



Essex Region Conservation
the place for life

Save ^{The} Homestead

— at the —
John R. Park Conservation Area

Land Acknowledgement



The Essex region is the traditional territory of the Caldwell First Nation, members of the Three Fires Confederacy, comprised of the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi Peoples. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all the Original Peoples of Turtle Island - North America who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.



Protect The Past . . . For Their Future



Most of us can remember our first visit to the Homestead, whether as a school field trip, for a special event such as the Maple Syrup Festival, Harvest and Horses, Christmas in the Country or for a family outing. Maybe you remember the tempting aromas of baking in the kitchen fireplace, carrying maple sap tapped from the trees in a yoke on your shoulders, or watching your grandchildren walk on old-time stilts. The Homestead magically brings people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities together, creating lasting memories of truly unique experiences.





Museums and conservation areas educate, inform and delight, they preserve our history and welcome us with stories told in their natural settings.

- Lynn Baker, Chair, Homestead Advisory Board









Every historic site has a story to tell. These stories share our culture and our convictions. They are our connections to the past and can inspire us into the future.





Located in the community of Harrow in the Town of Essex, the Homestead:



-  Is a 19-acre conservation area located on Fox Creek, a provincially significant wetland, providing a unique mix of human and natural history components.
-  Is Ontario's only living historical farm museum west of London, giving it significant regional importance.
-  Is the winner of the Russell K. Cooper Award from the Ontario Historical Society for "a living history museum showing excellence in programming, ingenious problem solving or site development".
-  Is one of six houses in all of Ontario with an American Greek Revival style of architecture; the Homestead is one of only two available for public access.
-  Has been recognized by Tourism Windsor-Essex-Pelee Island as the Best Museum/Heritage Space in Windsor-Essex, three times.
-  Provides a space for the community to connect for knowledge-sharing classes, workshops, family celebrations, and more.





A visit to the John R. Park Homestead Conservation Area takes you back in time to the 1850s. The original house and farm buildings of John and Amelia Park bring the 19th century to life.



The Homestead is a vital tourism destination and education resource for the region and welcomes up to 20,000 students and visitors annually - during maple season alone, nearly 4,000 visitors participate in this annual hands-on, truly Canadian cultural experience. Our partnership with a local school board has led to the development of an Indigenous education program that explores the history of the region's First Peoples.





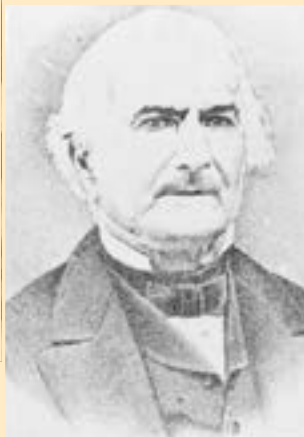
The Homestead is a vital link to our diverse history



When John R. Park, and his wife Amelia Park, completed construction of the Greek Revival Home in 1842, little did they know the impact they would have on our region and community.



Construction of the home was completed in 1842. The original barns, sheds, and outbuildings were built in a period from circa 1850 to 1882.



Original portrait of John R. Park.



The three Park brothers, Thomas, John and Theodore established a shipping and trading business, Park & Co. and their ties to the manufacturing history and development of this region are significant. The brothers owned and operated a fleet of schooners and steamers, a sawmill, a blacksmith shop, and two general stores. Their ships plied the Great Lakes and traveled to ports as far as Liverpool.

Today, the Homestead exposes children to quality, experiential, curriculum-connected outdoor **STEAM** education programs to create a pipeline of students interested in exploring a variety of career paths including the trades. As development in this region continues at an extraordinary pace, providing these opportunities is of critical importance to ensuring a future diverse workforce.



A Timeline of Homestead History



1970s

The era of private ownership of the Homestead ends. The property is acquired by the Province of Ontario and leased to Essex Region Conservation Authority for 30 years. JRPH's natural heritage inventory is completed, and Amelia & John Park's house, built in 1842, is restored, furnished with antiques and opened to the public as a museum in 1978.

1980s

Nine barns and outbuildings are restored, and the Lake Erie shoreline stabilized. A steam-powered sawmill is added and the first Maple Syrup Festival is held.

1990s

Homestead volunteers come together to form The Friends of the John R. Park Homestead Inc. The nature trail, heritage orchard, and outdoor science programs for children are developed.

2000
-2009

The Homestead and Holiday Beach CA are founding partners in Explore the Shore, a County Road 50 community special event. The house exterior and volunteer/visitor services in the existing Visitor Centre are rejuvenated through an Ontario Trillium grant. Ontario transfers ownership of the property to Essex Region Conservation Authority and major repairs (i.e. roof replacements) begin to be supported by community partners and fund raising.

2010
-2019

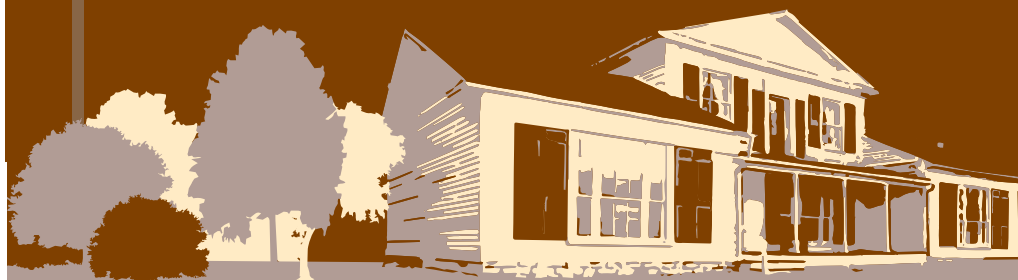
Paved shoulders along County Road 50 make the Homestead more accessible to cyclists, hikers, and walkers. The Homestead celebrates 40 years as a community museum, twice awarded "best museum or heritage space" by TWEPI (2018-2019). A new Indigenous education program is developed in partnership with Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board, as well as Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs and certifications. The Ontario Historical Society awards "Best Living History Museum" (2010) to the Homestead. A pollinator garden at the main entrance, the sugar maple tree planting project, a paw paw grove, and an osage orange tree planting enhance the site's natural heritage features.

2021

Fox Creek Conservation Centre is opened to provide accessible, expanded exhibit and education spaces. Generous donors raised more than \$700,000 towards this new Centre.

2022

A comprehensive condition assessment of the historic home of John and Amelia Park and the eleven outbuildings identifies nearly \$1.5 million in repairs needed at the Homestead, including more than \$700,000 that must be undertaken urgently this year.



Friends of the Homestead:

Passionate people who offer their time and talents

The Friends of the Homestead provide critically important volunteer services at the site. More than 90 volunteers contribute approximately 4,400 hours annually to aid in the operation of the historic site. Our dedicated volunteers provided unlimited support, helping to maintain the site, its heritage gardens and orchard; assisting with costume creation and maintenance; supporting special events and education programs; assisting with the museum collections; demonstrating 19th century skills; fundraising and more.





Preserving Our Heritage

The Homestead Needs Your Help



The historic home of John and Amelia Park turned 180 last year! The beloved American Greek Revival Home has seen 180 summer seasons, over 130,000 sunrises and sunsets, 360 spectacular migrations, and so much more!

The John R. Park Homestead has been welcoming visitors as a museum and conservation area since 1978. This unique 19 acre property on the shore of Lake Erie is used extensively to provide experiential, curriculum-connected outdoor education programs for students; it attracts tourists and preserves and interprets the history of our region for nearly 20,000 visitors annually.

These nearly 200 year-old buildings require extensive restoration work to ensure that they will be maintained for decades to come. While the connection to Lake Erie is one of the most extraordinary experiences available at the Homestead, it also exposes the historic building to wicked storms, leading to deterioration of these precious pieces of our shared history.

The Homestead needs your help *now* to ensure it is preserved for the future.

Generations of visitors love the John R. Park Homestead. How many family photos have been taken in front of the iconic horse barn? How many shoulders have the wooden yokes sat upon? How many children have watched in wonder as the blacksmith shaped iron by the fire?

We need your help to protect and preserve these priceless resources, and ensure the next generations have these same memory-making opportunities

Nearly \$1.5 million of restoration work is required to the twelve buildings that comprise the John R. Park Homestead Conservation Area, with more than \$700,000 needed immediately. Most concerning is the fragile state of the roof rafters, which must be replaced this year.



Urgent Restoration Needs



The historic home of John R. Park will require extensive restoration in many areas, including significant foundation work and repairs to all three chimneys. Numerous windows require replacement and repairs are required to the porches. The wooden eavestroughs need extensive repair and in some cases, replacement. A critical element of this work is to ensure the historic home is protected from water damage.

Most alarming is the fragile state of the roof rafters that urgently require replacement. Extensive, historic powder-post beetle damage has threatened the structural stability of the museum's roof, resulting in a significant roof sag and requiring immediate action. This repair will involve jacking up the roof and inserting new support beams, ensuring architectural integrity is maintained while also protecting the precious artifacts within the home. The top restoration priority is to ensure the structure's stability.

Following this work, substantial interior plaster restoration will be needed, as well as interior and exterior painting.

Extensive structural and repair work is also required to each of the eleven additional outbuildings that comprise the Homestead campus. There are challenges in addressing repairs to a heritage structure. Construction methods used in 1842 don't meet with current building code standards, and most modern builders are not experienced in historic restoration. However, the repairs to the Homestead are urgently needed to ensure it can be protected forever.



Conservation Principles

The John R. Park Homestead site is a unique cultural heritage landscape and represents a significant historical resource both to the Essex Region and within the Province of Ontario. The buildings, the heritage orchard, the gardens, the proximity to Lake Erie, and the site's relationship to the lake over time make this setting a rich repository of history, for interpretation and for ongoing study and discovery.

All the work will be undertaken with strict adherence to the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada and consideration for archaeological clearances as required.



**Summary of Preliminary Estimate of Costs
for the Twelve Buildings at the J. R. Park Homestead Site**

| Building | Within 1 year | Within 1 to 5 Years | Within 5 to 10 Years | Total for each Building |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| John R. Park House | \$264,876.00 | \$128,500.00 | \$52,750.00 | \$446,126.00 |
| House Roof | \$350,000.00 | | | \$350,000.00 |
| Horse Barn | \$6,500.00 | \$48,100.00 | \$53,650.00 | \$108,250.00 |
| Calf Barn | \$19,000.00 | \$55,200.00 | \$50,000.00 | \$124,200.00 |
| Hog Barn | \$7,200.00 | \$29,500.00 | \$63,200.00 | \$99,900.00 |
| Grain Barn | \$14,000.00 | \$26,800.00 | \$2,000.00 | \$42,800.00 |
| Tobacco Barn | \$14,000.00 | \$28,900.00 | \$2,000.00 | \$44,900.00 |
| Ice House | \$10,300.00 | \$200.00 | \$400.00 | \$10,900.00 |
| Smoke House | \$3,500.00 | \$200.00 | \$400.00 | \$4,100.00 |
| Loom Barn | \$4,700.00 | \$19,250.00 | \$500.00 | \$24,450.00 |
| Outhouse | \$1,500.00 | \$3,450.00 | \$300.00 | \$5,250.00 |
| Blacksmith Shop | \$13,000.00 | \$32,600.00 | \$500.00 | \$46,100.00 |
| Sawmill | \$19,500.00 | \$500.00 | \$500.00 | \$20,500.00 |
| Engineering, Archeology, etc. | \$120,000.00 | | | \$120,000.00 |
| Total Cost of all Twelve Buildings | \$848,076.00 | \$373,200.00 | \$226,200.00 | \$1,447,476.00 |

Note 1: Preliminary Estimate of Costs are based on 2022 dollars, with no adjustments being made for the 1 - 5 year time frame or for the 6 - 10 year time frame. Work undertaken in year two to ten will be subject to annual inflation rates.

Your Help is Urgently Needed

A comprehensive architectural review has been undertaken, and we have identified, in detail, all the work to ensure the Homestead can be protected and preserved. Nearly \$1.5 million of work is required to the twelve buildings that comprise the John R. Park Homestead Conservation Area.

We need your help to ensure the Homestead remains standing and continues sharing our stories long into the future.

Every dollar matters, and your donation will make a big difference in helping restore the Homestead!



Levels of Giving



Legacy - 100,000+



Patron - \$50,000-\$99,999



Benefactor - \$25,000-\$49,000



Historian - \$10,000-\$24,999



Builder \$5,000-\$9,999



- All donations of \$5,000 or more will be recognized on our glass Donor Recognition Exhibit which will be permanently located inside the Conservation Centre.
- Multi-year pledge installments are available (up to 36 months unless otherwise agreed upon).
- All eligible donors will receive a tax receipt for the full donation amount.

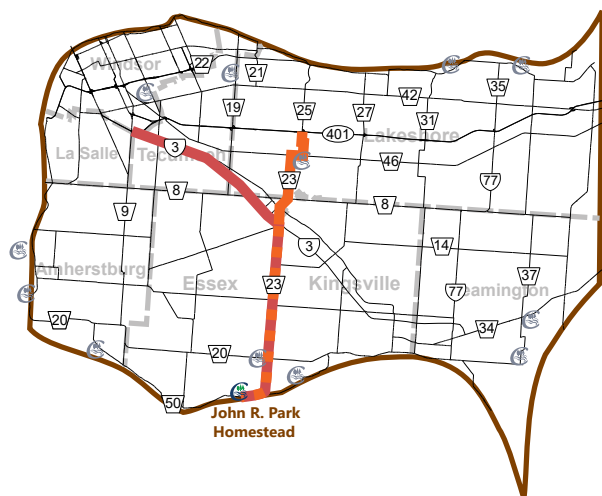
PS – Love it? Protect it forever!

A gift in your will can have a tremendous impact in ensuring the Homestead will be here for people to love and learn from for generations to come.

Want to learn more? Contact us at foundation@erca.org.



Visit the Homestead



Driving directions from Windsor

Take Highway 3 towards Essex, turn right (South) on Arner Townline (County Rd 23) to its end, approximately 17 km. Turn right (West) on County Rd 50 (Heritage Rd), go about 2 km. John R Park Homestead will be on the South side.

Driving directions from 401

Exit 401 from Manning Rd, head South for 5 km. Turn left (South East) on Highway 3, go 7 km, turn right (East) on County Rd 23 (Arner Townline), go 17 km to it's end. Turn right (West) on County Rd 50 (Heritage Rd), go about 2 km. John R Park Homestead will be on the South side.



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