

Past and present all aboard for a great future

By Erica Phillips

The development community and the heritage preservation community are again proving that they can work together.

Integrating Brampton's history through the old CPR Station into the new Mount Pleasant subdivision links Brampton's past to its future.

It's been a long, difficult and sometimes bumpy journey for the new permanent home of the CPR station, which was built in 1902 and expanded in 1912: it was designed by Charles Sorby, CPR's master architect.

"This amenity space will function as community meeting rooms and is part of a larger project, which includes a library and a public elementary school. The amenity space is the focal point of a new civic square," Falsarella added.

Cesidio Cugini of Makrimichalos Cugini Architects is the partner in charge of this project.

"The whole train station is being used; we're not using the original parts because they have deteriorated and it's not safe; we are using some of the masonry, brick and stone, so it's a recreation basically of the original 1902 building," Cugini said.

The firm, which has done other adaptive reuse projects,



Originally located in downtown Brampton between Park and West Streets, between Queen and Nelson Streets, after a few careful moves (at times dismantled)— with stops at Hutton Nurseries and a farm, the station has a new home.

It is now stationed about eight kilometres away at the northwest corner of Bovaird Drive and Creditview Road in Mattamy Homes' innovative new community, Mount Pleasant Village to the north of the Mount Pleasant GO train station.

"The City of Brampton has waited years for an opportunity to use the materials from the historic CPR train station. The fact that the materials have been in storage for many years is a testament to the commitment by the City to preserve its history. Mayor Susan Fennell, Councillor Paul Palleschi, Councillor John Hutton and the rest of Council identified this as an important project and City staff made it come to fruition. Mattamy Homes is pleased to be a part of it," said Frank Doracin, president, Mattamy Development Corporation.

Davis Falsarella, project manager, Special Projects with the City of Brampton said that because of Mattamy's development of the surrounding lands, it's a key partner in this project.

took this on because it's unique and features multiple uses.

However working on the CPR station has its challenges, Cugini wants to make sure "that we're true to the original building and somehow try to incorporate the traditional architecture with the new library, budget, as well as current building codes," he said.

"It was a challenge to incorporate three types of buildings into one building and make them all work collectively," Cugini added.

The journey to save the CPR station started in 1977 and along the way new partners hopped on board: the Brampton Heritage Board, the Brampton Historical Society, Canadian Pacific Railway, Hutton Nurseries, the City of Brampton, Mattamy Homes, the federal and provincial governments, plus various consultants.

Railways are like rivers: communities develop around them, for they serve as transportation routes; villages, and resources (natural and manmade) are usually found near them during their early stages. That history is well documented in books such as *Heritage Brampton: an Illustrated Review of Some Fine Old Buildings in the City* by Albert Seaman and *Brampton: an Illustrated History* by Helga V. Loverseed.



"The decision to incorporate Brampton as a village in 1853 was the result of many factors – not least of which was the arrival of the railroad," Loverseed said.

An article entitled "Save Our Station – A Brief history of the Brampton C.P.R. Station and the on-going fight to save it" appeared in the newsletter Buffy's Corner, in September 2004. It describes the importance of the station.

"The Dale Estates, the largest producer of roses in the British Commonwealth shipped its flowers to Toronto and across North America from the station; It was used as a meeting hall where townspeople would congregate to hear the latest news over the wire; CPR Agent Thomas Thauburn, the Brampton stationmaster in 1908, later became the mayor of the Town of Brampton; Special trains ran out of town for Brampton Excelsior lacrosse games and provided full service to the Canadian National Exhibition."

temporary— home at the Hutton Nurseries in 1981 until the lands were sold to the Kaneff Group. On life support again in the mid 1990's, the station was carefully dismantled and moved to the Crawford farm in west Brampton, where it remained unused for several more years started to fall apart. The city owns the station's salvaged materials.

Since its sesquicentennial in 2003, there has been a renewed passion for protecting Brampton's history.

"The City works diligently to protect and save all of its designated heritage buildings because they are integral to Brampton's collective memory and identity" said Antonietta Minichillo, a heritage coordinator with the City of Brampton.

In 2008 various options to give the station new life were explored: Mattamy Homes approached the City about integrating the historic building into its Mount Pleasant Village community, which is ironically



The Old CPR Station (far right) will be part of a new civic space (below centre and right) that includes a library and a school in Mount Pleasant Village.

The station received a heritage designation for several reasons.

"The building style followed the architectural pattern established by Charles Sorby, and, until recent years, was a familiar part of the rural and suburban Canadian scene. The windows were divided by vertical mullions carried upwards above the level of the eaves. Although a large proportion of the surface was glazed, the feature was literally overshadowed by the broad, flared, overhanging roof. The overhang was essentially functional in character, serving to shelter the freight and passengers from the elements," said Seaman.

This link to Brampton's past was almost lost: it was closed in 1970 to passengers and just used for CPR storage. In 1977 CPR applied for a demolition permit, but the City and residents persisted; the fight even went to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, which granted an injunction to halt demolition. The station was relocated in intact to a new —

anchored by a new GO train station— it opened in early 2005. Despite all of the moves, dismantling, neglect and threats of demolition, the CPR station was relocated again in October 2009. Funding from federal Infrastructure Stimulus Fund proved fortuitous.

Cugini has a goal for the station: "That it becomes a special place in Brampton, a focal point in the community, in the Mount Pleasant community first of all, and the city as whole."

The project is expected to be complete in the spring, a time of rebirth.

By salvaging the old CPR station, the City and various partners are salvaging a piece of Brampton's past.

Images: City of Brampton, Makrimichalos Cugini Architects, Mattamy Homes, Erica Phillips

