

Heritage Conservation District Study

Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District City of Ottawa



The Architectural
Conservancy
of Ontario



Heritage Resources Centre
Centre des ressources du patrimoine

UNIVERSITY OF
Waterloo



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Heritage Conservation District Study

Prepared for
The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

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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 the Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District

- Located in the City of Ottawa
- Consists of 88 residential and institutional properties
- District was designated in 1994
- Plan was written by Julian Smith & Associates, Margaret Carter, Cecilia Paine and Associates Inc. and Jane Ironside

Study Approach

- Resident surveys were not conducted
- 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 not 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
- New development does not fit into the character of the area
- Designation has had little influence on property values
- Information on satisfaction and applications for alterations were inconclusive
- Overall, the Sandy Hill Heritage Conservation District appears to be a successful planning initiative

Recommendations

The following aspects of the district represent areas for improvement:

- Track applications for alterations in a comprehensive and easily accessible manner
- Produce a list of addresses for the district that is easily accessible
- The University of Ottawa should be educated about the benefits and rules associated with the District

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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 Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District

2.1 Description of the District

The Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District is bounded by Daly Avenue, King Edward Avenue, Laurier Avenue East and Waller Street. It consists of 88 residential and institutional buildings.

2.2 Cultural Heritage Value of the District

The Canadian Register at www.historicplaces.ca describes the heritage character as follows:

The heritage value of the district of Sandy Hill West lies in its associations with the growth and development of the City of Ottawa in the late nineteenth century, its connection with prominent institutions (including the University of Ottawa) and its architectural variety.

Sandy Hill West is a relatively intact residential neighbourhood with the majority of buildings dating from the 1860s to the 1920s. The area of Sandy Hill West developed on a portion of land granted to Quebec City notary, Louis Besserer. From 1840-1880, the area saw little growth until the choice for Ottawa as the capital of Canada in 1857 by Queen Victoria. Besserer conveyed six lots to the Roman Catholic diocese, which became the site of Bytown College, Canada's first bilingual educational institution. The Oblate Fathers and a number of other religious bodies built churches and schools in the area. A number of influential, affluent residents were attracted to the area, and residential development accelerated in the late 1860s and early 1870s.

The majority of development occurred from 1880 – 1920 when the area was redeveloped as part of the rapid change and intensification in the core area of Ottawa as the city's population quadrupled. Within Sandy Hill West, lots were redeveloped to provide smaller single family and multiple unit residential properties. The area was middle class, with working level civil servants, railway employees and merchants. Some of the churches were also rebuilt on a larger scale in order to serve citizens across the city. Sandy Hill West is an important indicator and remnant of the incredible growth that Ottawa experienced in the late nineteenth century.

One of the landmark features of Sandy Hill West is the University of Ottawa, formerly Bytown College. Although most of the campus lies to the south of Sandy Hill West, a number of important buildings, including the oldest building on campus, Academic Hall, are contained within the district. The contribution of the Oblate Order to education in Canada, the history of French education in the province of Ontario, and the contribution of bilingualism and French/English relations are all important historical themes that have associations with the area of Sandy Hill West.

Sandy Hill West represents an unusually rich cross-section of Ottawa architecture over the last one hundred and fifty years. The survival rate has also been quite high;

over 80% of the buildings date from before 1920.

The district is strong in residential and institutional building types. The residential buildings include single-family homes, double residences, two, three and four door rows, and larger multi-unit apartments. The institutional buildings include an unusually high number of churches and related religious buildings and many of the more significant University of Ottawa properties. There are a few mixed-use properties that record the earlier commercial and light industrial activities in the area.

A variety of architectural styles and expressions are represented in Sandy Hill West. Despite the diversity of building stock, they are unified by the dignified decorative and ornamental elements, added to create a modest prestige in the district. The architecture is also representative of new building techniques being employed in Ottawa for the first time, such as the widespread use of stone and brick veneer, the emergence of the front gable and flat roofed building, as well as new preferences regarding siting and orientation. Overall, the architecture of Sandy Hill West represents a great diversity of styles and expressions, which contribute to the heritage character of the district.

2.3 Location of the District

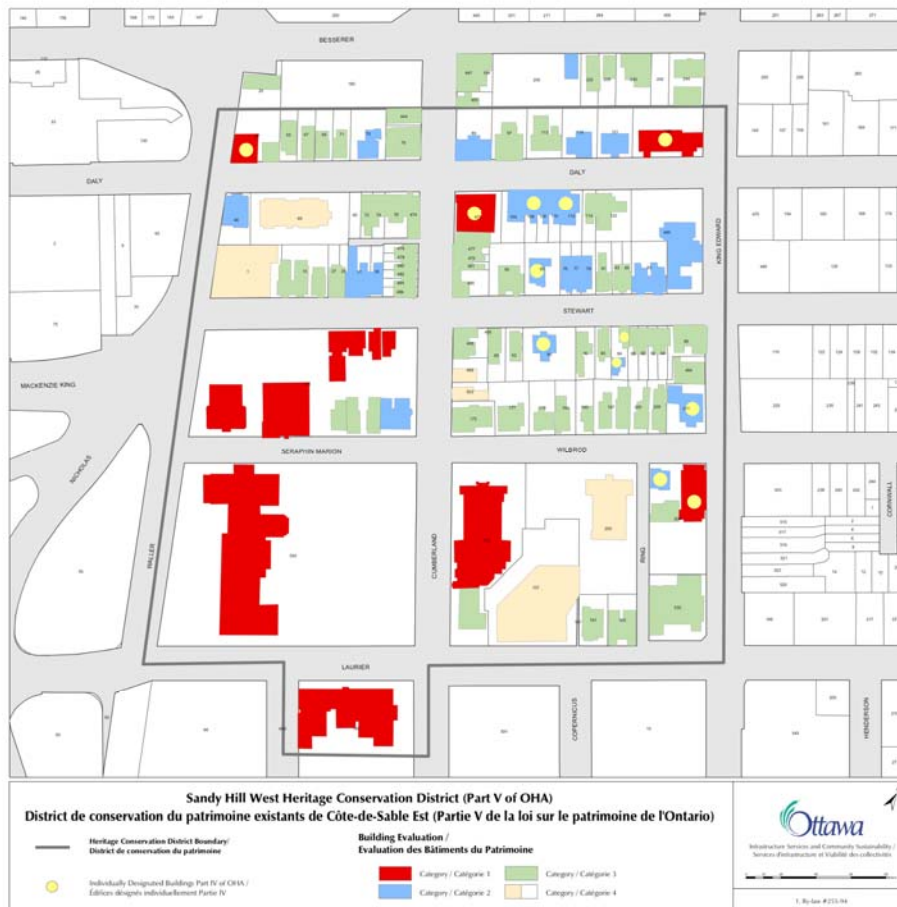


Figure 2: Map of Sandy Hill Heritage Conservation District.

2.4 Designation of the District

The designation of the Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District was initiated as a result of increased development pressure in the area.

The Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District Study was completed in 1993 by Julian Smith & Associates, Margaret Carter, Cecilia Paine and Associates Inc. and Jane Ironside. The Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District is protected by Bylaw 255-94, which was passed in 1994 by the City of Ottawa.

Study Approach

3.1 Resident Surveys

Residents of the Sandy Hill Heritage Conservation District were not asked a series of questions relating to their experiences and satisfaction living in the district.

3.2 Townscape Survey

A Townscape Survey of Sandy Hill West was conducted in March 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 Sandy Hill West (see Appendix A). 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 15 views were photographed and evaluated (see Appendices B and C). The summary of the scores is included as Appendix D.

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 Sandy Hill West Street Heritage Conservation District. Both interviews were conducted over the phone. Those interviewed included a Heritage Planner for the City of Ottawa, and a past member of the Heritage Advisory Committee. A summary of the responses is included in Appendix F. 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 Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District, the information regarding the number of applications for alterations and the time it took to receive approvals was not available.

3.0 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 moderately. There is some dereliction and few neglected historic features. This means that visually the area is being well maintained and historic elements and buildings are being conserved. However, quality of new development scored very low, indicating new buildings do not fit the character of the area.

4.2 Are people content?

Residents and owners were not interviewed in the district, therefore it is difficult to determine satisfaction levels.

4.3 Is it difficult to make alterations?

The records from the City of Ottawa and anecdotal evidence were not available. The results are inconclusive.

4.4 Have property values been impacted?

The data from GeoWarehouse indicates there are 18 properties with sales histories. Of these, four performed above average, seven at average and seven below average when compared to the surrounding area. Most properties are also below the area average in terms of absolute value.

These sales histories are generally what you would expect to find in a random sample, showing that designation in the Sandy Hill West district is having little influence on property values.

4.5 What are the key issues in the district?

a) Institutional

According to the interviews, a large number of properties in the district are owned by the University of Ottawa. It was stated that "they do not appreciate the heritage character of the buildings they own." Therefore, the City should reach out to the University to explain the district as an asset.

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
- New development does not fit into the character of the area
- Designation has had little influence on property values
- Information on satisfaction and applications for alterations were inconclusive

Overall, the Sandy Hill Heritage Conservation District appears to be a successful planning initiative.

5.2 Recommendations

The following aspects of the district represent areas for improvement:

- Track applications for alterations in a comprehensive and easily accessible manner
- Produce a list of addresses for the district that is easily accessible
- The University of Ottawa should be educated about the benefits and rules associated with the District

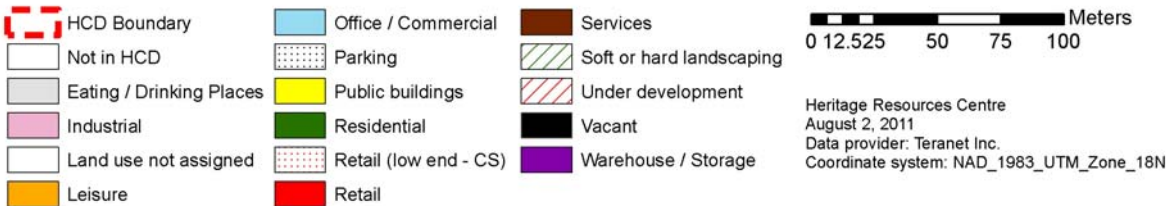
Appendices

Appendix A
Land Use Map

Ground Level Land Use in Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District, Ottawa



Legend



Upper Level Land Use in Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District, Ottawa



Legend

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

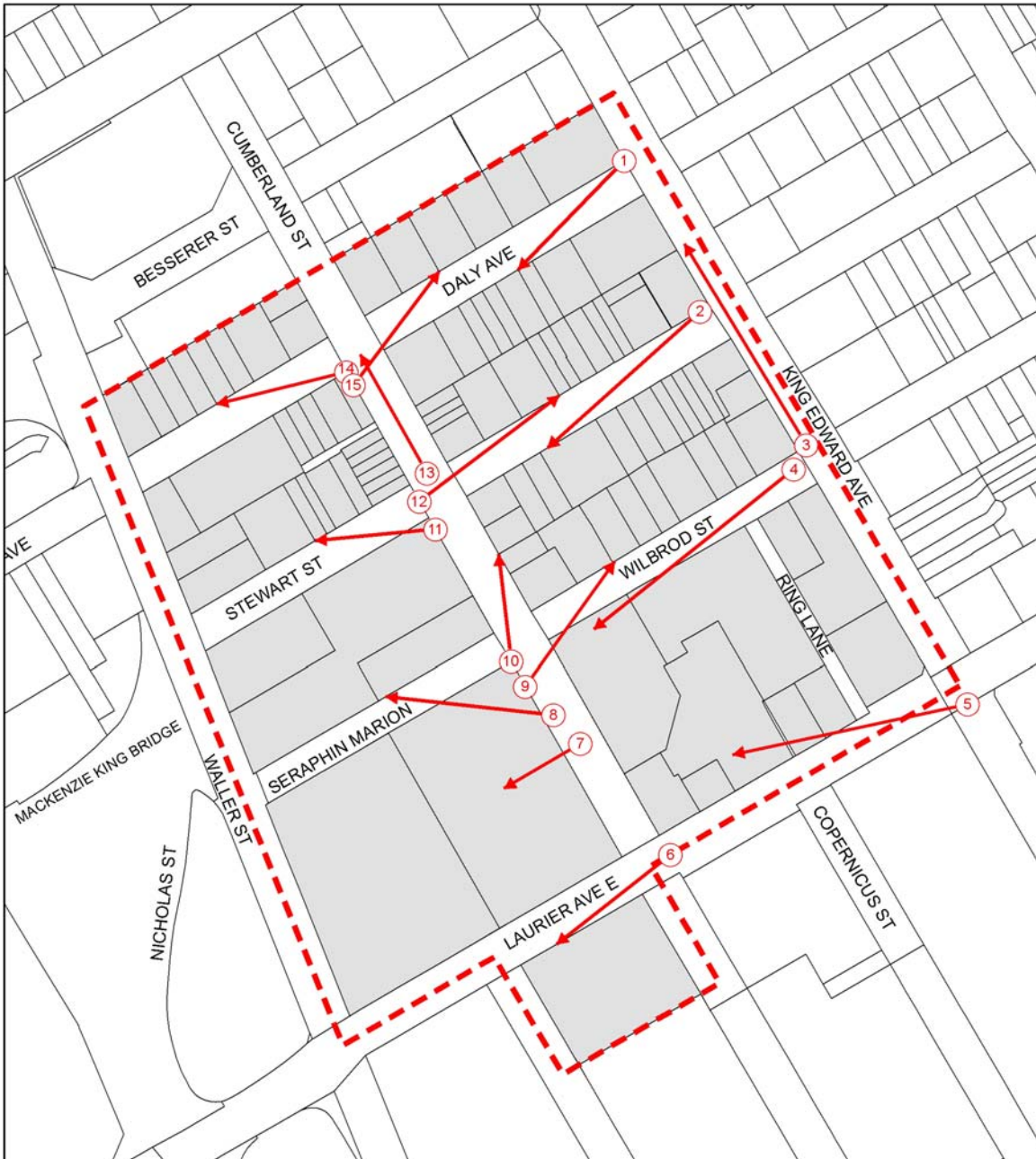
Meters
0 12.525 50 75 100

Heritage Resources Centre
August 2, 2011
Data provider: Teranet Inc.
Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_18N






Appendix B

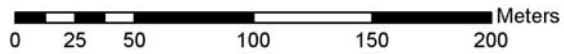
Map of Views

Views in Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District, Ottawa



Legend

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



Heritage Resources Centre
 August 2, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_18N

Appendix C
Photographs of Views



View 1



View 2



View 3



View 4



View 5



View 6



View 7



View 8



View 9



View 10



View 11



View 12



View 13



View 14



View 15

Appendix D

Townscape Evaluation Pro Forma

A. Streetscape Quality				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
A1-Pedestrian friendly	35.5	75	47.33	2.4
A2-Cleanliness	42	75	56.00	2.8
A3-Coherence	32	70	45.71	2.3
A4-Edgefeature Quality	43.5	75	58.00	2.9
A5-Floorscape Quality	32	70	45.71	2.3
A6-Legibility	41.5	75	55.33	2.8
A7-Sense of Threat	40	75	53.33	2.7
A8-Personal Safety: Traffic	49	75	65.33	3.3
A9-Planting: Public	24	30	80.00	4.0
A10-Vitality	44.5	75	59.33	3.0
A 11- Appropriate Resting Places	43.5	75	58.00	2.9
A12-Signage	32	45	71.11	3.6
A13-Street Furniture Quality	34.5	55	62.73	3.1
A14-Traffic Flow. Appropriateness	47.5	70	67.86	3.4
SUM A	541.5	940	57.61	2.9

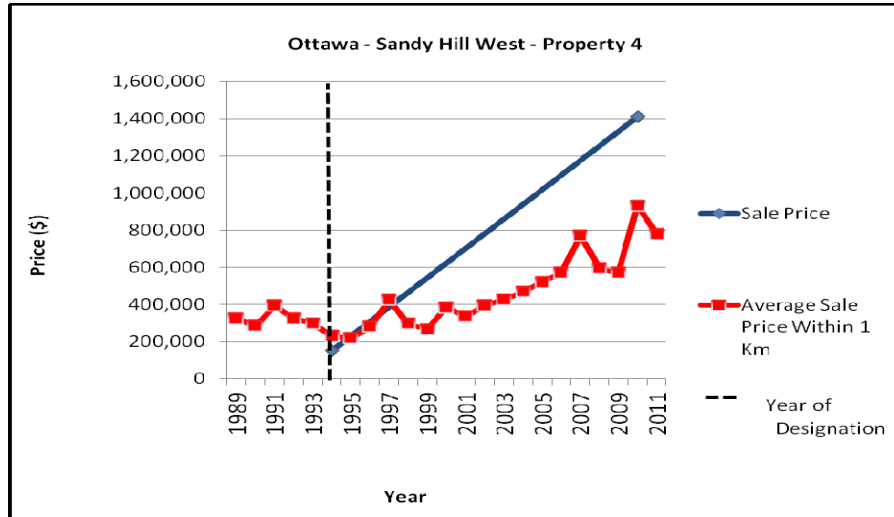
B. Private Space in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
B15-Advertising, in keeping	22	50	44.00	2.2
B16-Dereliction, Absence of	47.5	70	67.86	3.4
B17-Detailing, Maintenance	48	75	64.00	3.2
B18-Facade Quality	47	75	62.67	3.1
B19-Planting Private	19.5	40	48.75	2.4
SUM B	184	310	59.35	3.0

C. Heritage in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
C20-Conserved Elements Evident	51	75	68.00	3.4
C21-Historic Reference Seen	15	75	20.00	1.0
C22-Nomenclature/Place Reference	25	75	33.33	1.7
C23-Quality of Conservation Work	40.5	65	62.31	3.1
C24-Quality of New Development	16	45	35.56	1.8
C25-Neglected Historic Features	44	65	67.69	3.4
SUM C	191.5	400	47.88	2.4

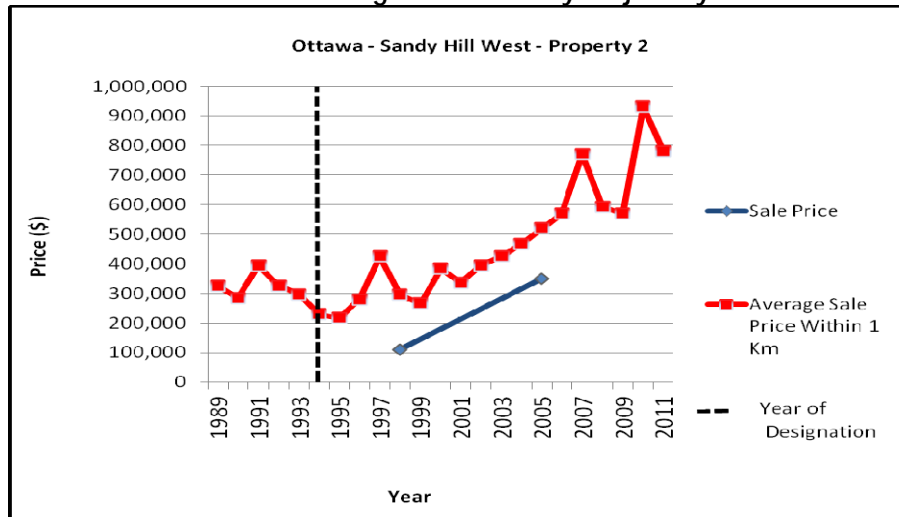
Impression Score				
Aggregate Score	917	1650	54.94540723	2.7

Appendix E

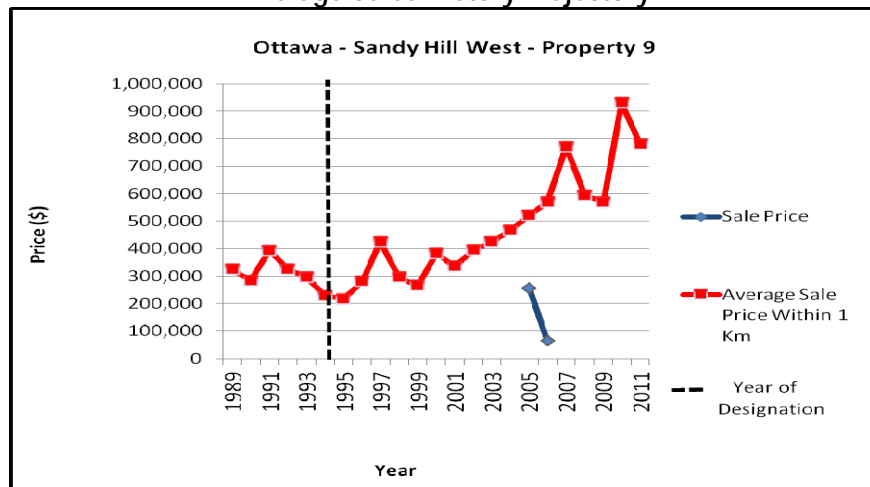
Real Estate Data



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: Sandy Hill West

Month(s) of Interviews: December 2011

Number of People Interviewed: 2

Question	Summary of Answer
1. How are you involved in the HCD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Past Chair of Ottawa's Built Heritage Advisory Committee (OBHAC)• Board member of Heritage Ottawa, a non-profit advocacy group• Coordinator of Heritage Planning
2. How did the HCD come about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community pushed for designation in response to increased development pressure• Initiative of the Ward Councillor to protect against the transition of building stock into slum and student housing
3. In your opinion how has the HCD designation been accepted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well accepted by most property owners who maintain their buildings• Some slum landlords do not follow guidelines and prove difficult to deal with• More accepted by the general public than by planning staff and local politicians
4. In your experience what are the HCD management processes in place and how do they work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heritage planning staff and OBHAC review applications• Staff has a lot of discretion in making approvals due to limited resources and abundance of protected properties in the City• Applications for alterations are required and dealt with through the Building Permit process (2)• Some management undertaken through the City's Heritage Grant Program
5. In your experience what is the process for applications for alterations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building Permit process utilized• All designated and listed properties are flagged in a database and tiered based on level of protection, when an application comes in staff know how to address the scope of work• Small scale (minor) alterations are dealt with by staff (2)• Larger scale heritage applications are addressed through pre-consultation (2)• City staff prepare a report that is sent on to the Built Heritage Advisory Committee, Planning Committee and finally Council who accepts/rejects application (2)
6. Is there a communication process set up for the HCD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City circulates notification letters to districts, surrounding communities and Heritage Ottawa when applications and designation requests are received• Informal communication through community associations (2)
7. In your opinion, what are the issues that are unique to the HCD and how have they been	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absentee landlords lead to deteriorating properties• Student housing is poorly and cheaply renovated• University of Ottawa is a major landowner in the district and they do not appreciate the heritage character of the buildings they own

managed?	
8. What are similar non designated areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area immediately to the west of the Sandy Hill HCD (2)
9. Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to designation before the amendments to the 2005 <i>Ontario Heritage Act</i> guidelines are unclear as no formal plan was created