

Get Set for Doors Open Aurora 2013



By Vanessa Hicks
Program Manager,
Heritage Planning

The Town of Aurora and the Heritage Advisory Committee are once again getting ready to celebrate the very popular Doors Open Aurora event.

The eighth annual Doors Open Aurora takes place on Saturday, August 17, with most sites open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Don't miss this opportunity to explore fascinating sites in your own backyard. Participation is free. No tickets or reservations are required. Just come out and join thousands of visitors exploring Aurora's hidden treasures, some of which are not normally open to the public.

Explore historic buildings, structures, landmarks and natural sites. Join the fun, ask questions, take part in an educational walking tour and give your children a great opportunity to learn more about the history of Aurora.

This year, Doors Open Aurora features 15 sites and a historic walking tour to educate and entertain the whole family.

Doors Open Aurora is part of the Doors Open Ontario initiative, a community-based celebration that builds pride in Ontario's built and natural heritage for residents and visitors alike.

The first Doors Open Day took place in France in 1984. In 2000, the City of Toronto launched the first Doors Open event in North America. In 2002, Doors Open Ontario, the first province-wide event of its kind in Canada, was launched by the Ontario Heritage Trust. Aurora joined in 2006. Since then, hundreds of significant historic sites have opened their doors to nearly 17,000 visitors.

Start your Doors Open day at the Aurora Farmers' Market & Artisan Fair located on Wells Street in Aurora Town Park. This is a place to enjoy a taste of Aurora's seasonal fruits and vegetables, baked goods, handmade jewellery and other crafts. Come early, as the Aurora Farmer's Market is only open from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Aurora Cultural Centre and the Aurora Public Library are back again as visitor favourites. Be sure to visit the Aurora Cultural

Centre, constructed circa 1885 in the late Victorian architectural style, which served as the former Church Street School. Don't miss the Aurora Public Library with its impressive modern architecture, dedicated staff and year-round displays.

Several historic buildings will open their doors to visitors this year, including Victoria Hall, which features a delightful art display by the Society of York Region Artists. Hillary House, Aurora's national Historic Site noted for its long-standing presence in the community and association with medical history, will also be featured this year.

The Wells Street Lofts (formerly the Wells Street School), an iconic building and a testament to Aurora's commitment to restore its built heritage resources, will open its doors this year and feature displays and designs illustrating its conversion to loft-style housing as a heritage re-use project.

Another distinctive site included in the event is the Aurora Cemetery. The cemetery is a designated heritage property that contains two unique structures, the Dead House and the Keeper's House, in addition to the burial grounds.

Many more sites are also featured this year, including the Aurora Rising Sun Masonic Lodge, the Benjamin Stephenson House, Trinity Anglican Church, Aurora United Church, the Aurora Armoury, the Absalom Blaker House, Merlin's Hollow and Horton Place.

Starting this week and leading up to the event, The Auroran will present you with weekly articles featuring participating sites and activities. Stay tuned!

For more information about Doors Open Aurora, or to volunteer for the event, please visit www.aurora.ca and click on the Doors Open icon on the front page.

We hope to see you there!