



## A Brief History Of The Market Hall

In 1889 Town Council approved plans for the construction of a new Market Hall. Construction costs were set at \$11,000. The new building would replace the much smaller market that had been operating since construction of Peterborough's first town hall (1851) on Water Street.

Architect John Belcher drew up plans for a large two storey brick building with an imposing four faced clock tower.

The building opened in 1890. The second floor gallery was an indoor market and during the summer months, a large outdoor market was located on the eastern side of the building. Ground floor areas were used as retail stores. The building was managed by the city.

The Market had moved out of the Hall by 1950. The upstairs became a gymnasium. In the mid 1970's, the City sold the building to private developers who incorporated it into the Peterborough Square shopping mall, built adjacent to the landmark.

In 1984, a million dollar capital project converted the gymnasium into a performing arts centre. First operated by Artspace, Market Hall became a major focal point for the region's cultural community. However, by 1997, no tenant was in place to manage the venue. As a result, the owner of Market Hall developed a plan to convert the theatre space into a downtown bingo hall. Moreover, the building's external façade was in need of considerable repairs. Two major campaigns emerged to remedy the problems.



**First, Friends of Market Hall was formed and gave rise to Market Hall Performing Arts Centre, an incorporated non-profit organization that would oversee and manage the building as a performing arts centre. Secondly, a Save the Market Hall campaign was created by Professor T.H.B. Symons, past Chair of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The campaign was designed to raise money for the city to acquire the building and restore the exterior of structure. Both initiatives were very successful.**



**Recently, the clock tower received its long needed upgrade and now stands tall in the heart of the downtown. Restoration and rehabilitation of the exterior facades is ongoing. At the same time, Market Hall Performing Arts Centre continues to successfully manage the theatre space, with dozens of user groups accessing the site and thousands of patrons enjoying its shows.**

**An exhibit prepared by the Museum Management & Curatorship Program Students at Fleming College is on display in the ground floor lobby. Using pictures and anecdotes it traces the evolution of the Market Hall and the surrounding buildings. It tells of the heartbreaking demolition of the adjoining Bradburn Opera House in the 1970's to make way for the shopping mall, followed by the Hall's revival as an arts centre in the 80's.**