



From then until now

Yorkton's historic flour mill, also known as the "brick mill" because of the construction material, is one of the oldest remaining buildings from the community's early years. Yorkton moved south from its original location in 1891 to be alongside the newly-built rail line, and in 1898 John J. Smith built the flour mill with bricks from his own brick plant to support the new settlement's agricultural base.

Over the next 80 years, the old mill changed ownership a number of times before falling into disuse in the late 1980s. It is now one of the last remaining heritage mills in Saskatchewan, and the only one of its kind made from brick, and it is also the oldest remaining local commercial/agricultural heritage site.

The Yorkton Brick Mill Heritage Society is a registered non-profit organization. It was formed in 2012 to raise funds to preserve, stabilize and refurbish the historic flour mill.

Phase I: Structural Stabilization

Repairs have included the construction of a new engineered roof, the replacement of broken bricks, foundation repairs and the installation of new windows and doors. The organization has contributed hundreds of volunteer hours raising funds and working on the building and grounds and has raised over \$330,000 through fund-raising activities, sponsorships and grants. A final structural engineer's report is expected to signal the completion of this phase.



Phase 2: The Interpretive Station at the Mill

The objective of the second phase is to create a new agricultural interpretive centre to educate and promote connections between society and agriculture and to restore the mill site to a thriving cultural hub and gathering space.

The new complex will be connected to the historic mill via a two-storey main entrance directly into the interpretive centre and its walk-in interactive agricultural displays. These will tell the stories of primary producers and prairie agri-businesses, demonstrating their focus on generating safe and wholesome food products by sustainable means.

The rest of the complex will be a vibrant, bustling hub of activity. It will offer a mid-sized event centre, shared meeting space for service groups, artists, youth and seniors, as well as office space, and a multi-user retail outlet space.

It will house the City of Yorkton archives and heritage researcher and will allow scholars and historians access to the archives in a controlled setting.

The exterior grounds provide a comfortable, park-like setting featuring large aluminum panel signs that display important aspects of Yorkton's history, including York Colony, the railroad, and the signing of Treaty 4.



Artist's rendering, architectural sketch and exterior concept of the mill and addition



The building will feature the iconic railway station roof design reflecting York Colony's relocation to the railway in the late 1890s.

Design will seek to minimize carbon footprint and maximize sustainability.

The building will adopt state of the art technology, creating a juxtaposition of the past and the present - a stunning mix of character and modernity that will be a coveted location for tenants and events, such as:

- ◆ Educational and historical programming, including guest speakers and display areas;
- ◆ Community events, small recitals and concerts, receptions, dinners, family reunions, etc.;
- ◆ corporate functions such as training meetings, strategic planning sessions, and customer or staff appreciation events;
- ◆ Youth, Indigenous and newcomers' groups gatherings and activities;
- ◆ Service group meetings and fundraising events;
- ◆ Revolving retail presence utilizing a shared retail space for start-ups and small businesses without their own permanent brick and mortar facilities;
- ◆ Farmer's market and other indoor/outdoor opportunities.

In the past year, the mill grounds have hosted several large events, including the Rally Round the Mill road rally, car show and entertainment fundraiser, Culture Days, and Indigenous Tuesday Teachings. These events are planned to continue to be a part of the Mill annual events.



The storyboards of Yorkton's history and events

The storyboards on the mill site, accessible year-round, tell the story of many aspects of local history, and continue to be expanded on an annual basis. The rich history of Yorkton, the early settlers, the Indigenous people who were here for centuries prior to the arrival of immigrants, agriculture, flour milling and much more is told in words and archival photos.

Events held at the Mill included participation in Culture Days, as well as fundraising events and Indigenous Tuesday teachings. Our local Indigenous leaders have also assisted greatly in the volunteer work involved in site development and have supported the Mill development financially.



The historic flour mill machinery

When the Mill started production just before the start of the 1900s, it had a granite millstone that was driven by steam-powered machinery located outside the building. The machinery that produced flour was updated as the milling technology developed, and what was there in later years is still in place.



When the project is completed

Who can be involved and use the spaces...

- ◆ First Nations
- ◆ Newcomer groups
- ◆ Service clubs
- ◆ Researchers and historians
- ◆ Artists
- ◆ Community groups

Doing...

- ◆ Educational programming
- ◆ Meetings
- ◆ Fundraisers
- ◆ Family gatherings
- ◆ Small business conferences
- ◆ Community events

The new spaces will be a valuable asset that can be used by many groups, including but not limited to the following who will be invited to collaborate to ensure maximum use of the new facilities:

- ◆ Agricultural education groups
- ◆ Yorkton Business Improvement District
- ◆ Yorkton Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ City of Yorkton Researcher
- ◆ Office of the Treaty Commissioner
- ◆ Yorkton Tribal Council
- ◆ Educational institutions
- ◆ Agricultural advocacy groups
- ◆ Municipal government



2021 Saskatchewan Heritage Awards

The Mill received three awards in 2021 in recognition of the work done to restore the mill and provide opportunities for public participation:

- ◆ Saskatchewan Heritage Conservation Award
- ◆ Saskatchewan Heritage Outreach Award
- ◆ Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation 30th Anniversary Award

The awards were presented by Lt. Gov. Russell Mirasty at Government House on November 2, 2021.



For more information contact
Larry Pearen at 306-621-0523
or visit
www.yorktonflourmill.ca