

Save the date for Doors Open Aurora 2017



By Jeff Healey

Town of Aurora

The Town of Aurora and the Heritage Advisory Committee are once again preparing to celebrate our popular Doors Open Aurora Event.

This year, Doors Open Aurora features 17 sites, including two new walking tours. Many sites feature historical buildings built in Aurora, or provide unique experiences tied to nature, art or culture.

The 12th Annual Doors Open Aurora Event will take place on Saturday, August 19 with most sites open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Don't miss this opportunity to explore 17 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.

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

Start your exploration in Aurora at the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair located on Wells Street in Town Park. Enjoy some of Aurora's seasonal fruits and vegetables, baked goods, handmade jewellery and other crafts. Come early and visit the Doors Open Aurora headquarters to pick up your guide of the sites.

Don't miss the chance to see the newly restored Horton Place, a beautiful home constructed in the Italianate Architectural style and new to this year for Doors Open Aurora 2017, the Aurora Royal Canadian Legion. The Aurora Royal Canadian Legion will provide tours of the building, historical displays of pictures, displays of military uniforms and cap badges.

The Aurora Armoury will feature The Great Canadian Songbook on Vinyl Returns, an art gallery that will showcase Canada's great music history.

The Patrick House is also on the list again. Constructed in the Georgian cottage architectural style, it was the former home of the famous architect, John Bowser.

Victoria Hall, originally built in 1883 for the local Disciples of Christ Congregation will feature artists from the 2017 Aurora Artist Studio Tour. During this event, both the Patrick House and Victoria Hall will have artwork displays by local artists.

Additionally, this year there will be two walking tours ?The Aurora Historical Society Walking Tour led by Leigha Cooney, and Creepy Tours led by gifted storyteller David Heard. Both walking tours will provide the interesting history of several sites within Historic Aurora.

Visitor favourites including the Aurora Cultural Centre, Merlin's Hollow and The Hillary House are also back again. 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 and features a variety of family events. Merlin's Hollow contains four unique gardens, including a rock and water garden that has been featured on CBC and HGTV. 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. Additional sites included are: the Aurora Rising Sun Masonic Lodge, The Patrick House, Aurora Public Library, Aurora Armoury, The George Russel House, Charles Henry Sheppard House, Theatre Aurora and Aurora's Lawn Bowling Club located in McMahon Park. Doors Open Aurora is part of the Doors Open Ontario initiative, a community-based celebration that showcases Ontario's built and natural heritage for residents and visitors alike. The first Doors Open Day event was held 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. Doors Open Aurora began in 2006. Since then, hundreds of sites of significant historical character have opened their doors and hosted more than 23,300 site visits. This is the first of a series of articles that will be published in The Auroran. Each article will feature participating sites, activities and historical information.

For more information about Doors Open Aurora, or to volunteer for the event, please visit <http://www.doorsopenontario.on.ca/aurora>