



Media Release

For immediate release - Thursday, June 29, 2023
Brant, Ontario

County of Brant Public Library new Main Branch receives Council approval

On Tuesday, June 27, County of Brant Council approved the proposed architectural design for a new Main Branch Library. The project includes restoration of the Bawcutt Centre, Paris' 1854 original town hall and National Historic Site. The concept design was developed by DPAI Architecture Inc., of Hamilton.

"We are thrilled to have Council's support to move the new Main Branch Library to the next steps," says Kelly Bernstein, Library CEO. "This library will be a cultural anchor where the community can gather, learn, and grow. It's an honour to have the opportunity to preserve a vital piece of our community's heritage for future generations."

In addition to traditional library services, the new Main Branch Library's 27,800 square feet will feature a MakerSpace lab, community kitchen, café, and restored historic Opera Hall for public performances. Exterior features such as a reading garden and outdoor program area will enhance the natural beauty of the heritage neighbourhood.

"The new main library and Bawcutt Centre will be a vibrant community hub for diverse and collaborative cultural expressions and gatherings for all residents of the County of Brant," says Mayor David Bailey. "It will bring new and exciting library services to our ever-growing community, provide much needed special event space, and restore and preserve an important piece of County of Brant heritage."

This project is guided by a Steering Group composed of Library Board members and the Bawcutt Centre Advisory Committee. Site preparation, including the demolition of a 1964 addition, will begin in July. Designs will be finalized and put to tender this summer and return to Council for approvals this fall. Once approved, construction is anticipated to take approximately 24 months.

Find approved architectural designs and up-to-date building news at brantlibrary.ca/NewMainBranch.

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About the Bawcutt Centre

The Bawcutt Centre (formerly the Paris Old Town Hall) is located at 13 Burwell Street, Paris, Ontario. It is the oldest civic Gothic building in Canada. The original structure was built in 1854 and consists of a basement, a first/ground/main floor, a second/upper floor, and a bell tower.

Community initiatives to save, preserve, and repurpose the Bawcutt Centre have evolved since the 1980s. County Council purchased the building in 2015 with the support of a \$1,000,000 donation from Skystone Media CEO Linda Schuyler. The building was renamed the Bawcutt Centre in honour of Schuyler's father, Jack Bawcutt, a former mayor of the Town of Paris.

In October 2020, the former Paris Town Hall received federal recognition as a National Historic Site.

In July 2021, Council approved The Bawcutt Centre Restoration/New Main Library Branch Project, establishing a project team and Steering Group.

On June 27, 2023, Council approved architectural designs and construction of the new Main Branch Library.

About the Library

The County of Brant Public Library serves the County of Brant, Ontario, with five branches in Burford, Glen Morris, Paris, Scotland-Oakland, and St. George, and a mobile library and 24/7 book-lending kiosk in Onondaga.

Visit the library online at brantlibrary.ca, [@brantlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/brantlibrary) on Facebook and Twitter, and [@brantcountypubliclibrary](https://www.instagram.com/brantcountypubliclibrary) on Instagram.

Questions or comments? Connect with:

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