



**MASONRY COUNCIL
OF ONTARIO**

BUILT HERE, BUILT TO LAST

The Local Advantage of Ontario Masonry

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MAY 2025



ONTARIO BUILT

The Enduring Legacy & Future of Masonry

How masonry made—and continues to make Ontario strong, beautiful, and resilient

A Craft Rooted in Our Province

Ontario's identity is built in masonry—literally. From the regal limestone of Kingston to the richly coloured brick façades of Toronto and the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the very foundation of our cities and towns is shaped by local stone, clay, block, and craftsmanship. Masonry is more than a building method; it is an expression of resilience, sustainability, and regional pride.

At the Masonry Council of Ontario (MCO), we proudly advocate for this homegrown industry, one that is not only steeped in heritage but is also driving innovation, creating jobs, and building communities across the province. Ontario's masonry industry is made here, works here, and builds here.

A HERITAGE OF STRENGTH

The Early Days of Ontario Masonry

Ontario's masonry tradition dates back to the 19th century when brick and stone began to replace more flammable materials in our rapidly urbanizing communities. Fires in cities like Toronto (1904) and Kingston (1840) were devastating—destroying large swaths of urban cores and thousands of livelihoods. But from the ashes rose a determination to rebuild smarter and safer.

Local bylaws began to mandate the use of non-combustible masonry materials. The Don Valley Brick Works in Toronto, for instance, played a vital role in reshaping the city after the Great Fire of 1904. Producing up to 100,000 bricks per day, this legendary plant supplied much of the brick used to reconstruct Toronto's downtown—including landmarks like Casa Loma, and Osgoode Hall.

In Kingston, known as the "Limestone City," the rebuilding effort after the fire of 1840 was driven by locally quarried Black River limestone. So extensive was this effort that even Kingston Penitentiary inmates worked the local quarries, shaping stone that would become churches, courthouses, and Canada's first parliament buildings.

PROUD SUPPORTER





BUILT FROM ONTARIO'S SOIL AND STONE

What makes Ontario's masonry industry so remarkable is that it is entirely local—from the raw materials to the skilled trades that transform them into structures of lasting beauty and strength. Our rich geological history has gifted Ontario with high-quality clay and stone deposits. Glacial movements over 10,000 years ago created clay beds ideal for brickmaking. The Queenston and Dundas shales provide the base for Ontario's red and buff bricks, while limestone from the Kingston and Niagara regions has defined civic and institutional architecture for over a century.

In communities like Cooksville, Streetsville, and Burlington, entire economies grew around brickyards that turned "Cooksville's gold"—the region's famed glacial clay—into millions of durable bricks annually. Burlington's Aldershot Quarry and Brampton's long-standing brick plants continue this tradition today.

SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT, AND BEAUTIFUL

As communities throughout Ontario adapt to the growing impacts of climate change and increasingly extreme weather, masonry continues to distinguish itself through its outstanding environmental resilience and long-term performance benefits:

- **Fire resistance:** Masonry construction is inherently non-combustible, reducing risk and insurance costs.
- **Durability:** Brick and stone buildings can last for centuries, outliving wood or synthetic materials.
- **Thermal efficiency:** Masonry acts as a natural insulator, reducing heating and cooling costs.
- **Low maintenance:** Masonry structures require minimal upkeep compared to other materials.
- **Aesthetic flexibility:** From sleek modern facades to heritage restoration, masonry suits every architectural style.

These qualities are why masonry remains the material of choice of building owners not only for institutional buildings and schools but increasingly for residential developments, low- and mid-rise construction, and retrofitting projects across the province.

THE ECONOMIC POWER OF ONTARIO MASONRY

Today, Ontario's masonry industry is a vital economic engine. It supports:

- **Over 14,000 direct and indirect jobs**, from quarry operators and kiln technicians to bricklayers, stonemasons, architects, and transportation specialists
- **\$1.3 billion in annual economic output**, reinforcing its importance to the construction sector and the broader provincial economy
- **Sustainable growth in municipalities across Ontario**, where most residents live within close proximity to a brick or stone facility

Members of the Masonry Council of Ontario—including leading brick, block, and stone manufacturers, masonry contractors, and dedicated suppliers—are at the forefront of building Ontario's future. Together, they play a vital role in delivering high-quality, durable, and locally made masonry solutions that support construction across every corner of the province.



BUILDING COMMUNITIES —Then & Now

Masonry has played a foundational role in the cultural and visual identity of Ontario's communities. Think of the yellow-hued brick homes of Lambton County, the warm buff façades of Mississauga's Brickyard Park area, or the stone-lined streetscapes of downtown Kingston. These are not just buildings—they are stories in stone, passed from generation to generation.

Today's communities continue to be shaped by masonry. From urban infill projects in the GTA to new subdivisions in Hamilton, Ottawa, and beyond, masonry helps meet the housing needs of Ontarians while contributing to urban resilience and environmental goals.

LET'S BUILD ONTARIO TOGETHER

Ontario's masonry story is far from over. It is still being written in every brick laid and every stone set. As we look ahead to a more resilient and sustainable future, we must remember the lessons of the past: Building with masonry isn't just about construction—it's about legacy.

Let's continue to build a stronger, more beautiful Ontario. One that is literally grounded in local materials, strengthened by skilled trades, and designed to last for generations.

A CALL TO ACTION

Choose Ontario. Build with Masonry

As builders, designers, policymakers, and residents, exists an opportunity and a responsibility to support what is made here in Ontario. Masonry is not just historically important; it is locally produced, economically powerful, and environmentally sustainable.

Choosing Ontario masonry means:

- Supporting local jobs and businesses
- Reducing transportation emissions by sourcing close to home
- Building structures that last generations
- Enhancing architectural beauty in every community

The Masonry Council of Ontario proudly stands behind this industry. We encourage all Ontarians—whether you're building a school, a home, or a community center—to build with Ontario brick, stone, and block.

PROUD SUPPORTER

