

The Loss of Heritage Properties In Ontario



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Cover Photos: Glengarda Ursuline Convent, Windsor. Demolished 1998. Photo Courtesy of ACO Windsor Branch.

Executive Summary

Purpose and Goals of Study

The intention of this study has been to determine how many historically significant buildings in Ontario have been lost over the last 16 years, to explore where the losses are taking place and why historic buildings are disappearing

Scope of the Study

- Approximately 9000 properties in 22 communities were investigated
- This may be the largest study of its kind ever undertaken in North America
- Communities representing a quarter of Ontario's population from the largest cities to smallest towns were involved
- 34 volunteers and many municipal employees contributed to the work

Major Findings of the Study

- Ontario communities continue to lose significant numbers of heritage buildings.
- Since 1985, 433 buildings have been lost in a sample of 22 communities.
- The rate of loss of historic buildings in different communities varies dramatically:
 - some places have lost 1 in 5 of their historic buildings
 - other locations have saved all of the structures identified as significant
 - some places have lost over 200 times more heritage buildings than other types
- In many communities it is difficult to determine what is being lost because very few heritage buildings have been given any sort of recognition
- Designated buildings make up 13% of the lost buildings while listed buildings make up 65% of the losses (designated means formally recognized under the Ontario Heritage Act Parts IV or V while listed means identified by the community as having heritage significance but not yet formally recognized under legislation)
- The places that have suffered the highest losses are, not surprisingly, among the municipalities with the greatest development pressure
- Larger communities (populations over 25,000) are losing more heritage buildings than smaller places
- Unsympathetic development is the dominant reason for the loss of listed buildings while fire, neglect, and vandalism join development as significant reasons for the loss of designated buildings
- The rate of loss of historic buildings appears to have declined since the last period for which any sort of measure is available
 - this may mean that legislation designed to save heritage buildings is working effectively, at least in some places
 - on the other hand many significant historic sites were already demolished before the period examined in this study

Conclusions

- Even when recognized as historically significant, buildings can be and are being demolished.
- Designation under the Heritage Act appears to provide more protection than simply recognizing significant historic buildings by placing them on a list
- The absence of consistent and standard approaches to designation and creating lists of historic structures hinders good planning and identification and the systematic collection of data
- Some communities have minimized the loss of their heritage buildings while other communities suffer high loss rates
- Some form of financial assistance, tax relief or other measures, that recognizes the value of heritage structures to the community, might make them less vulnerable to re-development and to the neglect that leads to fire and vandalism

Recommendations

- Elected representatives and municipal staff (planners, buildings inspectors and others) should be encouraged to learn more about and how to apply the tools available for conservation and preservation. These include:
 - demolition control
 - property standards
 - heritage conservation easements
 - Part 11 of the Ontario Building Code
 - better use of official plans, plans of subdivision and zoning to protect buildings
- There needs to be more encouragement for designation of significant buildings. More information and education should be given to building owners about the advantages of designation. Legitimately identified significant buildings should be designated with or without the owner's consent.
- There needs to be a standard system for listing buildings. This could be accomplished by:
 - amending the Heritage Act provisions on listing buildings
 - the Minister issuing guidelines under the current Act
 - sharing best practices from successful municipalities with the places where loss rates are more alarming.
- Citizens should encourage Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments to
 - take advantage of the current provisions to provide financial assistance to heritage property owners (as in Hamilton and London)
 - pursue the current proposals under the Ministry of Canadian Heritage - Historic Place Conservation Initiative and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation - Heritage Property Tax Relief Program

Sponsorship, Funding and Direction

- Research was directed by Professor Robert Shipley at the University of Waterloo, with funding provided by the Trillium Foundation.
- This study is the result of a partnership between the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Community Heritage Ontario and the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

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The project was developed by three organizations: the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO), Community Heritage Ontario (CHO), and the Ontario Heritage Foundation (OHF). Pat Malicki, Chair of the ACO, and Pat Neal, former ACO Executive Director, were extremely supportive and helpful throughout the project. The help of Bob Saunders of CHO was essential in recruiting volunteers to collect the data for the project. We thank Beth Hanna at the OHF for her involvement and support.

When we get down to it, the project was entirely dependent upon the volunteers across the province who collected all the data for the project. We realize that this job was sometimes extremely arduous, as many volunteers had to pour over old demolition permits in dusty warehouses. We are extremely grateful to them for their commitment to the preservation of Ontario's heritage. A number of municipal employees, generally the Heritage Planners in the communities involved in the study, also contributed materially to the work.

We would also like to thank Margaret Carter for her provision of her compelling 1999 study on the loss of CIHB buildings that allowed us to have a comparison for our results. We would also like to thank Pam Blackstock at the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Robert Shipley
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Introduction

General

In recent years there has been widespread concern among those interested in heritage about the demolition of buildings which are not only part of the heritage of Ontario but which should be good financial assets for their owners.

Three partner organizations have come together for this project - the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO), Community Heritage Ontario (CHO), and the Ontario Heritage Foundation (OHF). These organizations have worked over the years to preserve sites of cultural and architectural significance in the province. It is important to these groups and others, therefore, to begin to measure the effectiveness of preservation efforts and to better equip them for future endeavours. To assist with this effort, the partner groups have engaged the assistance of the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo.

The Ontario Heritage Act was proclaimed in 1975 as Ontario's response to a world-wide effort aimed at preserving for future generations, "not only...great works of art but also...more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time..." (UNESCO's *Venice Charter*, to which Canada was a signatory in 1964). The *Venice Charter* also states that, "it is the duty of governments to ensure the protection and the preservation of the cultural heritage of [humanity] as much as to promote social and economic development."

Under the Ontario Heritage Act it is possible for municipal governments to recognize the significance of certain buildings within their communities by awarding them a measure of protection against unsympathetic change or destruction, through a process referred to as "heritage designation." Designation under the Ontario Heritage Act can be applied to individual buildings as well as groups of buildings within districts.

Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committees (LACACs), who are represented by the CHO, the OHF (an arms length agency of the Ontario government) and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, are involved in implementing the province's heritage policies. The OHF is empowered by the Heritage Act to own built and natural heritage properties, to enter into easement agreements, and to support, encourage and facilitate the conservation, protection and preservation of the heritage of Ontario. The ACO,

which has been active in architectural conservation since 1933, interacts with other groups in support of preservation. Together these groups and others have not only assisted in the official protection and designation of historic properties but also the creation of “lists” of other significant buildings (often described as “wish lists” for designation), the writing of local architectural histories, the placement of plaques explaining the importance of sites, the education of the public, and the promotion of the province's heritage.

Over the years, in spite of the best efforts of government and private groups, a number of both designated and non-designated but significant heritage buildings have been demolished or altered in ways that have compromised their significance. It is the intention of this study to discover the extent of losses in Ontario and the reasons for these losses. A comprehensive knowledge of the extent and cause of the loss of historical buildings will provide crucial information for future preservation efforts.

The Antecedents and Development of the Present Project

This project began in 2000 when a number of people came together to discuss the need for more tenable data on the rate of loss of the heritage buildings in communities across the province. The ACO, OHF, CHO, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, and the University of Waterloo joined in an effort to ascertain the extent to which Ontario has been losing historically significant buildings. An application to the Trillium Foundation in 2001 was successful and provided the funds to make this study possible. The ACO acted as the lead partner and formally engaged the services of Professor Robert Shipley, Assistant Professor in the School of Planning, University of Waterloo. The research approach was finalized and vetted through the university's ethics procedure. Dr. Shipley is a well-respected researcher both nationally and internationally whose work has addressed a number of other heritage questions. A highly qualified Research Assistant, Karen Reyburn, was hired from among an excellent pool of several dozen applicants. The work was undertaken between the dates of September 17, 2001 and February 3, 2002.

Previous Work

In 1999, Margaret Carter conducted a study for the Department of Canadian Heritage, which reviewed the status of buildings recorded in the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings (CIHB).¹ To date, the CIHB is the most complete inventory of built heritage resources in Canada. The CIHB was intended to be a record of all buildings in Canada built before 1914, not just those identified as historically or architecturally significant. Collection of the majority of the data for the CIHB occurred between 1960 and 1980 and, as a result, the data is tied to a 25 to 30 year time span. In Carter's 1999 report, she chose a random sample of CIHB buildings in 10 Canadian areas, to assess changes that had occurred since the original recording. Carter studied areas with relatively dense CIHB records that were in and around major urban centres. These included Halifax, Fredericton, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver. For each city, she examined the urban centre, a nearby small centre and a nearby rural area. She chose every 100th record in the cities, 20th record in small centres, and 10th record in rural areas to provide an unbiased review sample. From Carter's sampling of the CIHB, she found that 21% of the buildings in her sample had been demolished and 14% experienced substantial alteration resulting in a total loss, by the definition of this study, of 34%.

Need for Research

Until now there has been no other systematic research collecting information about Ontario's lost heritage buildings. There is a lack of reliable, systematic and defensible data. Such data is needed to replace anecdotal information, which can be selective depending upon one's point of view. Further, since the designation process falls within local municipal jurisdiction, it is important to provide information to communities that is pertinent to them. Although some municipalities are aware of the number of losses of designated buildings in their jurisdiction, most are not aware of the number of lost un-designated but historically significant buildings. This information will help local groups in their efforts to save buildings, as they will have up-to-date and relevant figures. As well, it will give them a better understanding of how designation and listing affects the future of a building.

Research Focus

Until now, the knowledge of lost heritage buildings in Ontario has primarily been anecdotal or, it has been limited to buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act where the municipality in question has kept a record of lost designated buildings. This study concentrated on collecting information on buildings in participating communities that have been recognized as significant in some “official” manner, whether by designation, a municipal or LACAC list, a plaque, inclusion in an architectural study, noted in architectural tours or in some other “official” manner.

The main focus of the study was to determine how many buildings in Ontario have been lost since 1985. The date was chosen in order to be within the reliable memory of the volunteers conducting the research. We have also considered a number of related questions such as what kinds of buildings are being lost and the reasons for loss.

Methodology

Scope and Approach of the Research

Participation in this study was sought from a wide variety of communities with respect to the size, character and geographical spread in order to establish a sample that was broadly representative of all regions of the province. In the end 22 communities joined in the study ranging in size from the former City of Toronto through medium sized cities such as London, North Bay and Kitchener, down to small towns and rural townships such as Port Hope and Mississippi Mills. The municipalities involved represent a combined population of 2,782,729 or about 25.9 % of the province’s population. The communities also represented a range from the very urban, such a Mississauga, to the primarily rural, such as Brockton (which includes the former town of Walkerton). The geographical spread covers places from the southwest at Windsor to Sault Ste. Marie in the north (see map on page 6).

Data was collected for a number of different types of buildings. The building types included residences, commercial buildings, industrial buildings, places of worship, and public buildings. The buildings for which data was collected must have been “recognized” in

¹ Margaret Carter, *CIHB Revisited 1999*, Ottawa: Heritage Resource Associates Inc., 1999

some official or systematic manner. In order to make data collection and analysis more efficient, buildings were divided as follows:

- Category 1 (buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act)
- Category 2 (listed buildings – on a recognized list held by a municipality, LACAC or similar body)
- Category 3 (buildings with a plaque)
- Category 4 (buildings included in an architectural study)
- Category 5 (buildings in an historical publication such as a town history)
- Category 6 (buildings included in a walking tour and others that do not fit into the other categories).

How the Data was Gathered

It was decided that an effective way to gather the required information for the study was to engage the services of volunteers. Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committees (LACACs) and branches of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario were approached in a wide variety of communities across Ontario. The research proposal was presented to these committees and volunteers were sought. A list of communities that were willing to participate was formed and the volunteers were contacted individually and sent further information about the project. Training workshops were organized in Toronto and Waterloo, with the intention that one of the workshop locations would be convenient for most of the participating communities. These workshops were 1.5 hours in length and provided a step-by-step set of instructions for the volunteers to follow. They also provided an opportunity for volunteers to question the research methodology in order to ensure that they were fully comfortable with the work being requested of them. A second goal of the workshops was to allow face-to-face communication amongst architectural conservationists from across the province.

At the workshops, volunteers were given instructions on how to fill out the required forms for each of the properties on their list. Volunteers were asked to complete the survey data and to return their forms to the University of Waterloo for analysis.

This project would not have been possible without the expertise and dedication of volunteers. They are named and acknowledged in Appendix A.

The Steps Followed

The first step in the research process was for volunteers to decide the amount of time they were able to commit to data collection as this would determine how many Categories they would research. All volunteers were asked to research Category 1 (designated) properties. The first step then was to obtain a list of all designated properties for a given community. This list was obtained in some cases through the community's LACAC and in other instances, directly from the municipality's planning department. The lists contained the street addresses of the designated properties as well as the year of designation for each property.

The second step was to find out whether the buildings on the Category 1 list had been lost. This step of the process involved site visits and, in some cases, a time-consuming search through old demolition permits in city archives. In some places, the city had kept records of lost designated buildings on their list. Volunteers also gathered information on the date of loss and the cause of loss.

If volunteers chose to move down the list of categories to collect information on buildings not designated, they followed a similar process. They put together the list of buildings which may have been a municipal or LACAC list of buildings that were recognized as historically or architecturally significant but not designated (Category 2), buildings with historical plaques (Category 3) etc. Volunteers were instructed to include buildings only in the "category of highest recognition" - that is if a building was designated, volunteers only counted it as a building in Category 1 even if it fell in subsequent categories, to avoid double-counting.

Sources of Information

Once the lists of buildings were established, volunteers had to find sources that would inform them about the losses of buildings. It was determined that city demolition permits would be the most convenient source for information regarding the precise date and place,

since municipalities usually keep these records listed by street address. Most volunteers started their research on losses by accessing their own memories and then moved on to search the demolition permits. In some cases, cities did not keep demolition permits back to 1985 and volunteers then had to visit some sites to find out if they were lost or altered.

While volunteers collected information on the date of loss from their memories and demolition permits, they also collected details on the cause of loss and any other relevant information relating to loss and submitted this information with their data.

Limitations of the Research

Only buildings lost since 1985 have been included in this study. As data was collected by volunteers who have been involved in architectural conservation, a lot of emphasis was put on accessing their own memory. It was felt that most volunteers could easily recall back to the mid-80s but further back than that might be more difficult resulting in less reliable information.

There were some findings in the project that made data collection difficult at times, such as the fact that some communities have no designated buildings; some communities have recently created their LACACs and so there were very few records on which to draw; some communities leave it up to the owner of the building to request designation of their building resulting in very few designated buildings in some communities (as few owners, if any, have requested designation.) In these cases, it is difficult to compare losses in a town such as this to others, where designation is a government initiative. The provisions in the Heritage Act that enable municipalities to designate properties are applied in different ways depending on local decisions. In addition, there appear to be great variances in the way that properties qualify for listing.

Inconsistencies may exist in the data as not all communities submitted information on the same categories (see Appendix B). This will be further discussed under Findings: Other Categories.

Findings

Overall Loss of Heritage Buildings

- Approximately 9000 properties in 22 communities were investigated representing approximately one quarter of Ontario's population.
- Since 1985, 433 buildings have been lost in a sample of 22 communities.
- The communities that have experienced the greatest rate of loss - Richmond Hill, Scarborough and Orangeville – are all areas experiencing considerable growth.
- Orangeville appears to have experienced significant loss but it has only lost three buildings in total and only one designated building. The high percentage results from the fact that few buildings (12) have been identified as significant. This illustrates that there may not be a diligent identification process at work in Orangeville while towns like Richmond Hill, that has lost a high percentage of buildings, have a very thorough identification process.
- Richmond Hill has suffered the greatest percentage of losses at 19.4%; in other words, Richmond Hill is losing one out of every five of its heritage buildings. While Richmond Hill has recorded some relocated buildings as losses, this accounts for only 5 out of 95 losses.
- Richmond Hill's high percentage of loss could mean that they have a poor preservation record or it could also mean that they are more diligent in identifying heritage buildings and therefore have more buildings to lose that will appear in data collection.
- Toronto, Fergus, Sault Ste. Marie, Brant County, and North Bay are having the most success with preserving their heritage buildings. In fact, Sault Ste. Marie, Brant County and North Bay have recorded no lost heritage buildings. It must be noted however that North Bay has not designated any buildings and therefore has none to lose.
- Toronto seems to have been quite successful in saving heritage buildings but the question arises about whether they are adequately identifying their significant structures. Toronto no longer designates buildings unless they are threatened and has not listed large numbers of potentially significant buildings.
- Mississauga, Niagara Falls, and Windsor have lost between 6 and 8.6% of their heritage buildings. They are medium-sized cities with some growth pressure, however

only Mississauga would match the growth rate of than Richmond Hill, Scarborough and Orangeville.

- Windsor and Niagara Falls are both border towns that, unlike other communities in this study, have experienced downtown development. This is due in part to casinos in both cities. Both cities have experienced the same rate of loss of their heritage buildings. New development in their downtown cores, have likely contributed to their rates of loss.
- The communities on Table 1 listed from Port Hope to Kitchener have experienced moderate losses while Whitby, London and Cobourg are doing fairly well.

Table 1: Total number of losses for each participating community

Town	Number lost	Number of Buildings Examined	Percentage of loss
Richmond Hill	95	489	19.4%
Scarborough	28	193	14.5%
Orangeville	3	55	12.0%
Mississauga	66	764	8.6%
Niagara Falls	7	116	6.0%
Windsor	49	816	6.0%
Port Hope	6	112	5.4%
Mississippi Mills	2	53	3.8%
Brantford	16	429	3.7%
Meaford	6	177	3.4%
Cambridge	8	256	3.1%
Waterloo	29	1140	2.5%
Whitby	10	415	2.4%
Kitchener	16	766	2.1%
London	48	2890	1.7%
Cobourg	7	570	1.2%
Brockton	1	99	1.0%
Toronto	34	3914	0.9%
Fergus	2	627	0.3%
Sault Ste. Marie	0	102	0.0%
Brant County	0	15	0.0%
North Bay	0	76	0.0%
Total	433	14074	3.1%
Average % of loss			4.5%
Mean			2.8%

Alarming Rate of Loss Among Heritage Buildings Compared to Community Average

- Some communities are losing over 200 times more heritage buildings than other buildings in the community. Meaford has lost over 300 times more heritage buildings than other types.
- The communities included in Table 2 are the ones that were able to provide data for their demolition permits. Others did not respond or we were not able to get the information

Table 2: Percentage of loss of all buildings compared to loss of heritage buildings

Community	Average # of Demos per Year	# of Properties in Community	% of Properties Demolished	% of Heritage Properties Demolished	How many times greater is % of heritage losses to other buildings
Orangeville	3.6	7026	0.05%	12.0%	240
Niagara Falls	55.3	28000	0.2%	8.6%	43
Port Hope	5.7	4500	0.1%	5.4%	54
Brantford	36.8	29000	0.1%	3.7%	37
Meaford	1	7000	0.01%	3.4%	340
Cambridge	13.1	35000	0.03%	3.1%	103
Whitby	20.4	27000	0.07%	2.4%	34
London	76.1	109287	0.01%	1.7%	170
Cobourg	6.2	6333	0.01%	1.2%	120
Brockton	2.6	10610	0.02%	1.0%	50
Brant County	18	13 168	0.1%	0.0%	
North Bay	20.7	18000	0.1%	0.0%	

* Brockton does not issue demolition permits for rural buildings and only permits for the ward of Walkteron are included here.

Table 3: Comparison between *CIHB Revisited 1999* and *Lost Heritage Buildings Study 2001/2002*

	# of years in study	Total loss	% loss per year
Lost Heritage Buildings Study 2001/2002	16	3.1%	0.2%
CIHB Revisited 1999	27.5	34.0%	1.2%

Apparent Deceleration in Rate of Heritage Building Loss Compared to Previous Period

- The percentage of loss per year (shown in the last column of Table 3) indicates an apparent deceleration in the percentage of loss of historic buildings since the *Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings* (CIHB) was monitored. The buildings examined in this present study were recorded after 1975, when the Heritage Act came into affect thus creating a designation and listing process. The CIHB buildings were mostly recorded between 1960 and 1980.
- Table 3 shows the percentage of loss of heritage buildings occurring per year overall as recorded by these two studies, in other words, an annualized figure. This figure was reached by dividing the number of years covered by the study by the total percentage of loss.
- It should be remembered that the CIHB attempted to record all buildings built before a certain date while the current study has focussed only on buildings with some formal degree of heritage recognition. However, the two studies are the only ones we have on which to base any comparison.
- There are at least three ways to interpret this comparison:
 - that legislation, protection and/or awareness have become more effective in heritage conservation, or
 - such a large number of buildings were lost before 1985 (the cut-off date for this study) that we had many fewer historic buildings to lose.
 - Many older buildings such as those that make up significant commercial streetscapes are not usually designated or listed and were in categories not recorded as part of the current study
- The correct reading may involve some combination of the above
- Even if we only used half of the *CIHB Revisited* sample, the loss rate per year would still be 0.6%, still higher than the loss rate per year found by this study illustrating a definite deceleration.

Table 4: Small vs. Large communities: total losses

	Town	Percentage of loss	Ratio
<i>Over 25,000 population</i>	Richmond Hill	19.4%	
	Scarborough	14.5%	
	Mississauga	8.6%	
	Niagara Falls	6.0%	
	Windsor	6.0%	
	Brantford	3.7%	
	Cambridge	3.1%	
	Waterloo	2.5%	
	Whitby	2.4%	
	Kitchener	2.1%	
	London	1.7%	
	Toronto	0.9%	
	Sault Ste. Marie	0.0%	
	Brant County	0.0%	
	North Bay	0.0%	
Total percentage		3.3%	1:30
<i>Under 25,000 population</i>	Orangeville	12.0%	
	Port Hope	5.4%	
	Mississippi Mills	3.8%	
	Meaford	3.4%	
	Cobourg	1.2%	
	Brockton	1.0%	
	Fergus	0.3%	
Total percentage		1.6%	1:62
Total loss for all participating communities		3.1%	1:33

Building Losses: Large vs. Small Communities

- Communities with a population over 25,000 had a total loss rate for their recorded buildings of 3.3% while communities with a population less than 25,000 had a total loss rate for their recorded buildings of 1.7% (see Table 4)
- However, Orangeville has a much higher percentage of loss than the other small communities although this is based on small numbers both in terms of buildings identified as significant and buildings lost.

- Large communities have a lower rate of loss for residences than small communities but a greater rate of loss for commercial buildings (see Table 5)

Table 5: Percentage of Loss by Type for Small vs. Large Communities

	Large	ratio	Small	ratio
Type				
Public Building	5.8%	1:17	5.0%	1:20
Place of Worship	2.1%	1:47	0.0%	
Residence	58%	1:7	75.0%	1:1.3
Industrial	11.2%	1:9	10.0%	1:10
Commercial	15.3%	1:7	10.0%	1:10
Other	0.3%	1:330	0.0%	

Loss of Designated Buildings (Category 1)

- The rate of loss for designated buildings (Category 1) is 13%. In other words, for all communities in the study, there were a total of 433 losses and 58 of these losses were designated buildings – or 13% of the lost buildings had been designated.
- According to this study, Ontario has lost 2.3% of its designated buildings over 16 years
- While some communities have not lost any of their designated buildings, such as Waterloo and Sault Ste. Marie, showing that the process of designation seems to be working well for them, other communities have lost a lot of their designated buildings showing that more needs to be done to protect their built heritage.
- Richmond Hill has lost 1 out of every 5 of its designated buildings or 18.75%; Mississauga has lost 1 out of every 10 of its designated buildings or 10.37%; Scarborough has lost 1 out of every 11 of its designated buildings or 9.09%.
- Brantford, Toronto, Fergus, and London included within their list of designated buildings a number of properties contained within heritage districts.

Table 6: Summary: Lost Buildings: Category 1 (Designated Buildings)

Municipality	Total No. of Designated Buildings in Community	Total No. of Lost Designated Buildings (Category 1)	Percentage of Designated Buildings Lost	Ratio	Main Reasons Given For Loss
Richmond Hill	48	9	18.75%	1:5	Fire, relocation, and demolition.
Mississauga	164	17	10.37%	1:10	Development, vandalism and fire.
Scarborough	66	6	9.09%	1:11	Development, neglect and fire
Orangeville	13	1	7.69%	1:31	Building deemed unsafe
Windsor	71	4	5.63%	1:18	Fire and development
Kitchener	70	3	4.29%	1:23	Development
Mississippi Mills	41	1	2.44%	1:41	Fire
Cobourg	100	2	2.00%	1:50	Re-development
Whitby	51	1	1.96%	1:51	Sale of land
London	405	4	0.99%	1:101	Fire, vandalism, development, alterations
Toronto	1170	10	0.85%	1:117	Development
Brantford	197	1	0.51%	1:197	Development
Waterloo	34	0	0.00%		
Niagara Falls	28	0	0.00%		
Fergus	27	0	0.00%		
Sault Ste. Marie	21	0	0.00%		
Brant County	15	0	0.00%		
Brockton	12	0	0.00%		
Total:	2533	58	2.3%	1:42	

Loss of Listed Buildings (Category 2)

- The rate of loss for listed buildings (Category 2) is 65%. In other words, for all communities in the study, there were a total of 433 losses and 282 of these losses were listed buildings.
- Based on the sample for this study, Ontario has lost 3.2% of listed buildings over 16 years.
- While in some communities listing their significant heritage buildings seems to help to preserve them, others are losing a high percentage of them (see Table 6). Richmond Hill has lost 19.5% of its listed buildings, or 1 out of every 5 and Scarborough has lost 17.32% of its listed buildings, or 1 out of every 6.

- Many of the same communities that struggle to hold onto their designated (Category 1) buildings as shown in Table 5, are also struggling with their listed buildings (Category 2).
- Again, while Toronto’s loss rates are low in both categories, there are questions regarding adequate identification of buildings (see page 17).
- The majority of communities that participated in the study collected information only on Categories 1 and 2. For tables containing information on Categories 3 to 6, please see Appendix E. In the other categories (Categories 3 to 6), the percentage of loss reported is similar to mid-range losses reported in Categories 1 and 2.

Table 7: Summary - Lost Buildings: Category 2 (Listed Buildings)

Municipality	Total No. of Buildings in Category 2	Total No. of Buildings Lost in Category 2	Percentage of Loss	Ratio	Main Reasons Given For Loss
Richmond Hill	441	86	19.5%	1:5	Development and fire.
Scarborough	127	22	17.32%	1:5	Development
Mississauga	600	49	8.17%	1:12	Development
Niagara Falls	88	7	7.95%	1:12	Development
Brantford	232	15	6.47%	1:15	Development
Windsor	745	45	6.04%	1:17	Development
Cambridge	256	8	3.13%	1:32	Condemned, development.
Waterloo	1140	29	2.54%	1:39	Development
Kitchener	696	13	1.87%	1:53	Development and relocation.
London	2495	44	1.8%	1:57	Development
Whitby	364	6	1.65%	1:60	Development
Cobourg	470	5	1.06%	1:94	Development and deterioration
Toronto	2744	24	0.87%	1:114	Neglect
Fergus	600	2	0.33%	1:300	Development
North Bay	76	0	0%		
Brockton	57	0	0%		
Total:	11131	355	3.2%	1:31	

Other Categories (3 to 6)

- It is certain that some relevant data was missed for the communities involved in this study.
- All places were asked to collect information on Category 1, designated buildings, and then proceed down the list to other categories as time permitted. This meant an inconsistency in information since some towns were able to collect data on all categories while some collected information only on Categories 1 or Categories 1 and 2 (see Appendix B). In fact, the majority of towns collected information only on Categories 1 and 2.
- A specific example of this problem is in Toronto, where Category 1 and 2 information was collected and the results showed a low loss rate. It is suspected that if information had been collected on Category 4 (architectural studies), the results would have been less rosy. Many architectural studies have been done on Toronto that include buildings that have not been designated or listed but have indeed been demolished.
- This kind of problem probably does not exist for smaller communities where architectural studies or historical publications on the town may not exist or where virtually all of the significant buildings have been listed. Where towns did collect information on all categories (such as Brockton), it was found that very few properties in Categories 3 to 6 were not included in the previous categories indicating a very thorough set of data. The same would not be true for larger centres.

Reasons for Loss

- The last columns in Tables 5 and 6 show the main reasons for the loss of buildings in each community.
- For listed or Category 2 buildings (Table 7), development is the dominant reason for loss while designated or Category 1 buildings (Table 6), fire, neglect, and vandalism join development as significant reasons for loss (see Photos 1 and 2).

Anecdotal information

Long Development Processes

- In Mississauga, much effort has been made by private owners, churches and the municipality to preserve buildings that were under pressure of destruction. Often, however, the process of re-development was long and drawn out resulting in deterioration or arson of the building in question.
- Mississauga, Orangeville, Port Hope, Whitby, Cobourg, Scarborough, and Richmond Hill have all lost buildings due to neglect of the owners after they were listed or designated. Legislation does not require the owner to keep the building in good repair and after years of neglect it can become unsafe and therefore condemned. This can result in the building being taken down.
- Some became targets for arson and vandalism.

Missed Opportunities

- In a 1997 Recommendation on a Plan of Subdivision in Waterloo, a section was devoted to provisions for saving an old Mennonite farmhouse that stood on the property being developed. The city was prepared to specially zone the land on which the house stood in order to facilitate the retention of the house. The developer had agreed to try to find a buyer for the fine old building that overlooked the former orchard that was to be used as a storm water retention basin.
- The City of Waterloo, however, did not make this a condition in granting the plan of subdivision. The development property in question changed hands and the subsequent owner made no effort to maintain the house or offer the property for sale. This was done in spite of the fact that there were willing buyers who would have been more than happy to have paid market value and would have restored the building.



Photo 1: Richmond Hill: 8771 Yonge Street c1860. Part of Old Langstaff Jail Farm.
Demolished 1989 due to development.
Photo Courtesy of Town of Richmond Hill, Planning Department.



Photo 2: Fire at the Station Hotel, Kitchener, December 2001.
© 2001 The Record - Kitchener, Ontario



Photo 3: Richmond Hill: Lynett-Palmer Farmhouse 1861. Just prior to demolition in 1995.
Parts used for restoration of other buildings
Photo Courtesy of Town of Richmond Hill, Planning Department.



Photo 4: In 1991 London's Talbot Block was flattened to make way for private development which never came. The city ended up with the property minus its designated buildings.
Photo Courtesy of the London Free Press Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, UWO.

Loss of A Rare Building

- The owner of a car dealership in Cobourg demolished a “model school” to expand his display space for vehicles. The school was one of six identical schools built by Egerton Ryerson when he was superintendent of schools in Upper Canada. Of the original six schools, only the one in Ottawa remains.

An Unusual Story in Orangeville

- Orangeville has had an interesting end to their first designated building. The Jull Mill’s designation was removed by council so that demolition could take place. The land on which it stood was re-designated and vague plans now exist to turn this land into a heritage park – without the original mill of course.

Trends in Richmond Hill

- In Richmond Hill a number of significant historic buildings have been lost to create vacant lots – at least 19 out of 88 buildings that were lost are now just pieces of vacant land.
- Richmond Hill has also moved a number of buildings out of the municipality in order to save the buildings from demolition. These buildings are recorded as losses due to their significant relocation. The buildings however still stand within a “heritage park” in another city.
- Richmond Hill has also saved materials from demolished buildings in order to use them in other buildings. Like other municipalities, this city has also been victim to promises from owners that were not honoured to save buildings. After demolition of a number of buildings in Richmond Hill, parts from the demolished structures were used in other buildings (see Photo 3).

London's Talbot Block

- After several years of bitter debate and what was described in the press as bullying and insensitivity to local concerns, Cambridge Development Ltd. was allowed to demolish an

entire block of historic London commercial buildings... most of which were designated (see Photo 4).

- The developer claimed that they would build a new downtown shopping mall that would bring economic prosperity to the city.
- Over ten years later, the developer long since having abandoned the site, it remained an ugly urban wasteland, a gaping hole in the middle of a once thriving city centre.
- The city's lack of a downtown plan, committed to heritage conservation was cited as one of the main reasons for this debacle.

Agricultural Losses

- Anecdotal information from Brockton and Central Elgin indicated that a high number of agricultural buildings are being lost in rural areas. Agricultural buildings are seldom designated, listed, plaqued or recognized in any other official manner and so are completely without protection.

Types of Buildings Lost

- Residences have suffered the greatest total loss out of the different building types, with 66.4% of the lost buildings being residences While in Margaret Carter's study, residences did not have the highest percentage of loss, in this study, residences suffered losses far above any other type of building.
- Why is this? Perhaps the commercial and industrial buildings that were under pressure of destruction before have already been lost.
- The same communities that are losing the highest percentage of heritage buildings out of all communities in this study are losing the highest number of residences, which could be a result of considerable growth in these communities.
- For a breakdown of types of buildings lost by category for each community, please see Appendix D.

Table 8: Types of Buildings Lost for Each Community

	Public Building	Place of Worship	Residence	Industrial	Commercial	Other
Richmond Hill	2.1%	1.1%	86.3%	4.2%	6.3%	
Scarborough	14.3%		67.9%		17.9%	
Orangeville	33.3%				66.6%	
Mississauga	1.5%	4.5%	83.3%	7.6%	3.0%	
Windsor	8.2%	4.1%	34.7%	24.5%	26.5%	2.0%
Mississippi Mills			100.0%			
Brantford	12.5%		25.0%	62.5%		
Kitchener			75.0%	25.0%		
Whitby	40.0%		60.0%			
London			70.8%	6.3%	22.9%	
Cobourg	14.3%	14.3%	57.1%	14.3%		
Toronto	2.9%	2.9%	41.2%	5.9%	47.1%	
Cambridge	12.5%		75.0%		12.5%	
Niagara Falls			70.0%		30.0%	
Fergus			100.0%			
Meaford				100.0%		
Brockton				100.0%		
Port Hope			100.0%			
Total Percentage of Loss for each type	5.1%	1.8%	66.4%	12.0%	14.3%	0.2%

Table 9: Comparison of *CIHB Revisited 1999* and *Lost Heritage Buildings Study 2001/2002*: Types of Buildings Lost

	CIHB Revisited 1999	Lost Heritage Buildings Study 2001/2002
Public Building	11.1%	5.1%
Place of Worship	6.6%	1.8%
Residence	20.0%	66.8%
Industrial	26.3%	12.0%
Commercial	33.3%	14.5%
Other	0.0%	0.2%

Comparison of Loss Rates Over 6-Year Periods

- The loss rates over 6 year periods are fairly uniform
- However, a few anomalies exist. Windsor and Mississauga experienced a significant rise in demolition of heritage buildings through the 1990s. Toronto's rate of loss declined after the end of the 1980s. Waterloo's rate of demolition spiked in the early 1990s.
- Brantford lost many more buildings in the late 1990s than it had in the two previous periods.

Table 10: Comparison of Loss Rates Over Time

	1985-90	1991-96	1997-01	Unknown	Total Number Lost
Richmond Hill	37	32	26	0	95
Meaford	1	2	3	0	6
Mississippi Mills	1	0	1	0	2
Windsor	9	20	19	1	49
Scarborough	11	11	6	0	28
Niagara Falls	1	0	4	2	7
Whitby	2	6	2	0	10
Brantford	3	3	10	0	16
Cobourg	0	1	6	0	7
London	14	13	19	2	48
Kitchener	5	7	4	0	16
Brockton	0	0	1	0	1
Mississauga	12	33	21	0	66
Orangeville	1	2	0	0	3
Port Hope	1	0	5	0	6
Toronto	17	8	7	2	34
Waterloo	3	17	9	0	29
Fergus	0	0	2	0	2
Totals	118	155	145	7	425
Percentages	27.8%	36.5%	34.1%	1.6%	

NB: Cambridge did not include demolition dates but as their list was created in the 1990s, the buildings listed were destroyed after 1985 although the exact date is unknown.

Conclusions

Even when recognized as historically significant, buildings can be and are being demolished in Ontario. Many buildings that have been formally designated, and are seemingly protected by designation or listing, are among those being lost. The loss of listed buildings is happening at almost twice the rate of the loss of designated buildings illustrating that designation offers some degree of protection over simply listing buildings. Overall, Ontario has lost 433 buildings in a sample of 22 communities.

The loss of heritage buildings seems to have decelerated over the last twenty years. This could be because preservation laws and efforts, at least in some places, are working more effectively. On the other hand, it could be that we have already lost so many buildings that there is now less pressure on those that remain. For many communities in this study, preservation laws are working well and they are preserving many of their most significant heritage buildings but there are also some communities in this study – Richmond Hill, Mississauga, Scarborough and Orangeville – where legislation is not providing the protection it should. The challenge now is to develop a strategy whereby the legislation can protect heritage buildings in all Ontario communities. Essentially, this research indicates the need for stronger conservation regulation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Residences are being lost at a much greater rate than any other type of building. Buildings are being lost primarily to unsympathetic development. Communities that are experiencing a high growth rate stand to lose more heritage buildings than slower growing communities.

While heritage legislation and the listing of buildings by LACACs and municipalities can help delay demolition (while not actually prevent it), it cannot protect a building against neglect. Municipalities must find ways to ensure that heritage buildings are inspected against neglect. Some form of financial assistance, tax relief or other measures that recognize the value of heritage structures to the community might make them less vulnerable to re-development and to the neglect that leads to fire and vandalism.

This study has illustrated a need for more consistent and standard approaches to recognizing historic structures. Through the collection of data for this study, it was found that there is no consistency between municipalities and LACACs as to how a building is put

on a list of significant structures. Consistency would facilitate better planning and identification.

Lastly, some anecdotal information from volunteers revealed that there is a high rate of loss of heritage buildings in rural areas that cannot be illustrated through the data collected in this study. Many agricultural buildings are not recognized in an “official” manner – designated, listed, plaqued, etc – and as such no information is being recorded regarding their loss. However, anecdotal information reveals that many heritage agricultural buildings are being torn down on farms and often without a demolition permit (in many communities demolition permits are not required for agricultural buildings) adding to the lack of record keeping. Certainly, more attention must be given to our rich heritage of agricultural buildings and legislation must be expanded in order to protect these buildings.

Recommendations

Elected representatives and municipal staff, such as planners, buildings inspectors, engineers, property managers, clerks and others, should be encouraged to learn more about how to apply the tools available for preservation. These include demolition control, property standards, Heritage Conservation Easements, Part 11 of the Building Code, and better use of Official Plans, Plans of Subdivision and Zoning to protect buildings.

There needs to be more encouragement for designation of significant buildings as it has been shown here that designation offers more protection than listing. More information and education should be given to building owners about the advantages of designation. Legitimately identified significant buildings should be designated with or without the owner’s consent.

There also needs to be a standard system for listing buildings. The standards for listing buildings could be improved by amending the Heritage Act. Alternatively, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation could issue new and clearer guidelines for listing under the current Act.

As some communities have shown that their conservation practices are working, while others are struggling to save their heritage buildings, best practices of successful municipalities should be shared with municipalities where loss rates are more alarming.

In order to make designation more attractive to building owners citizens should encourage the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments to act on a number of initiatives. There are current provisions to provide direct financial assistance to heritage property owners as has been done in Hamilton and London among other places. Other communities should adopt these measures.

The Ministry of Canadian Heritage is pursuing the Historic Place Conservation Initiative. This program will provide a national standard for designation, set conservation standards and pave the way for federal and Provincial tax measures to remove the disincentives that have hindered good conservation. The Federal government should be applauded and supported in this undertaking. The national government is not, however, working alone in this regard. The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation recently announced the Heritage Property Tax Relief Program. This program is coordinated with the Federal effort and clears the way for municipalities to offer property tax refunds of up to 40% on designated buildings where the owners are prepared to undertake proper conservation. Communities should be urged to adopt these tax provisions.

Recommendations for Further Research

It would be useful to extend the examination of heritage building loss back to earlier periods. The reasons why some communities are doing a better job of conserving their built heritage might be explored in order to determine the keys to success. The data and anecdotal information in this study has shown a problem in rural areas of Ontario in regards to data recording and, at least anecdotally, a higher rate of loss. Worthwhile future work would be to research this problem in detail. Finally, a study of the impact that various incentives might have on improving the record of conservation would be helpful.

Appendix A

People Involved

Bensason, Leon	Kitchener
Bourn, Deborah	Sault Ste. Marie
Brown, Laura	Cambridge
Clayton, Margaret	Whitby
Condelli, Frank	Mississippi Mills
Dietrich, Brian	Waterloo
Duncan, George	Richmond Hill
Elliott, Bridget	St. Marys
Fior, John	North Bay
Fraser, Don	Fergus
Goodlet, George	London
Hasler-Watts, Pat	Brant County
Hicks, Paul	Kitchener
Hiebert, Vic	Waterloo
Hudson, Edna	Toronto
Hunton, Janet	London
Louws, Brenda	Central Elgin
MacDonald Krueger, Cindy	Brantford
Matson, Bill	Niagara Falls
Malicki, Pat	Windsor
Mitchell, Audrey	Meaford
Morand, Nancy	Windsor
Nelson, Christine	London
Roberts, Shelagh	Orangeville
Saunders, Robert	Scarborough
Schofield, Rick	Scarborough
Simpson, Henry	Brockton
Smith, Eleanor	Fergus
Smith, Peter	Cobourg
Sobolak, Adam	Toronto
Stickley, Sue	Port Hope
Swan, Graham	Mississippi Mills
Warrack, Mark	Mississauga
Westaway, Anne	Brantford

APPENDIX B

Data Collected by each town by category

Towns	Categories						Notes
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Brant County	x						Haven't lost any buildings
Brantford	x	x					
Brockton	x	x			x		Haven't lost Cat 1 or 2 buildings
Cambridge		x					
Cobourg	x	x					
Fergus	x	x					Haven't lost any designated buildings.
Kitchener	x	x					
London	x	x					
Meaford			x				
Mississauga	x	x					
Mississippi Mills	x		x				
Niagara Falls	x	x					Haven't lost any designated buildings
North Bay		x					Haven't lost any buildings. Have no designated buildings.
Orangeville	x					x	
Port Hope	x	x				x	Haven't lost Cat 1 or 2 buildings
Richmond Hill	x	x					
Sault Ste. Marie	x		x	x			Haven't lost any buildings.
Scarborough	x	x					
Toronto	x	x					
Waterloo	x	x					Haven't lost Cat 1 buildings
Whitby	x	x					
Windsor	x	x					

Legend:

- Category 1: Buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act
- Category 2: Buildings listed as significant with a city/town or LACAC
- Category 3: Plaqued buildings
- Category 4: Buildings included in an architectural study
- Category 5: Buildings included in an historical publication
- Category 6: Buildings included in a walking tour; other

APPENDIX C

Populations of Participating Communities

Municipality	Population
Brantford	84,764
Brockton	5,036
Cambridge	101,429
Cobourg	16,027
County of Brant	30,000
Fergus	10,429
Guelph	95,821
Kitchener	178,420
London	330,258
Meaford	4,681
Mississauga	544,382
Mississippi Mills	10,700
Niagara Falls	76,917
North Bay	54,332
Orangeville	21,498
Port Hope	11,698
Richmond Hill	101,725
Sault Ste. Marie	80,054
Scarborough	114,840
Toronto	653,734
Waterloo	77,949
Whitby	73,794
Windsor	200,062
Total Population of Participating Communities:	2,878,550
Population of Ontario:	10,753,573
Percentage of Ontario Population covered in study:	26.8%

APPENDIX D

Types of Buildings Lost by Category

Legend:
 PB = Public Building
 PW = Place of Worship
 R = Residence
 Ind = Industrial
 Comm = Commercial

Category 1 Buildings (Designated)

Type of Bldg	Richmond Hill	Scarborough	Orangeville	Mississauga	Windsor	Mississippi Mills	Brantford	Kitchener	Whitby	London	Cobourg	Toronto
PB	12.5%	16.7%	100.0%		25.0%						50.0%	10.0%
PW				5.9%							50.0%	10.0%
R	75.0%	66.7%		82.4%	25.0%	100.0%	100.0%	66.7%	100.0%	50.0%		20.0%
Ind	12.5%			11.8%				33.3%		25.0%		
Comm		16.7%			25.0%					25.0%		60.0%
Other					25.0%							

Category 2 Buildings (Listed)

Type of Bldg	Richmond Hill	Scarborough	Niagara Falls	Mississauga	Windsor	Cambridge
PB	1.1%	13.6%		2.0%	6.7%	12.5%
PW	1.1%			4.1%	4.4%	
R	87.4%	68.2%	70.0%	83.7%	35.6%	75.0%
Ind	3.4%			6.1%	26.7%	
Comm	6.9%	18.2%	30.0%	4.1%	26.7%	12.5%
Other						

Category 2 Buildings cont'd

Type of Bldg	Brantford	Kitchener	Whitby	London	Cobourg	Toronto	Fergus
PW	13.3%		44.4%				
PW							
R	20.0%	76.9%	55.6%	72.7%	80.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Ind	66.7%	23.1%		4.5%	20.0%	8.3%	
Comm				22.7%		41.7%	
Other							

Category 3 Buildings (Plaques)

Type of Bldg	Mississippi Mills	Meaford
PB		
PW		
R		100.0%
Ind	100.0%	
Comm		
Other		

Category 5 Buildings (Historical Publications)

Type of Bldg	Brockton
PB	
PW	
R	
Ind	100.0%
Comm	
Other	

Category 6 Buildings (Walking Tours; other)

Type of Bldg	Port Hope	Orangeville
PB		
PW		
R	100.0%	
Ind		
Comm		100.0%
Other		

Legend:

PB = Public Building
 PW = Place of Worship
 R = Residence
 Ind = Industrial
 Comm = Commercial

APPENDIX E

Summary Lost Buildings: Categories 3, 5, and 6

Category 3: Plaques

Municipality	Total No. of Buildings in Category 3	Total No. of Buildings Lost in Category 3	Percentage of Loss	Ratio	Main Reasons Given For Loss
Mississippi Mills	12	1	8.3%	1:12	Development
Meaford	177	6	3.4%	1:30	Development
Sault Ste. Marie	81	0	0.0%		
Total:	270	7	2.59%	1:39	

Category 5: Historical Publications

Municipality	Total No. of Buildings in Category 5	Total No. of Buildings Lost in Category 5	Percentage of Loss	Ratio	Main Reasons Given For Loss
Brockton	24	1	4.2%	1:24	Building abandoned
Total:	24	1	4.17%	1:24	

Category 6: Walking tours; other

Municipality	Total No. of Buildings in Category 6	Total No. of Buildings Lost in Category 6	Percentage of Loss	Ratio	Main Reasons Given For Loss
Port Hope	112	6	5.4%	1:19	Neglect, building moved, fire.
Orangeville	42	2	4.8%	1:21	Neglect & damage during renovation
Total:	154	8	5.2%	1:19	