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Baby Point Gates in midst of improvement

Bloor West Villager

Restoration of the historic stone gates at the Jane and Annette streets intersection began earlier this month, a project that has been in the works by the local Business Improvement Area (BIA) since its centennial anniversary in 2011.

Improvements to the Baby Point Gates include enhancing lighting, removing graffiti, repairing mortar, landscaping, installing new benches, pavers and a parkette. A historic plaque will be erected to illustrate the importance of architect Robert Home Smith, who designed the residential neighbourhood.

The gates will be used for seasonal decorating at Christmas and Halloween, according to Danica Loncar, owner of Art Works Art School and chair of the committee working on the restoration of the gates.

"This is about reclaiming public space," Loncar told *The Villager* this week. "The gates had been neglected for so long. They had become a place where people dumped garbage."

The gates were erected in 1911 at the onset of the construction of the Robert Home Smith-designed subdivision to showcase the new neighbourhood. Once the houses were built and residents moved in, they liked the gates so much they wanted to keep them.

The gates played a key role in the creation of the Baby Point Gates BIA, Loncar said. Not only did they inspire the organization's name, but they share a milestone: The gates turned 100 in 2011 while the BIA became official.

"The gates are an important part of our streetscape. They tie the residents and the businesses together," she said.

The restoration work began the week of July 22 and is scheduled for completion in mid-August. Loncar credits community partners such as the Humbercrest United Church congregation, which also celebrated its centennial recently, the Baby Point residential community and city planner Antonella Nicaso as well as BIA merchants and their neighbours.

"Everybody has been extremely supportive," Loncar said. The entire project comes with a \$100,000 price tag, the majority of which BIA members have contributed significantly. The city's office of the public realm and transportation donated \$48,000. "The gates are here for everyone to enjoy," Loncar said.

For details, visit babypointgates.ca



Baby Point Gates BIA Chair Darryl Kaplan, Vice-chair Dennis Maslo and Treasurer Rada Belomarkovic stand in front of the historic gates at Annette and Jane streets, the BIA's namesake.