

Historic Wolfville Walking Tour



Wolfville's Main Street of today was part of the old Post Road of the New England Planters which connected Halifax and Annapolis. In the Annapolis Valley, it followed the Grand-Pré to Annapolis trail used by the Acadians from 1680 to 1755. In the late 18th century, the road here was bordered almost entirely by farms. By 1800, two locations, at the beginning and end of our walk, had become the "industrial" and the "social" centres of what was then called Upper Horton. *The building to the left was Hales' department store and building to the right is currently the Kings Arms Commons Restaurant.*

1 Willow Park is on the site of the old inner harbour, called Mud Creek, which was cut off when the railway went through in 1868. Around the inner harbour were wharves and warehouses, smithies and harness makers, shops, chandlers and hotels, all of which disappeared as a result of the railway's construction.

2 259 Main Street. Randall House Museum was originally built between 1809 and 1812 as a farm house for the land up the hill behind it. Land surrounding it was market-gardened commercially until the 1940s, when the building was turned into the community museum. See the interpretive panel in Willow Park or visit the museum during open hours for more information about the history of this building and its residents.

3 295 Main Street (ca. 1840). The Whidden House replaced an earlier house and was built for a shop keeper whose store was next door.

4 329 Main Street (ca. 1914). St. Andrew's was designed by one of Nova Scotia's finest architects, Andrew Cobb, and contracted by master builder Charles Wright. The structure was originally built for the Presbyterian Church after the original church burned in August 1913. From 1923 to 2010 it served as a home for the United Church of Canada. In 2014, the church was decommissioned and between 2017-19 was converted into the Church Bewing Company.

5 385 Main Street. Built as a White Rose service station in the Art Moderne style, this was the last of seven gas stations here in town. It now houses the Wild Lily Boutique.

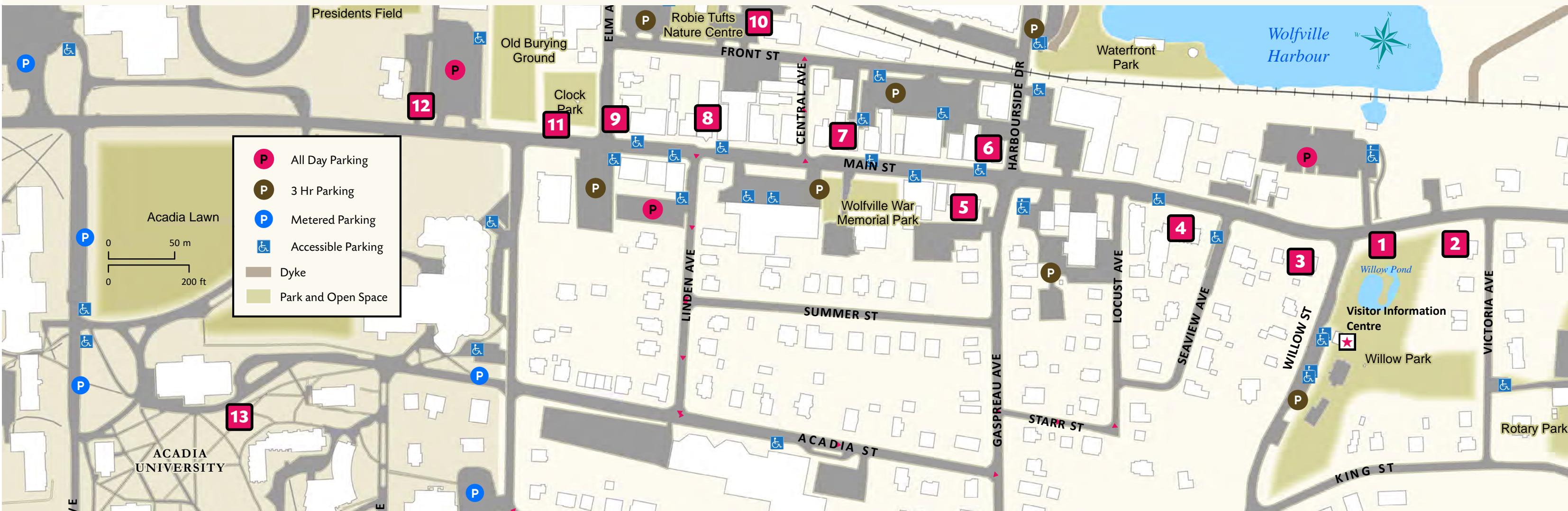
6 378 Main Street. This building was moved in 1864 from its original site opposite Randall House, and has been, over the past 150 years, a ship chandler's, a grocery store, a hardware store, and a real estate office.

7 410 Main Street (ca. 1912). The old Royal Bank and the Bank of Montreal buildings represented, for much of the 20th century, the northern corners of Wolfville's central downtown core. Opposite them is the Wolfville War Memorial Park, where stands a statue of a Canadian soldier that was installed in 1978. The newest installation in the park is a sculpture of war heroine Mona Parsons that was created by Nistal Prem de Boer. You can read more about Mona's courageous journey during World War Two on the interpretive panels at the park.



A more complete description of old Wolfville's heritage buildings can be found in *Wolfville's Architectural Heritage*, available at the Randall House Museum Site#2 (summers only).

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8 450 Main Street. In 1911, this auditorium was opened as an opera house. The lobby was added in 1923, and the front façade in 1947; from then until 2000 it was the Acadia Cinema. It now houses the Al Whittle Theatre, run by the Acadia Cinema Co-op.

9 472 Main Street (1857). Another of the Town's oldest commercial buildings, this building over the years has housed an undertaker, a bakery, a florist, and a tailor. The outside was restored in the late 1990s, when it became a pub. The building behind it, 5 Elm Avenue, was originally to its west and was moved in 1869 to make way for an access street to the railway station.

10 21 Elm Avenue (1911). From 1911 to 1993, this building served as the Town's train station. It is the third train station to have been constructed, as the previous two buildings, which were constructed of wood, burned to the ground. After the last passenger train rolled through the Town of Wolfville in 1993, the building was adapted to serve as the Wolfville Memorial Library.



11 Clock Park was the early social centre of Upper Horton. Here in the 1760s was built a meeting house, which also served as a church for various denominations and as a courthouse. Between 1858 and 1870, it was the site of a girls' school, then various hotels, and a gas station until 1998. Beside the park is the Old Burying Ground, dating from 1763, where the graves of many of Wolfville and area's early Planter families, along with founders of Acadia University, can be found. Across the street stands Wolfville Baptist Church, which was constructed in 1911. It replaced two previous buildings that stood on that site. The congregation, formed in 1778, is the oldest continuing Baptist congregation in Canada.



12 512 Main Street (ca. 1852). Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries the farmland to the west and south of the Old Burying Ground and Baptist Church gave way to stores, houses, and university structures. This building, known as Alumni Hall, has been described as the finest example of a Greek Revival residence in Nova Scotia. It was constructed by prominent merchant and MLA John L. Brown, whose store was at the south-west corner of Main and Highland. The building was subsequently owned by Dr. George DeWitt, a pioneer public health officer and leader in the fight against tuberculosis. From 1920 to 1993, it was the residence of six successive presidents of Acadia University. Since then it has served as Alumni Hall. The rear addition, known as the Wu Welcome Centre, is a recent addition.

13 From Alumni Hall (Site 12) can be seen two of Acadia's most impressive buildings. The first is Seminary House, first built in 1879 as the Acadia Ladies' Seminary. The first female Acadia graduate was Clara Belle Raymond, who graduated in 1884. The second building worthy of mention is University Hall, which was constructed in 1925 and designed by one of Wolfville's great architects, Leslie R. Fairn. This building, made of stone, replaced two previous wooden halls that succumbed to fire on December 2, 1877 and again 43 years later on December 2, 1920.

