

Heritage Conservation District Study

Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District Town of Orangeville



Heritage Conservation District Study

Prepared for
The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

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Of the
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Thank you!

Executive Summary

Introduction

- The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to designate Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs)
- Heritage Conservation Districts allow municipalities to guide future changes in these areas of special character
- This study of Heritage Conservation Districts has been funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and is a joint effort among volunteers of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, the Heritage Resources Centre and volunteer historical societies across the province
- 32 districts designated in or before 2002 were examined

Background of Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District

- Located in the Town of Orangeville
- Consists of 64 commercial properties
- District was designated in 2002
- Plan was written by the Town of Orangeville Planning Department and Heritage Orangeville

Study Approach

- Resident surveys were conducted by local volunteers
- Land use mapping and a streetscape evaluation was conducted
- Sales history trends were collected from GeoWarehouse and analyzed
- Key stakeholders were interviewed
- Applications for alterations were collected

Analysis of Key Findings

- The following objectives of the district plan have been met:
 - Encourage the conservation and maintenance of the existing historic fabric
- 80% of people are satisfied or very satisfied with owning or renting commercial space in the district
- Sales history trajectories show four of the eight properties are performing at or above average
- The majority of applications for alterations are approved within a month
- Overall, the Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District appears to be successful planning initiative

Recommendations

The following aspects of the district represent areas for improvement:

- Continue the grant program

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Heritage Act and Designation

The *Ontario Heritage Act* (Subsection 41. (1)) enables municipalities to designate Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs). A Heritage Conservation District is an area with “a concentration of heritage resources with special character or historical association that distinguishes it from its surroundings.”¹ Districts can be areas that are residential, commercial, rural, industrial, institutional or mixed use. According to the Ministry of Culture, “the significance of a HCD often extends beyond its built heritage, structures, streets, landscape and other physical and special elements to include important vistas and views between buildings and spaces within the district.”²

The designation of a Heritage Conservation District allows municipalities to protect the special character of an area by guiding future changes. The policies for guiding changes are outlined in a Heritage Conservation District Plan that can be prepared by city staff, local residents or heritage consultants. A Heritage Conservation District Plan must also include a statement of objectives and guidelines that outline how to achieve these objectives³.

1.2 Rationale for Heritage Conservation District Study

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, volunteers from branches of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) and Historical Societies partnered with the Heritage Resources Centre (HRC) at the University of Waterloo to undertake Phase 2 of a province-wide research program to answer the question: have Heritage Conservation Districts in Ontario been successful heritage planning initiatives over a period of time?

Many people now consider the Heritage Conservation District to be one of the most effective tools not only for historic conservation but for good urban design and sound planning. At least 102 HCDs are already in existence in Ontario with the earliest designations dating back to 1980. While more are being planned and proposed all the time there is also a residual resistance to HCDs from some members of the public. Typically this resistance centres on concerns about loss of control over one’s property, impact on property values and bureaucratic processes. On the other hand, the benefits of HCDs, establishing high standards of maintenance and design, allowing the development of and compliance with shared community values and the potential for increasing property values, are not as widely perceived as might be the case.

Since it takes a period of time for the impacts of district designation to manifest, Phase 1 of the study concentrated on examining the oldest districts, those designated in or before 1992. Phase 2 continued to look at well-established districts. Applying the criterion of residential, commercial or mixed-use areas designated in 2002 or before, 32 HCDs were examined. These districts are found in or near the following areas: Cobourg, Hamilton, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Markham, Toronto, Centre Wellington, Orangeville, London, Stratford, and the Region of Waterloo.

¹ Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 5

² Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 5

³ Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 12

Figure 1 shows that the 32 districts have a wide geographic distribution and represent various community sizes. The types of districts that are part of the study are also evident.

Geographical Distribution		Community Size		Type	
Northern	0	Small Community	11	Commercial	6
Eastern	7	Medium Sized	10	Residential	20
Central	19	Large City	11	Mixed	6
South Western	6				
	32		32		32

Figure 1: Distribution of Heritage Conservation Districts under examination.

The study sought to answer the following specific questions in each of the 32 Heritage Conservation Districts:

- Have the goals or objectives set out in the District Plan been met?
- Are residents content living in the Heritage Conservation District?
- Is it difficult to make alterations to buildings in the Heritage Conservation District?
- Have property values been impacted by the designation of the district?
- What are the key issues in the district?

These questions were answered through the contributions of local volunteers from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario branches, Historical Societies and local heritage committees as well as through communication with local municipal officials.

2.0 Background of the Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District

2.1 Description of the District

The Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District runs along Broadway between Third Street in the east and Faulkner Street in the west and encompasses buildings that front or flank onto Broadway, including one property fronting onto Armstrong Street and two properties fronting onto First Street. It consists of 64 commercial buildings.

2.2 Cultural Heritage Value of the District

The Heritage Conservation District study describes the heritage character as follows:

The portion of Broadway currently under consideration by this study has a wealth of historic buildings that are of similar character, age, massing and architectural style. At present, the growth that the Town is experiencing is placing pressure on the fabric of the downtown area. The high quality of life, variety of lots sizes, mature landscaping and vibrant downtown core are attracting many people and, with them, infill development and redevelopments into the area. The HCD Study Area encompasses the historical commercial buildings of the town's downtown core.

Most of the buildings within the HCD study area date from the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th. The study area comprises primarily commercial buildings with residential apartments on the upper floors. Despite a number of building renovations and conversions along Broadway, the remaining façades are still remarkably consistent, well-preserved and of high quality, forming a continuous streetscape wall along Broadway. As part of the Broadway upgrade initiative, interlocking brick sidewalks, traditional street lamps and street trees were installed in 1991. The recent addition of historical street signs has continued the Town's commitment to the historic character of downtown.

The architectural styles within the study area include: Italianate (1850-1900), Georgian (1790-1875), Gothic Revival (1830-1900), Second Empire (1860-1900) and Edwardian Classicism (1900-1930). (Page 16)

2.3 Location of the District

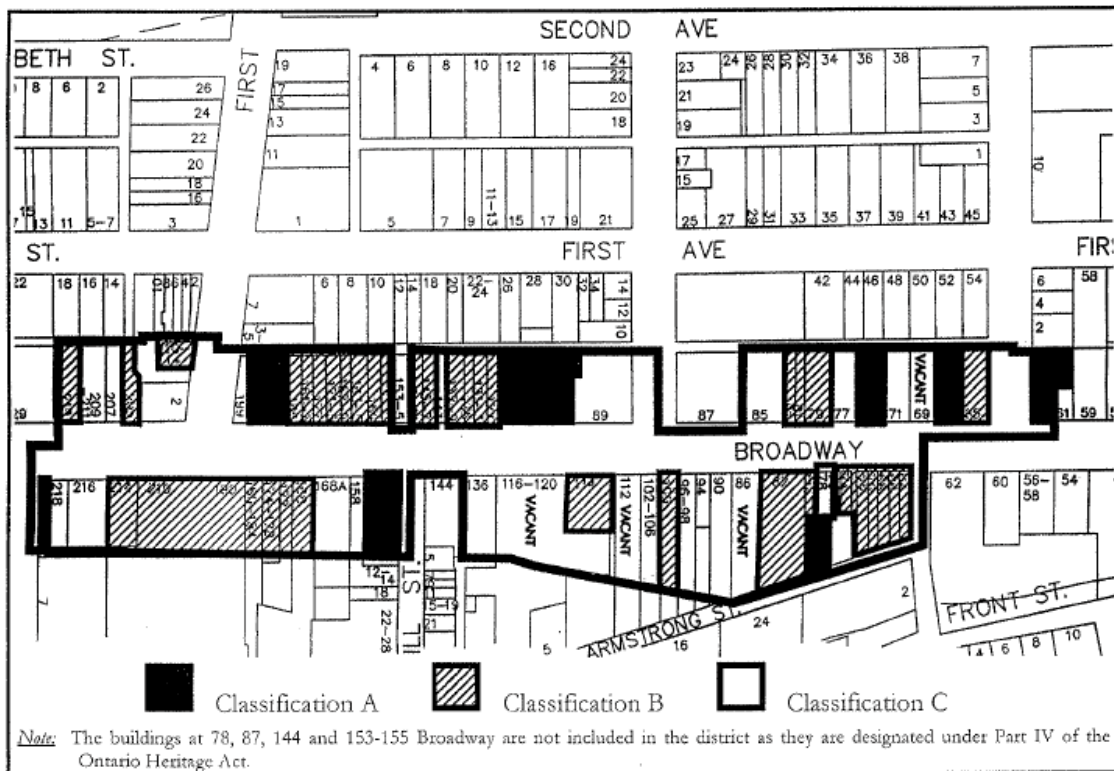


Figure 2: Map of Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District.

2.4 Designation of the District

The process undertaken to designate the Orangeville Heritage Conservation District is laid out in the Heritage Conservation District study:

"In 1990 the report produced for the Program for Renewal Improvement Development and Economic revitalization (PRIDE) recommended that Council designate downtown Orangeville as a heritage conservation district under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. This designation would serve to protect the downtown and help maintain it as the primary area for the commercial activity of the town. This report was followed in 1993 by a report produced by the Ontario Association of Architects that made the same recommendation – that the town create a heritage conservation district in order to maintain the sense of history and continuity so clearly evident in their review of the town's essential elements" (Executive Summary).

The Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District Study began in 2002 and the district was designated in 2002. The study was completed by the Town of Orangeville Planning Department and Heritage Orangeville. The Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District is protected by Bylaw 22-2002 passed on March 18, 2002 by the Town of Orangeville.

3.0 Study Approach

3.1 Resident Surveys

Residents of the Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District were asked a series of questions relating to their experiences and satisfaction living in the district. These surveys were conducted door-to-door by local volunteers. Forty-eight of 64 residents answered surveys, representing a 75% response rate. Tabulated findings of the survey are presented in Appendix A.

3.2 Townscape Survey

A Townscape Survey of the Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District was conducted in July 2012. The purpose of this survey is to provide an objective way to evaluate streetscapes. There are two elements to the survey; land use mapping and a streetscape evaluation. Land use maps, which represent the current use of buildings in the district, were produced for Downtown Orangeville (see Appendix B). The streetscape evaluation involves the use of a view assessment pro forma that generates scores between one and five for 25 factors in a view. Views were photographed and evaluated (see Appendices C and D). The summary of the scores is included as Appendix E.

3.3 Real Estate Data

Sales history trends for properties within each Heritage Conservation District (HCD) under study were calculated and compared against non-designated properties in the immediate vicinity of each district. Sales records spanning an average 30 year period were identified for individual district properties using GeoWarehouse™, an online subscription database commonly used by real estate professionals.

To measure the market performance of properties within a given HCD the designated properties were compared with surrounding real estate. Properties within the HCD that had more than one record of sale were plotted on graphs and compared with the average sales figures for properties outside the HCD and within a 1 km radius. This comparison was done using three factors: first the line of best fit (a trend line derived from regression analysis) was compared to establish which was rising or falling at the greater rate, second the period between designated property sales was compared with that segment of the longer line that coincided with it and third the gap between the designated property sale value and the average for that year was noted. From this the judgement was made whether the designated property performed above, at, or below the average.

It is expected that the use of average sales prices from the immediate vicinity of a district as opposed to the use of municipality-wide sales trends would provide a more accurate comparative record to show how the district designation status itself affects property values. Aside from the locational factor (i.e. properties located within a district), it must be recognized that this study did not take into account a variety of other issues that can also affect sales prices (e.g. architecture, lot size, zoning etc.). This comparison simply looks at the single variable of designation. A total of 872 properties sales histories were calculated as part of this study.

3.4 Key Stakeholder Interviews

Individuals that had special knowledge of each district were interviewed for their experiences and opinions. These stakeholders often included the local planner, the chair or a member of the Municipal Heritage Committee and members of the community association or BIA. Two people were interviewed for the Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District. Both interviews were conducted over the phone. Those interviewed included the Director of Planning and a member of the Heritage Advisory Committee. A summary of the responses is included in Appendix G. Interviewees are not identified in accordance with the University of Waterloo policy on research ethics.

3.5 Requests for Alterations

With respect to the requests for alterations within the Heritage Conservation District, the study wished to answer these questions in each district:

- How many applications for building alterations have been made?
- How many applications have been approved or rejected?
- How long did the application process take for individual properties?
- What type of changes were the applications for?

For the Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District, the information regarding the number of applications for alterations and the time it took to receive approvals was made available in a chart format. A table of applications is included in Appendix H.

4.0 Analysis of Key Findings

4.1 Have the goals or objectives been met?

The district plan does not outline specific goals for the district. However, as a Heritage Conservation District, the assumed goal is the conservation of the historic building fabric.

The objective to preserve and maintain the existing historic fabric has been met. The Townscape Survey shows that conserved elements, detailed maintenance and quality of conservation work all scored well. There is no dereliction and few neglected historic features. Coherence and façade quality also scored well. This means that visually the area is being well maintained and historic elements and buildings are being conserved.

4.2 Are people content?

Two questions were asked about people's contentment with the district. First, participants were asked if they owned or rented businesses in the area before or after it was designated. Eighteen people were located in the area before it was designated. Of the five respondents to the follow-up question, three felt positive about the designation at the time, one person was neutral and one person had negative feelings.

Twenty-nine people stated they moved to the area after designation. Twenty-eight of those people responded to the follow-up question: "Did the designation affect your decision to move here?" Of those respondents, 25 people indicated it did not impact their decision, while only three indicated it did. Clearly, the district designation is not deterring people from operating businesses in the area.

Currently, 21 of the 48 respondents are very satisfied with owning or renting property in the district. Another 16 people are satisfied. This represents an 80% satisfaction rate. Nine people were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and two people did not know how satisfied they were. No one indicated they were dissatisfied. Clearly, there is a high level of satisfaction among business owners and commercial tenants in the Orangeville Downtown Heritage Conservation District.

4.3 Is it difficult to make alterations?

Only 24 of the 72 respondents had applied for building alterations. Of these, all were approved. Twenty people responded to the question regarding the length of time it took for applications to be approved. Of these 20 people, six indicated that the alteration process took less than a month, five people said it took one-to-three months and seven people said "not long." Only two people indicated the application process took over five months.

The records from the Town of Orangeville indicate the same trend (Figure 3). According to the Town, most applications are approved within four weeks, with only a few taking longer than nine weeks. In short, most applications are completed in a timely manner.

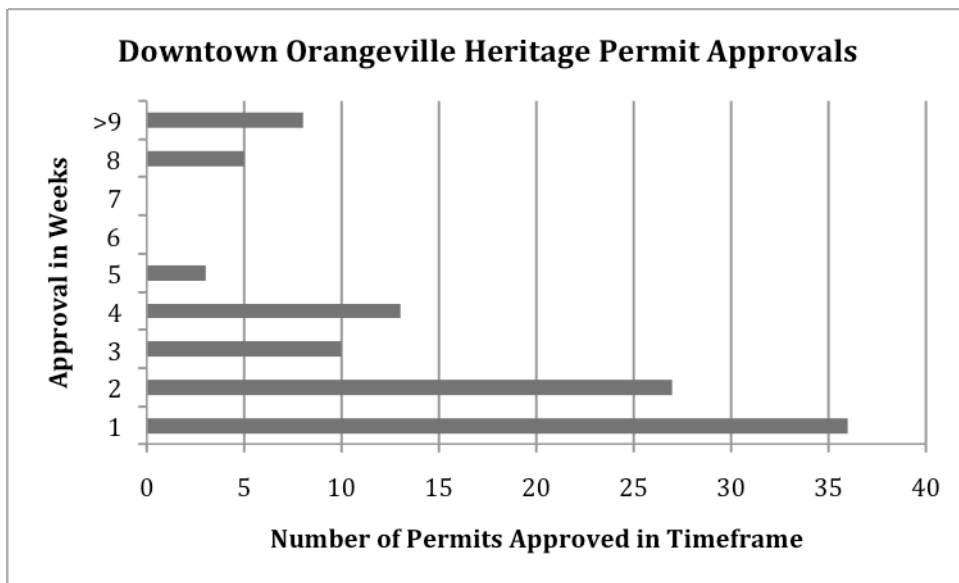


Figure 3: Length of time for Heritage Permit Approvals

4.4 Have property values been impacted?

The data from GeoWarehouse indicates there are 18 properties with sales histories. Of these, 10 properties fell outside the sample since they had no sales after designation in 2002. Among the properties bought and sold before designation, most were rising much faster than the average.

Of those properties in the sample (eight), four performed above average, one at average and three below average when compared to the surrounding area. Some price fluctuations both above and below average were extreme, indicating a volatility in the market. This is unlikely to be due to designation, although designation might have been initiated in part to stabilize that market.

4.5 What are the key issues in the district?

a) Grants

During a volunteer orientation carried out in the district as part of this study, volunteers expressed the desire to add questions to the survey regarding the grant program in Orangeville. Of the 36 respondents, two-thirds (26) were aware of the Heritage District Façade Assistance Program. Owners were then asked if the grant would affect their decision to do work. Five of 26 respondents would do the work with or without the grant. Another five people would definitely use the grant, completing work only if there was matching money, and 15 people would think seriously about doing more work because of the grant. In short, the grant is well known, and is spurring on conservation efforts in the Downtown Orangeville District.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

- The following objectives of the district plan have been met:
 - Encourage the conservation and maintenance of the existing historic fabric
- 80% of people are satisfied or very satisfied with owning or renting commercial space in the district
- Sales history trajectories show four of the eight properties are performing at or above average
- The majority of applications for alterations are approved within a month

Overall, the Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District appears to be successful planning initiative.

5.2 Recommendations

The following aspects of the district represent areas for improvement:

- Continue the grant program

Appendices

Appendix A

Resident Surveys

Heritage Conservation District Name: Orangeville

1. Are you the owner or tenant of this property?

Responses

	Owner	Tenant-Commercial	Tenant - Residential
Counts	22	26	0
Percentage	45.83	54.17	0.00

2. Are you aware you live within a HCD?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	40	8
Percentage	83.33	16.67

3. Did you move here before or after the area was designated?

Responses

	Before	After
Counts	18	29
Percentage	38.30	61.70

4. If you lived here before designation, how did you feel about it at the time?

Responses

Positive	3
Negative	1
Neutral	1
Mixed Feelings	0

5. If you came after the designation did the designation affect your decision to move here?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	3	25
Percentage	10.71	89.29

6. What is your understanding of how the HCD works?

Responses

Preservation	18
Restriction	13
No understanding	8
General understanding	0

7. Have you made application(s) for building alterations?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	24	19
Percentage	55.81	44.19

8. If so, were your applications for alterations approved?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	23	0
Percentage	100.00	0.00

9. On average, how long did the application take?

Responses

Over 5 months	2
4 to 5 months	0
1 to 3 months	5
Less than 1 month	6
Not long	7

10. Overall, how satisfied are you with living in a HCD?

Responses

	Mean Score out of 5	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Do not Know
Counts	4.26	21	16	9	0	0	2
Percentage		45.65	34.78	19.57	0.00	0.00	4.17

11. How do you think the HCD designation has affected the value of your property compared to similar non-designated districts?

Responses

	Mean Score out of 5	Increased a Lot	Increased	No Impact	Lowered	Lowered a lot	Do not Know
Counts	3.48	4	13	13	1	0	11
Percentage		9.52	41.94	41.94	3.23	0.00	26.19

12. Do you think the HCD designation will affect your ability to sell your property?

Responses

No	19
Yes	4
Yes, easier	4
Yes, harder	1
Don't know	0
Maybe	2

13. Comments:

Additional Comments: like being on a main street (1); should be consistent along the street (1); not strict enough (1); no other historic commercial area in Town so can't compete to another part of town (1); unique (1); quaint, a tourist draw (1); its good and bad, can be headache for changes (1); visitors to community love it (1); different perspective for functionality (1); upgrades are improving streetscape (1); signage can be an issue (1); agree with preservation (2); downtown has brought visitors (1); could do more with heritage (1);

Municipality Specific Questions:

14. Are you aware there is a Downtown Heritage District Façade Assistance Program?

Responses

Yes	27
No	9

15. Would the fact that there is a grant program affect your decision to carry out work?

Responses

Yes, I would only do the work if there was matching money	5
Yes, I would think more seriously about doing work	15
No, I would do the work either way	5
I don't know	1

Total Population	64
Participants	48
Participation Rate	75

Appendix B

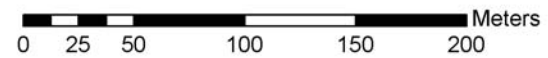
Land Use Maps

Ground Level Land Use in Downtown Heritage Conservation District, Orangeville



Legend

HCD Boundary	Office / Commercial	Services
Not in HCD	Parking	Soft or hard landscaping
Eating / Drinking Places	Public buildings	Under development
Industrial	Residential	Vacant
Land use not assigned	Retail (low end - CS)	Warehouse / Storage
Leisure	Retail	



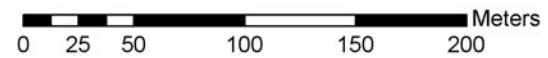
Heritage Resources Centre
 August 12, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

Upper Level Land Use in Downtown Heritage Conservation District, Orangeville



Legend

HCD Boundary	Office / Commercial	Services
Not in HCD	Parking	Soft or hard landscaping
Eating / Drinking Places	Public buildings	Under development
Industrial	Residential	Vacant
Land use not assigned	Retail (low end - CS)	Warehouse / Storage
Leisure	Retail	



Heritage Resources Centre
 August 12, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N






Appendix C

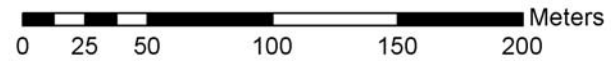
Map of Views

Views in Downtown Heritage Conservation District, Orangeville



Legend

-  HCD Boundary
-  Not in HCD
-  Viewpoints
-  In HCD
-  Viewlines



Heritage Resources Centre
 August 12, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

Appendix D
Photographs of Views



View 1



View 2



View 3



View 4



View 5



View 6



View 7



View 8

Appendix E

Townscape Evaluation Pro Forma

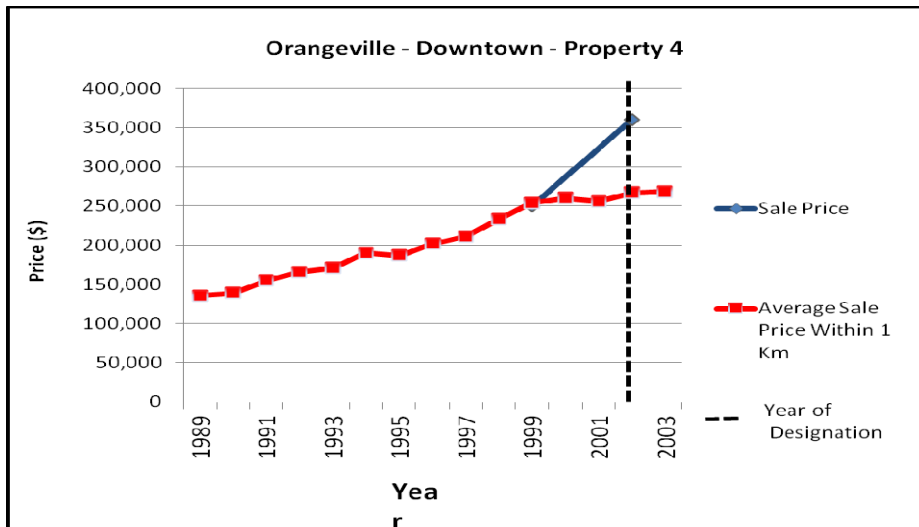
A. Streetscape Quality				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
A1-Pedestrian friendly	34.5	40	86.25	4.3
A2-Cleanliness	33	40	82.50	4.1
A3-Coherence	32.5	40	81.25	4.1
A4-Edgefeature Quality	34.5	40	86.25	4.3
A5-Floorscape Quality	35.5	40	88.75	4.4
A6-Legibility	34	40	85.00	4.3
A7-Sense of Threat	32.5	40	81.25	4.1
A8-Personal Safety: Traffic	31.5	40	78.75	3.9
A9-Planting: Public	35.5	40	88.75	4.4
A10-Vitality	31	40	77.50	3.9
A 11- Appropriate Resting Places	35.5	40	88.75	4.4
A12-Signage	29	40	72.50	3.6
A13-Street Furniture Quality	33	40	82.50	4.1
A14-Traffic Flow. Appropriateness	30.5	40	76.25	3.8
SUM A	462.5	560	82.59	4.1

B. Private Space in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
B15-Advertising, in keeping	28.5	40	71.25	3.6
B16-Dereliction, Absence of	35	40	87.50	4.4
B17-Detailing, Maintenance	34	40	85.00	4.3
B18-Facade Quality	31.5	40	78.75	3.9
B19-Planting Private	16.5	25	66.00	3.3
SUM B	145.5	185	78.65	3.9

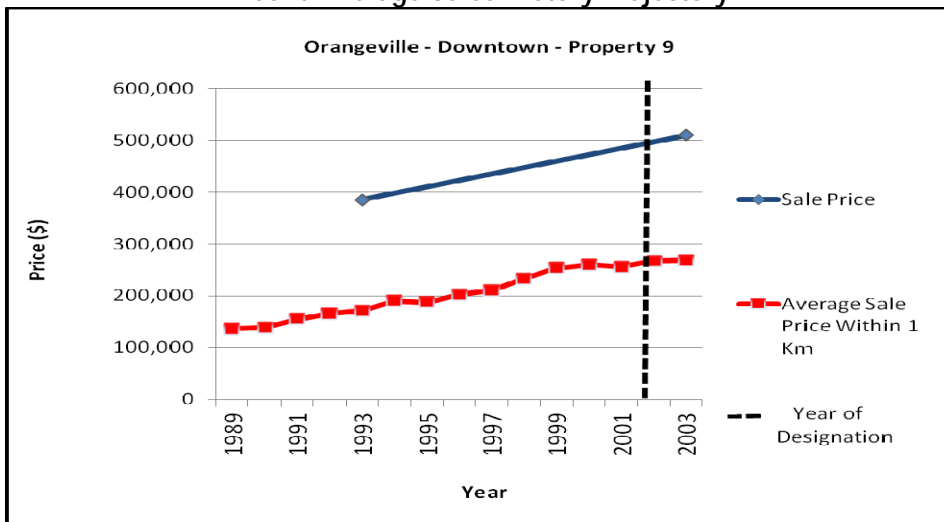
C. Heritage in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
C20-Conserved Elements Evident	33.5	40	83.75	4.2
C21-Historic Reference Seen	30.5	40	76.25	3.8
C22-Nomenclature/Place Reference	27.5	40	68.75	3.4
C23-Quality of Conservation Work	33.5	40	83.75	4.2
C24-Quality of New Development	20	35	57.14	2.9
C25-Neglected Historic Features	37.5	40	93.75	4.7
SUM C	182.5	235	77.66	3.9

Impression Score				
Aggregate Score	790.5	980	79.63250294	4.0

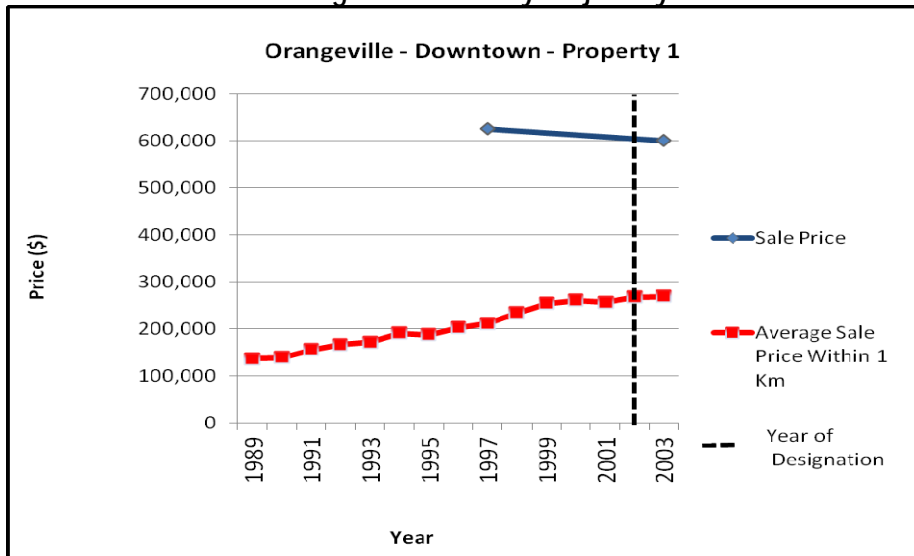
Appendix E
Real Estate Charts



Above Average Sales History Trajectory



Average Sales History Trajectory



Below Average Sales History Trajectory

Appendix F

Summary of Key Stakeholder Interviews

Heritage Conservation District Name: Downtown Orangeville

Month(s) of Interviews: February and March 2012

Number of People Interviewed: 2

Question	Summary of Answer
1. How are you involved in the HCD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Chair of Heritage Orangeville, involved in the initial district study • Director of Planning
2. How did the HCD come about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the efforts of the municipality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - undertook study, plan and bylaw • Orangeville's Economic Development Officer at the time thought a downtown district would be a great economic tool and tourism draw (2)
3. In your opinion how has the HCD designation been accepted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very well accepted with support that continues to grow amongst property owners, tenants and the community (2) • Property owners are seeking out space in the downtown core, very few vacancies
4. In your experience what are the HCD management processes in place and how do they work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance is taken from the district study and plan • Heritage Permit process controls change (2) • Subcommittee of Heritage Orangeville and planning staff access applications and process them quite quickly (2) • Façade Improvement Grant encourages sensitive façade improvements and works similarly to heritage permits
5. In your experience what is the process for applications for alterations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications for alterations (signage, paint colours, etc.) are submitted by property owners for review by Heritage Permit Review Committee (2) • Heritage Permit Review Committee (composed of two members of Heritage Orangeville and one municipal staff member) work with property owners to review and approve applications (2) • Staff have delegated approval authority • •
6. Is there a communication process set up for the HCD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication flows through the local Business Improvement Area (BIA) • No
7. In your opinion, what are the issues that are unique to the HCD and how have they been managed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage and zoning restrictions have been adjusted to compliment the intent of the district • Unit sizes are smaller than in most commercial areas • Parking limitations • District's built form is heavily regulated but zoning is very permissive allowing a variety of mixed uses • Redevelopment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fires on Broadway (main artery of the district) have led to the demolition of

	<p>structures and new pockets of redevelopment that need to be managed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - poses challenges to the integrity of the district - impacts neighbouring properties
8. What are similar non designated areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No
9. Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a

Appendix G

Applications for Alterations

Year	Permit Weeks for Approval	Year	Permit Weeks for Approval
2003		2006	2
			1
			3
			2
			2
			2
			2
			24
			4
			12
			5
			1
			8
			1
			1
2004		2007	1
			2
			3
			16
			5
			1
			3
			4
			1
			2
			1
			1
			4
			1
			8
2005		2008	2
			4
			2
			2
			1
			4
			12
			4
			2
			1
			2
			1
			4
			2
			2
2009		2009	3
			2
			4
			2
			2
			3
			2
			1
			1
			1
			2
			1

Year	Permit Weeks for Approval
2010	2
	3
	2
	1
	1
	2
	1
	2
	1
	1
2011	2
	1
	1
	1