applications;

That staff be directed to authorize Collaborative Structures Limited (CSL) to issue requests for tender for the construction of the Main Library and Bawcutt Centre to prequalified contractors;

That \$13,489,000 be included in the 2024 Capital Budget, with funding components from reserves, development charges, debt to be repaid by development charges and debenture as funding sources;

That the Steering Group transition to Fundraising Committee and begin fundraising efforts;

And that staff be directed to investigate parking opportunities on adjacent streets and present designs for Council consideration.

### Strategic Plan Priority

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Strategic Priority 4 - Reliable Infrastructure

Strategic Priority 5 - Healthy, Safe, and Engaged Citizens

Strategic Priority 6 - Stable and Responsive Governance

### Impacts and Mitigation

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#### Social Impacts

The recommendations of this report support the County's initiative to construct a new Main Branch Library facility at the Bawcutt Centre to serve the growing communities of Brant.

The improved service levels offered at the new building will result in increased use, helping to support healthy, safe, and engaged citizens. The building's central location ensures equitable access from all parts of Brant County.

This project restores the Old Town Hall building to public use, preserving a key part of the County's heritage and ensuring reliable community infrastructure.

The local arts community will benefit from access to a new performance and exhibition space, in turn offering new entertainment and enrichment opportunities for residents.

Potential negative impacts to neighboring properties could include increased traffic, noise and site lighting but will be mitigated during detailed design. The adjacent property owners will continue to be consulted and engaged throughout construction.

### Environmental Impacts

The new facility will incorporate environmentally conscious design features that promote low energy use, water conservation and sustainable building materials and practices. The site will also promote access by active transportation.

Outdoor programming and green spaces will promote greater interaction and enjoyment of nature within an urban centre.

### Economic Impacts

The building will host cultural events, weddings, and special events, driving new business to the area from visitors and tourists. The return on investment for such events yields \$78 to \$138 dollars per visitor.

This project is anticipated to spark further rejuvenation of Paris' Upper Town which will expand the commercial centre of Paris and trigger additional adaptive re-use projects within the existing heritage neighbourhood.

The anticipated project cost of \$37,770,000 will be largely funded through debentures that will draw on several funding sources. Of the total budget, only the debt servicing costs on \$16,702,000 will be solely funded through the annual tax levy. In consultation with the Finance Division, this amount of additional debt will bring the County nearly exactly at the County's self-imposed debt limit. County staff are working on further details of this impact and will be presenting Council with options at an upcoming meeting.

Fundraising will be an important funding source for this project and is anticipated to begin in summer 2023.

## **Report**

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The building located at 13 Burwell St, Paris, now known as the Bawcutt Centre, holds a significant place in Brant's history. Constructed in 1854, it was an original community hub, serving as town hall, council chambers, market, jail, and opera hall. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it also held a school and fire hall. Over time it passed into private hands and housed various businesses, including the world headquarters of the Mary Maxim company.

In addition to its local significance, the building is remarkable for its architecture. It is the oldest neo-gothic public building in Canada, pre-dating Ottawa's parliament buildings by several years. In recognition of its importance, the building was given heritage designation by Council in 2016 and in 2020 was recognized federally as a National Historic Site.

The County of Brant purchased the building in 2015 with the assistance of a \$1 million donation from Skystone Media (owned by noted former Paris resident Linda Schuyler and her spouse Stephen Stohn). The gifting agreement requires the County to use the building for social purposes with an arts/culture/heritage focus. Between 2015 and 2021, Council explored multiple options for adaptive re-use of the building.

The County of Brant Library (the Library)'s mission is to cultivate inclusivity and empower lifelong learning, which it works to fulfill by providing library services and programs to the public. Arts, culture, and heritage form the basis for many library collections and events. The Library had been searching since 2014 for a site for its new main branch.

Recognizing this natural alignment of purposes and needs, through RPT-21-340 Council approved a restoration and construction project to turn the site into the Library's new main branch.

In June 2022, the County engaged DPAI Architecture Inc to lead the design, tendering, and project management of the building and in January 2023 engaged Collaborative Structures Limited (CSL) to provide construction management services.

DPAI and CSL have worked closely with the project team and the Steering Group to develop a heritage restoration plan and conceptual design for the building.

The proposed design concept for the New Main Library and Bawcutt Centre brings new life to the heritage building, ensures its restoration, and provides a suitable space for the Library to deliver its services to the rapidly growing community.

## Background

Although community initiatives for both the Old Town Hall and New Main Branch Library date back to the early 2000s, Council's formal involvement in these two key projects began in 2015:

- Early 2015 - Council formed an informal working group with local heritage preservation groups and developed a vision for a building that included municipal ownership;
- Fall 2015 - Council approved the acquisition of the Old Town Hall building and entered into a Gifting Agreement with Skystone Media (holding corporation of Ms. Schuyler and her spouse Mr. S. Stohn) to secure a \$1 million donation;
- 2016 - Council passed By-Law 168-16 to designate the Bawcutt Centre as an historic site;
- 2017- Council formed the Bawcutt Centre Advisory Committee;
- 2018 - Council approved the acquisition of the neighboring property (former KFC site);
- 2020- Bawcutt Centre recognized as a National Historic Site.

Discussion surrounding a new Main Branch Library started in earnest in 2016. Council has received past delegations from the Library Board of Directors (the “Library Board”) regarding this matter which include:

- July 2016 - Council received a study entitled “Paris Branch Library Facility Planning Study”, acknowledging the need for a 25,000 square foot library to serve the community’s projected growth;
- June 2017 - Council received a new Strategic Plan for the Library with a 2017 to 2019 time frame;
- October 2018 - Council received a report from the Library Board outlining the results of a site selection process for the New Main Branch;
- 2019 and 2020 - Council authorized studies of additional sites and community hub opportunities.
- July 2021 - RPT-21-340 – Council approved The Bawcutt Centre Restoration / New Main Library Branch Project, which established a project team and Steering Group.

### Project Management and Guidance

The project has been led by a Project Team, consisting of Library and County staff, and guided by a Steering Group, consisting of the Bawcutt Centre Advisory Committee and the Library Board of Directors.

Project team: Kelly Bernstein, Library CEO / Project Manager  
Mark Maxwell, County Project Engineer  
Karen Scott, Library Director of Operations  
Lindsay Plant, County Facilities Project Coordinator

Steering Group: Linda Tripp, Library Board  
Barb Graham, Bawcutt Advisory Committee  
Mayor David Bailey, Library Board and Bawcutt Advisory Committee  
David Powell, Bawcutt Advisory Committee  
Fred Gladding, Library Board (Chair)  
Janet Snaith, Bawcutt Advisory Committee  
Amanda Henderson, Library Board  
Councillor John MacAlpine, Bawcutt Advisory Committee  
Councillor John Peirce, Bawcutt Advisory Committee  
Kari Raymer Bishop, Library Board and Bawcutt Advisory Committee  
Kathryn (Kate) Carter, Bawcutt Advisory Committee (Chair)  
Councillor Christi Garneau, Library Board (to May 2023)  
Marilyn Sewell, Library Board  
Nathan Etherington, Library Board  
Paula Chorpitta, Library Board  
Councillor Steve Howes, Library Board  
Councillor Jennifer Kyle, Library Board (since May 2023)

Throughout the design development phase, the architects and Project Team met regularly with the Steering Group. After an initial visioning exercise and site visit, DPAI’s Indigenous

consultant conducted an education session. As the design evolved, DPAI presented sketches, drafts, and 3D renderings to the Steering Group for feedback and input. The final proposed design concept has been endorsed by the Steering Group.

## Proposed Design

Attached to this report is a design report from DPAI Architecture showing the following drawings:

- A site plan showing the existing structure and a new addition in relationship to the site and the surrounding intersections of Burwell Street, Church Street, and Dumfries St;
- Floor plans for the main floor, upper floor, and basement of the building;
- Concept rendering of the building's facades
- 3D renderings of the interior spaces including the foyer, children's department, adult department, and restored performance centre.

The proposed building is comprised of the heritage portions of the 1854 structure and a new two-story addition with a combined square footage of 27,800 square feet. The total project will include restoration of the building's heritage elements, construction of the addition, fit-up of fixtures, landscaping of an outdoor program space, and associated site works including parking.

The building will feature a double-height foyer that highlights heritage brick elements, lively children's area with interactive decor, a light-filled adult department with service desk and reading balcony, a teen area with soundproofed gaming gear, small quiet study and meeting rooms, accessible collections featured on the main floor, restored opera hall with café, multi-use programming room equipped with a teaching kitchen, staff workroom, and administrative offices. Ample public washrooms and foyer space ensure that large events can be comfortably accommodated.

## Intelligent Design for Now and into the Future

A key building element will be its MakerSpace, an area for learning and exploration of high- and low-tech equipment where residents of all ages can gain hands-on experience and cutting edge skills. Growing on the success of the Library's Coding for Kids and VR for Seniors programs, the new Main Library will offer technology opportunities for all Brant residents.

Wherever possible, the design seeks to provide multiple uses for key spaces: the café will serve the public during Library hours and do double-duty as a bar during weddings and other events. The teaching kitchen will be used for food literacy programming during the day and can serve as a catering area at night or be rented by local entrepreneurs as a commercial kitchen. The multipurpose room will be used for small-to-medium Library programs and can double as a green room or back-of-house for performances.

## Heritage Work and Scope

The Bawcutt Centre requires significant restoration work to ensure that its structural integrity is maintained. As a designated and National Historic Site, all heritage work must comply with the standards set out in Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places*.

The new addition has been designed to complement the existing heritage structure. It is set back slightly from the original façade so as not to overshadow it. The building is planned to be constructed of steel and mass timber framing and clad in brick in a colour complimentary to the original. Elements such as the roof line and window details have been designed to emphasize symmetry and balance with the heritage portion.

The building's overall height and landscaping have been deliberately designed to maintain and contribute to the neighbourhood's heritage atmosphere.

To mitigate costs, this proposed design concept does not include restoration of the wooden spire and bell above the masonry brick tower or full restoration of the jail cells in the basement. Both are relatively self-contained projects that could be undertaken at a later date.

Significant interest and support for the spire and bell restoration was expressed through community consultation. Should Council wish to expand the project scope to include a working bell, an additional \$600,000 would be required.

### Environmental Sustainability

The building will feature sustainable design elements and materials wherever possible. An engineered "access floor" will create an 8" hollow between floors, enabling low-velocity heating and cooling to be piped in from the floor, thus eliminating the need for a natural gas furnace. The access floor also helps to future-proof the building because electrical and networking cables can be easily reconfigured as program needs change.

Further initiatives to improve sustainability, such as a geothermal system or solar roof panels, will continue to be investigated and added to the scope of work if grant or donated funds are secured to cover the additional costs.

### Role of a Main Branch Library

This new library, while located in Paris, will serve at the County of Brant Library's Main Branch and administrative headquarters. This branch will house the largest collections and host the most programs of all library locations. System-wide functions such as cataloguing, processing, IT, and programming will all be based out of the Main Branch. This model is widely used by public libraries for its efficiencies and benefits.

Centralizing administration at the new library will free up square footage in other branches, which will increase the amount of effective public space there as well. The new Main Branch design will enable the streamlining of staffing, allowing the Library to re-deploy those resources into increased community outreach and services. The result will be growth in library service across the entire County without a tax levy increase.

The current Paris Branch has served as a de-facto main branch for several years. In 2022, the Paris Branch transferred over 25,000 items to other Library branches in Brant. On average, approximately 14% of monthly users at the Paris Branch live in other parts of the County.

### Community Consultation

A draft of the proposed design was presented to the public at an open house on February 6, 2023. More than 120 residents attended and provided feedback. Responses were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the project. Concerns expressed were limited largely to parking.

The design concept slides and video of the presentation were then posted to EngageBrant.ca from February 6 to March 6, 2023. The site received 189 visits and 9 comments. Two of the comments were related to parking concerns, two stated the importance of sustainability, one requested a coffee shop, one requested a larger children's program space, one requested that the building be larger to accommodate growth, and two were requests for information on existing library services.

This feedback was incorporated into the concept design wherever feasible: the site plan was modified slightly to accommodate an additional 4 on-site parking spaces and adjustments were made to the HVAC plan to improve sustainability.

### Indigenous Consultation

Members of the project team met with representatives from Six Nations on two occasions; once to inform about the upcoming project and once to share elements of the draft design concepts. Feedback from Six Nations was generally positive and particularly supportive of the proposed sustainability elements and planned use of Indigenous themes in the design.

### Parking Needs and Mitigation

The proposed site plan includes 41 parking spaces on site. This is more than enough to meet the everyday needs of regular Library business and is a vast improvement from the current Library, which only has 4 street parking spaces, none of which is accessible.

With an anticipated special event occupancy of 100 to 150 people, there is a significant need for additional parking during events and rentals. Zoning regulations require approximately 65-70 parking spaces. Permission for reduced parking will require a Zoning By-Law Application to the Planning and Development Committee for public hearing, presentation and decision by committee.

Justification for any parking reductions would rely on identifying new or additional parking spaces.

The architects and Project Team considered parking alternatives, depicted in Attachment 2. Discussions are underway with the neighbouring St. James Church to make use of their 10 parking spaces. 26 street parking spaces are located within a 2 minute walk of the site and an additional 99 street parking spaces can be found within a 5 minute walking radius of the building. A combined total of 176 parking spaces are located on site or within a short walk of the new Main Library.

Since street parking or walking short distances may not be acceptable to all, the option of developing Church Street is proposed for further study. Church Street borders the site to the north and could provide an additional 10-11 parking spaces. Additionally, redevelopment of Church Street could provide flexibility and opportunity for cultural events such as street fairs, outdoor events, or pedestrian markets.

The results of these further parking studies would be presented to the Planning and Development Committee during the Zoning By-Law Amendment application process.

## Costing

The architect estimates total project costs to be \$37,770. The amount of heritage restoration required and the reality of post-COVID construction pricing both significantly impact the budget.

New Addition	\$	15,405,132
Heritage Restoration (includes 10% heritage contingency)	\$	12,862,581
Additional Contingencies	\$	4,077,016
Professional Fees	\$	2,201,989
Civil Fees, Demolition, and Site Works	\$	3,223,282
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>37,770,000</b>

Earlier budget estimates suggested to Council could not account for the building's rapid deterioration. Structural investigations by Construction Manager CSL uncovered new deficiencies and found that some earlier assumptions about the building envelope's integrity were incomplete. Inflation is also responsible for the larger-than-anticipated budget. The Canadian Non-Residential Consumer Price Index for Construction rose from 107.4 in Q1 2019 to 144.5 at Q4 of 2022, representing an increase of 34.5%.

Despite building condition and market challenges, CSL has proven to be a valuable addition to the project team. CSL's knowledge and expertise informed a more accurate budget and reduced costs from an initial \$42,000,000 Class D estimate to the current projection of \$32,334,729 for construction and restoration.

The project costing presented here includes multiple contingencies. Given the risks and uncertainties of any heritage restoration, a healthy but prudent 10% contingency has been included in the estimates. Additional 7% design and 7% construction contingencies have been included to ensure that the projected costs are as accurate as possible.

The total construction costs as detailed in this report include demolition, construction, heritage restoration, professional fees, civil fees, site works, fixtures, and contingencies but not furniture and décor. \$600,000 has been allocated in the 2025 Capital Plan for furniture and equipment.

## Funding Sources

This project will draw on several sources of funding. The 2022 and 2023 County of Brant Capital Budgets allocated a total of \$14,191,000 towards the Main Library and Bawcutt Centre project, primarily to be funded through debenture, with some contributions from development charges and debt to be repaid from development charges. There is no proposed contribution from the capital tax levy at this time.

Overall proposed funding sources are:



	Life to Date Actuals	Life to Date Budget	Budget being Requested	Total Project Budget
<b>780310 20 New Paris Library Branch (Bawcutt Cen)(19-63)</b>				
LIB037 20 New Paris Library Branch(Bawcutt Cen)(19-63)				
<b>Revenue/Funding Sources</b>				
Federal & Provincial Grants			(5,000,000)	(5,000,000)
06652 Donations	(21,000)	-	(5,020,000)	(5,020,000)
06662 Donation from Skystone	(250,000)		(250,000)	(250,000)
07603 Contribution From Reserve Fund	-	(150,000)	(150,000)	(300,000)
07604 Contribution From Dev Chg Fund	(28,350)	(1,283,590)		(1,283,590)
07653 Proceeds from Debentures	-	(7,796,960)	(8,905,040)	(16,702,000)
07654 Debt to be Repaid by DC's	-	(4,960,450)	(4,183,960)	(9,144,410)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>(299,350)</b>	<b>(14,191,000)</b>	<b>(23,509,000)</b>	<b>(37,700,000)</b>

Targets for fundraising and grant revenue have been developed in consultation with grant officers and industry professionals. The Steering Group has endorsed these targets and believes they are realistic and attainable.

Additional granting opportunities will be continually explored as the project progresses.

Upon approval of this report, the Steering Group will transition into a Fundraising Committee and formal fundraising efforts will begin. By the time detailed design is completed and tender costs come to Council for consideration, the Fundraising Committee will have early results and a firm understanding of how quickly fundraising targets will be reached.

Development Charges and Debt to be Repaid by Development Charges estimates are based on the current Development Charges Background Study and components of this project that are eligible to be attributed to growth. These figures may require adjustment over time as the Development Charges Update progresses and depending on fundraising / donation levels.

### Added Value and Self-Generated Revenue

This design concept enables the Library to fulfill its mission to cultivate inclusivity and empower lifelong learning. Library services and programs will be enhanced by the new building. Besides providing a beautiful and inspiring environment, the building provides much-needed space. Utilizing its existing staff complement, the Library will be able to increase the number of new programs and events by at least 25%. Approximately 20% of current programming delivered is off site due to space limitations, but could be brought under one roof, which will maximize staff efficiency.

The new building contains enough square footage to house all Library administrative staff together. The square footage currently used in other branches for these purposes will be freed up to better serve that branch's community, for example through increasing the amount of shelving, creating new seating areas, or implementing new services such as a mobile maker space.

The proposed design and the restoration of the Opera Hall performance space provides new self-generated revenue opportunities for the Library. There is a demonstrated demand for secular wedding/event space, small meeting rooms, and commercial kitchen facilities. When these spaces are not being used by the Library for its own purposes, they can be offered for

rent, generating a new revenue stream to help offset building operating and maintenance costs.

Assuming one major performance space rental per week, and averaging 1 major Library event per month, revenues are projected to exceed \$240,000 per year.

Type	Number /Year	Fee		Annual Revenue	
Weddings / Special Events	40	\$	5,000	\$	200,000
Small Meeting Room Rental	52	\$	30	\$	1,560
Community Kitchen Rental	52	\$	120	\$	6,240
Café Lease				\$	36,000
			<b>Total:</b>	\$	<b>243,800</b>

Annual operating costs for the performance centre and its amenities are anticipated to be approximately \$145,000. Staff recommend that net annual revenues be transferred to a capital reserve fund established for the ongoing maintenance of the heritage building.

Analysis

The proposed design concept offers an intelligently-designed building that meets the Library’s needs now and for the foreseeable future. The multipurposing of spaces in the new Library design maximizes use and provides the best value for taxpayer dollar. The Bawcutt Centre’s rapidly deteriorating condition would soon require intervention and force expenditures that might otherwise sit empty or underutilized. Through one project, the County can ensure the survival of a valuable piece of built heritage, provide a modern, innovative Library service, and restore public access to a once-beloved community asset.

Next Steps

The anticipated timeline for the Main Library and Bawcutt Centre Project is:

Design Concept Approval	June 2023
Construction documents	June – September 2023
Zoning Application Process	Summer-Fall 2023
Tender	September 2023
Construction	November 2023 to December 2025

**Attachments**

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1. DPAI Architecture Inc. Proposed Concept Design
2. Parking Summary

**Contributors**

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This report was prepared with contributions from County of Brant Finance Division staff.

**Copied To**

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**By-law and/or Agreement**

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By-law Required	No
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No