

Macaulay Church Rehabilitation Project

Opened circa 1825, this former St. Mary Magdalene Church has been through considerable structural changes and issues. Three additions occurred between 1864 and 1877, adding to the functionality of the Church, including the Chancel, Choir Entrance and the Spire.

Unfortunately, the Church also suffered from some structural issues with the roof collapsing on several occasions including the last time in 1925. The issues with the structure created some concern for the congregation and in 1912 the "new" St. Mary Magdalene Church opened on Main Street.

The old St. Mary Magdalene Church continued to be used for an annual service, picnics on the grounds and for weddings. The last service to be held on the site was in 1966 and in 1967 the building was declared unsafe.

In 1970, the County of Prince Edward took over the building from the Anglican Dioceses for use as Museum. Wintario grants helped with the renovations needed to create a second floor and provide a suitable museum space. Over the years, it became evident that there issues with the structure including the roof, movement in the walls (especially on the North wall) shown by the bowing out of the brick near the roof line, and water penetration and plaster issues in the ceiling and the wall in the chancel.

From 2004 to 2007 several heritage preservation specialists provided assessments and plans. It was in 2008 that it was identified that a full rehabilitation project would be needed to ensure the preservation of the structure for the future. Approval from Council with funds dedicated from the Investing in Ontario program, County of Prince Edward funds and a successful application to the Department of Canadian Heritage Cultural Spaces Canada Program meant the work could proceed. The museum closed for the resulting rehabilitation project in October 2009 and re-opened in July 2011.

Work completed included:

- Reconstruction of the North wall and foundation by taking down the wall brick by brick and using heritage brick re-building the wall.
- Construction of a new foundation wall.
- Re-pointing and consolidation of the chancel wall.
- Re-building the pilasters.
- The interior section of the second floor was cut out, leaving a more open view of the chancel and creating a mezzanine area overlooking the chancel wall
- Stained glass window preservation and repairs.
- Touching up damaged areas of the Chancel's stencil work.
- Floors were levelled to create an accessible main floor
- Creation of a ramp to the front door
- Accessible washrooms.

The vision of creating an open and inviting space for a functional museum has also meant that this building will continue to function just as Reverend Macaulay had envisioned.