

Heritage Conservation District Study

Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District Township of Centre Wellington



The Architectural
Conservancy
of Ontario



Heritage Resources Centre
Centre des ressources du patrimoine



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Prepared for
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By

Author: Kayla Jonas Galvin

Editor: Dr. Robert Shipley

Series Editor: Lindsay Benjamin

Data Collection: Christopher Sanderson

GIS Specialist: Beatrice Tam

Of the
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University of Waterloo

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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 Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District

- Located in the Town of Fergus, now the Township of Centre Wellington
- Consists of six residential properties
- District was designated in 1988
- Plan was written by the local Steering Committee, a LACAC sub-committee

Study Approach

- Resident surveys were conducted door-to-door by Heritage Resources Centre staff
- Land use mapping and a streetscape evaluation were conducted
- Sales history trends were collected from GeoWarehouse and analyzed
- Key stakeholders were interviewed

Analysis of Key Findings

- The implied objectives of the district to maintain and preserve buildings have been met
- 75% of the people surveyed are very satisfied with living in the district
- Only two properties in the district had sales, both had above average sales history trajectories
- One property in the district showed resistance to real estate downturns
- Residents reported an efficient application for alterations process
- Overall, the Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District has been a successful planning initiative

Recommendations

The following aspects of the district are areas for improvement:

- Track applications for alterations in a more comprehensive manner

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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 HCD were examined. These districts are found in or near the following areas: Cambridge, 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 the various community sizes. The various 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 Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District

2.1 Description of the District

Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District consists of six residential properties on Brock Avenue in the Town of Fergus, now the Township of Centre Wellington.

2.2 Cultural Heritage Value of the District

The value of Brock Avenue is expressed in the heritage value section of the Statement of Significance for the district, which can be found on www.historicplaces.ca:

"Brock Avenue is adjacent to the Beatty Brothers Ltd. factory on Hill Street where the original residents were employed. The street itself is a cul-de-sac, running north and south, and opening to Hill Street at its north end. There are four houses on the west side, and two on the east side. This residential area was greatly improved when the railway was closed in 1986, as the tracks ran behind all six houses creating a noisy environment.

The Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District is significant for its association with the Beatty Brothers Ltd., local manufacturers of farm equipment that employed a significant number of Fergus' residents. The six houses in this heritage conservation district were built circa 1935 by the company as residences for supervisory personnel who might be needed in the factory at irregular hours, or during emergencies. The name 'Brock Avenue' was suggested by Hugh Cameron, Maintenance Supervisor at the Beatty Factory, and the first occupant of 345 Brock Avenue. The name was inspired by General Sir Isaac Brock, who was a military commander and administrator of Upper Canada during the War of 1812. General Brock was killed in battle and is regarded as the saviour of Upper Canada, and a Canadian hero of the war.

The houses were designed by Harvey Matthews, a self-taught architect and designer, who worked in the Beatty's design department. The designs of several other properties in Fergus, including the Melville Church Hall, are attributed to him. The building contractor was likely Charles Mattaini and the stone used in the construction of each home was supplied from a local quarry just east of Fergus. Each lot and house was sold to its occupants at cost and paid for by salary deductions of \$18 per month.

All six buildings in the Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District contribute to the heritage value of the district due to the workmanship, beauty, and uniqueness of each home. Each house is characterized by cut, squared stone, laid in irregular courses and similar in colour and size which provides a cohesive aesthetic to the streetscape. While the floor plans, height and massing of each house is the same, details such as the roof configurations, window details,

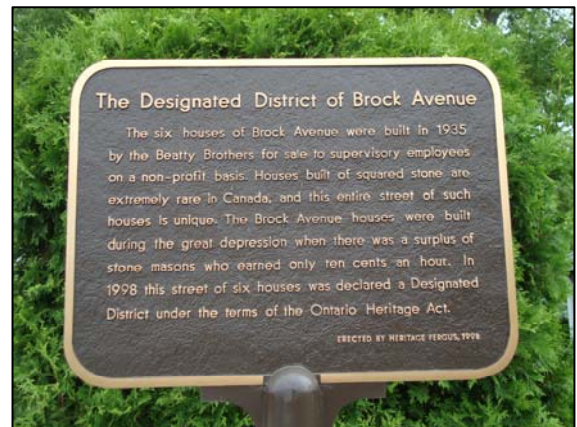


Figure 2: A plaque with a brief explanation of the value of the area

entranceways and trim work provide each one with their own unique character. This gives the street a remarkable consistency of design, while also providing a pleasing variety. Only two other houses similar in style were built in Fergus (240 St. David Street North, and 250 Hill Street West)."

2.3 Location of the District



Figure 3: Map of the Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District.

2.4 Designation of the District

The designation of Brock Avenue was initiated by a member of the LACAC at the time. A steering committee that contained one LACAC member and two residents was then established to prepare the background report and district plan.

The Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District Plan was completed in 1996 and the District is protected by By-law 97-076, which was passed in 1997.

The Heritage Conservation District Plan contains the following sections: background report, steering committee, historical, architectural, delineation, participation, implementation and financial assistance.

3.0 Study Approach

3.1 Resident Surveys

Residents of the Brock Avenue 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 staff at the Heritage Resources Centre. Four of six residents answered surveys, representing a 66% response rate. The tabulated findings of the survey are presented in Appendix A.

3.2 Townscape Survey

A Townscape Survey of Brock Avenue was conducted in August 2008. 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 Brock Avenue (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. A total of two views were photographed and evaluated (see Appendices C and D). The summary of the scores is included in 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

People 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 Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District. The interviews were conducted over the phone. Those interviewed included a staff liaison to the Municipal Heritage Committee and a person from the Building Department. 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 Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District no information was provided regarding the number of applications for alterations received.

4.0 Analysis of Key Findings

4.1 Have the goals or objectives been met?

The Heritage Conservation District Plan does not list any goals. However, as a district, it is implied that the goal is to preserve existing buildings and the streetscape.

The objective to maintain and conserve buildings appears to have been met. Drawing on measures collected in the Townscape Survey, conserved elements evident, quality of conservation work, and maintenance all scored well (see Figure 4). In addition, there are few neglected historic features and no dereliction. The district also scored well in coherence. The only factor related to building conservation that did not score well was quality of new development. This low score is directly related to a garage addition within the district. However, the plan specifies that additions should be reversible so that they do not require structural modifications (pg. 7). Since the garage is reversible (it is not attached to the house structurally), it meets the alterations criteria in the district plan. In short, the area is well maintained and historic elements and buildings have been conserved.



Figure 4: An example of one of the well maintained and conserved buildings in the district.

4.2 Are people content?

Two questions in the resident survey addressed people's contentment with living in the district. Three of the four people surveyed moved after the district was designated and it did not affect their decisions to move to the street. The one person who lived in the area prior to designation felt neutral about it at the time of designation. Currently, three of the four people are very satisfied with living in the district, while one person is neutral.

4.3 Is it difficult to make alterations?

Of the residents surveyed only two of the four had made an application for alteration. Both reported that they were approved, one in less than one month and the other in one to three months. In short, both people reported an efficient application for alterations system. The records from the Township of Centre Wellington were not available.

4.4 Have property values been impacted?

According to the resident surveys, three of the four respondents did not believe the designation would have an impact on their ability to sell their property in the future. They had mixed feelings about the impact designation had on their property value, with one person believing it increased it, two believing it had no impact, and one who did not know.

The data from GeoWarehouse indicated that two of the four properties had sales histories. Both of these properties had above average sales value increases.

One of the properties shows an interesting trend. It resisted a real estate market downturn. While other properties in the city were losing value, the properties in the district maintained their value.

4.5 What are the key issues in the district?

a) Small area

The district is composed of only one block containing six houses. Though it is performing well, it brings up the question of how effective an area it is when its so small. The small nature lacks the critical mass that creates a district's character.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

- The implied objectives of the district to maintain and preserve buildings have been met
- 75% of the people surveyed are very satisfied with living in the district
Two properties in the district had sales, both had above average sales history trajectories
- One property in the district showed resistance to real estate downturns
- Residents reported an efficient application for alterations process

Overall, the Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District has been a successful planning initiative.

5.2 Recommendations

The following aspects of the district are areas for improvement:

- Track applications for alterations in a more comprehensive manner

Appendices

Appendix A

Tabular Results of Resident Surveys

Heritage Conservation District Name: Brock Ave

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

Responses

	Owner	Tenant-Commercial	Tenant - Residential
Counts	4	0	0
Percentage	100.00	0.00	0.00

2. Are you aware you live within a HCD?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	4	0
Percentage	100.00	0.00

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

Responses

	Before	After
Counts	1	3
Percentage	25.00	75.00

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

Responses

Positive	0
Negative	0
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	0	3
Percentage	0.00	100.00

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

Responses

Limited changes	3
Money provided	1
No knowledge	1
More work than anticipated	1

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

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	2	2
Percentage	50.00	50.00

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

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	2	0
Percentage	100.00	0.00

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

Responses

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

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	4.50	3	0	1	0	0	0
Percentage		75.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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	3.33	0	1	2	0	0	1
Percentage		0.00	33.33	66.67	0.00	0.00	25.00

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

Responses

No	3
Yes	0
Yes, easier	1
Yes, harder	0
Don't know	0
Maybe	0

13. Comments

Responses

Additional Comments: very happy (1)

Total Population	6
Participants	4
Participation Rate	66.67

Appendix B
Land Use Maps

Ground Level Land Use in Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District, Township of Centre Wellington



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	



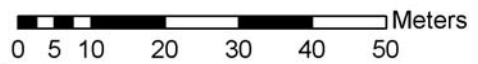
Heritage Resources Centre
 August 24, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

Upper Level Land Use in Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District, Township of Centre Wellington



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 24, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

Appendix C

Map of Views

Views in Brock Avenue Heritage Conservation District, Township of Centre Wellington



Legend

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



Heritage Resources Centre
 August 24, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

Appendix D
Photographs of Views



View 1



View 2

Appendix E

Townscape Evaluation Pro Forma

A. Streetscape Quality				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
A1-Pedestrian friendly	5	10	50.00	2.5
A2-Cleanliness	7	10	70.00	3.5
A3-Coherence	9	10	90.00	4.5
A4-Edgefeature Quality	6	10	60.00	3.0
A5-Floorscape Quality	7	10	70.00	3.5
A6-Legibility	8	10	80.00	4.0
A7-Sense of Threat	8	10	80.00	4.0
A8-Personal Safety: Traffic	7.5	10	75.00	3.8
A9-Planting: Public	0	0	0.00	0.0
A10-Vitality	7	10	70.00	3.5
A 11- Appropriate Resting Places	6	10	60.00	3.0
A12-Signage	7	10	70.00	3.5
A13-Street Furniture Quality	2.5	5	50.00	2.5
A14-Traffic Flow. Appropriateness	8	10	80.00	4.0
SUM A	88	125	70.40	3.5

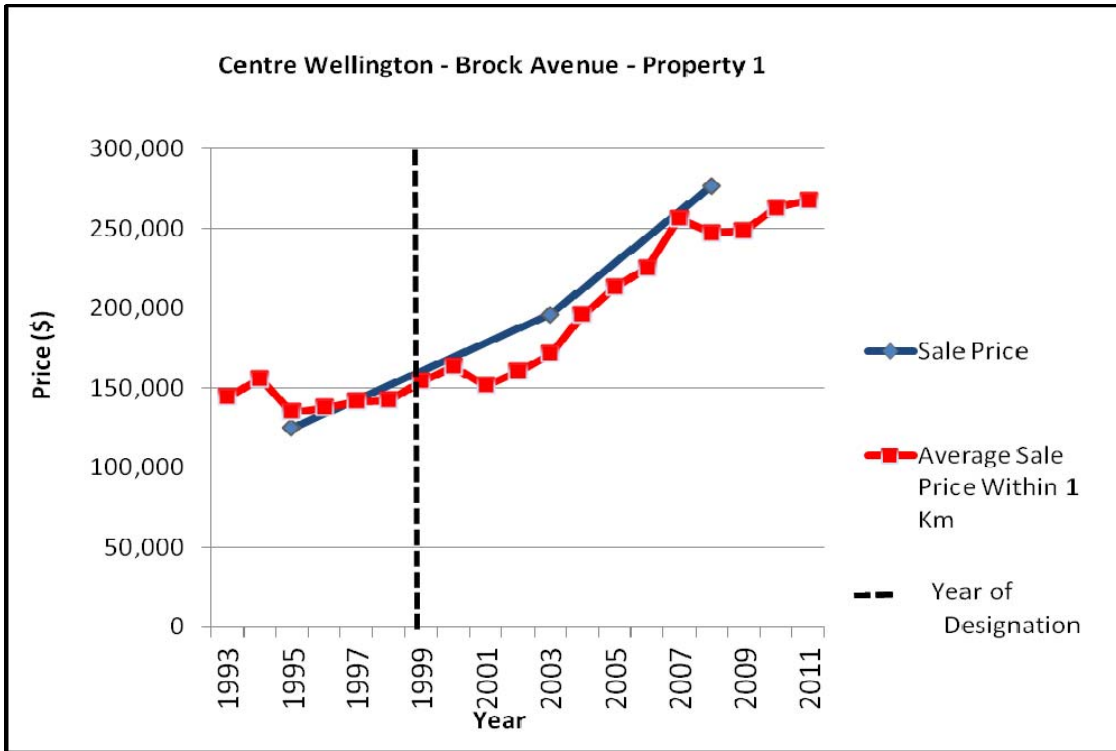
B. Private Space in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
B15-Advertising, in keeping	0	0	0.00	0.0
B16-Dereliction, Absence of	10	10	100.00	5.0
B17-Detailing, Maintenance	8	10	80.00	4.0
B18-Facade Quality	8	10	80.00	4.0
B19-Planting Private	8	10	80.00	4.0
SUM B	34	40	85.00	4.3

C. Heritage in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
C20-Conserved Elements Evident	8	10	80.00	4.0
C21-Historic Reference Seen	5	10	50.00	2.5
C22-Nomenclature/Place Reference	5	10	50.00	2.5
C23-Quality of Conservation Work	8	10	80.00	4.0
C24-Quality of New Development	1.5	5	30.00	1.5
C25-Neglected Historic Features	8.5	10	85.00	4.3
SUM C	36	55	65.45	3.3

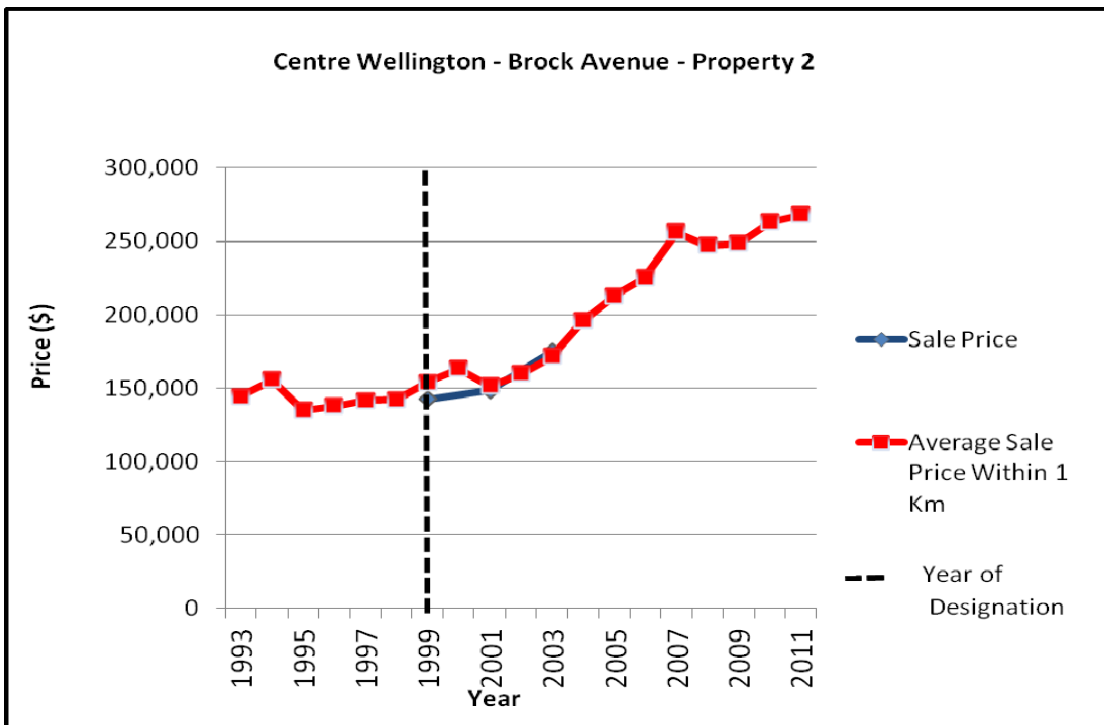
Impression Score				
Aggregate Score	158	220	73.61818182	3.7

Appendix F

Real Estate Data



Above Average Sales History Trajectory



Above Average Sales History Trajectory

Appendix G

Summary of Key Stakeholder Interviews

Heritage Conservation District Name: Brock Avenue
 Month(s) of Interviews: December 2011 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"> • Staff liaison to Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC) • Director of Building & Development Services, Chief Building Official • Department coordinates the activities of Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC)
2. How did the HCD come about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of the previous LACAC committee in the former Town of Fergus spearheaded the effort to designate the district (2)
3. In your opinion how has the HCD designation been accepted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to determine as district was established many years ago, it is very quiet with little activity but no complaints (2) • Well received by residents due to lack of established design guidelines • Results in limited implications for residents
4. In your experience what are the HCD management processes in place and how do they work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage permits issued through the Building Department (2) • No extensive process as a study and plan for the district were not required at the time of its establishment • Guidelines for the management of significant attributes do not exist
5. In your experience what is the process for applications for alterations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage permits (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minor alterations: Chief Building Official has delegation authority and can approve, sometimes referred to MHC - Major alterations: MHC and/or Council approval
6. Is there a communication process set up for the HCD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal communication process established (2) • Municipal letter is sent to new residents introducing them to the district
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"> • Study and plan for the district were not required at the time of its establishment • Guidelines for the management of significant attributes do not exist • Very few requests for heritage permits • District appearance has changed little over time
8. What are similar non designated areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calhoun Street, Fergus
9. Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a