

# THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE & GAOL



## History

In 1852, the Waterloo County Gaol was built and consisted of a jail and four exercise courtyards with stone walls. The Gaol was essential for the designation of Waterloo as a County in 1853, as one of the requirements to become a county was to have a local jail and a courthouse. The Gaol is a fine example of the Classic Revival style with its distinctive granite, stone and brick patchwork facade, and the symmetry of its six windows and arched roof. It is the only building in the Region built in this style, incorporating brick as a decorative feature. The building currently serves as the Provincial Offences Court.

In 1878, the Governor's House was added in front of the Waterloo County Gaol as the home for the "Gaoler" and his family. It became an integral part of this complex for 100 years. The Governor's House, designed by local architect David W. Gingerich, was built in the mid-Victorian Italian Villa style and is one of the last existing houses of this type in the area. The Governor's House was built to act as a visual barrier between the surrounding community and the jail. The home also reflected the Governor's respected position in the Town of Berlin (to later become Kitchener). The Governor's House currently houses the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, an advisory community committee to Regional Council.



**Character defining elements of the Governor's House include:**

- Buff brick construction in an L-shaped layout.
- Offset four-storey tower with Mansard roof and dormer windows.
- Brick quoining (on the corners), tower and wood brackets.
- Circular staircase leading to the top of the tower.
- Positioning of the Governor's House in front of the jail.
- Location within the Civic District in Kitchener's downtown.

**Restoration**

During restoration in 2000-2001, the upper exterior corridor linking the Governor's House and the Gaol was demolished to expose the entire façade of the Gaol. The red paint on the exterior of the house was removed to reveal the original buff-coloured bricks.

After restoration the Governor's House became the home of Waterloo Regional Police and then the Provincial Offences Administration. In 2015, it became the home of the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council.

Bibliographic sources: Canada Historic Places website  
Doors Open Ontario website



**The Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (WRCPC)**

The work of the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council is rooted in a long history of restorative justice and community stewardship. Established in 1994, the WRCPC generates a greater public understanding of the root causes of crime, creating a deeper community commitment to prevention. To do this, WRCPC focuses its efforts on public education and engagement, knowledge exchange and evidence-based decision making, developing dynamic partnerships and advocating for equity and against marginalization.

The WRCPC strives to shift the focus of crime prevention upstream, building a community foundation where all citizens experience safety and wellbeing equitably. **Upstream approaches** to community safety and wellbeing are about more than the absence of crime; they are about creating a community where everyone has opportunities to grow, learn, work, play, connect, love and be loved. When we start upstream, we make the connection between many diverse aspects of wellbeing such as safety, health, income, housing and belonging. This approach allows us to address multiple downstream issues simultaneously with fewer resources and before harm happens.

To learn more, visit [www.preventingcrime.ca](http://www.preventingcrime.ca) or visit the Governor's House, 73 Queen St. N., Kitchener.