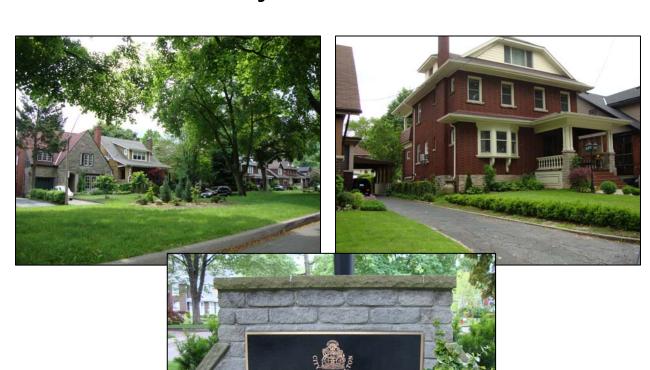
Heritage Conservation District Study

St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District City of Hamilton













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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 St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District

- Located in the City of Hamilton
- Consists of 38 residential properties
- District was designated in 1992
- Plan was written by the Local Planning Branch, Planning and Development Department, Hamilton-Wentworth Region in consultation with the St. Clair Boulevard District Steering Committee

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
- Data on requests for alterations were collected

Analysis of Key Findings

- The objective of the district is to ensure that the heritage character of St. Clair Boulevard's residential streetscape and its component buildings are maintained
- There is some perceived discontentment due to the current turbulent nature of the district's organization
- Nine of 11 properties in the district had average or above average sales history trajectories
- Properties in the district showed a wide fluctuation in sales prices
- Application for alterations process is not lengthy, most are approved within a month
- Overall, the St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District has been a successful planning initiative, however it is at risk due to organizational issues

Recommendations

Clarify roles and processes to ensure the district can continue to function

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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." 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."

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		Туре	
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 St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District

2.1 Description of the District

The St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District runs along St. Clair Boulevard between Delaware Avenue and Cumberland Avenue. The district consists of 38 residential properties.

2.2 Cultural Heritage Value of the District

The Heritage Conservation District Planning Background Study and Plan discuss the value of the district:

"The St. Clair Park survey, registered in 1911, was one of a number of residential surveys laid out in Hamilton's east end just after the turn of the century, a boom period for residential construction throughout the City. The St. Clair Park Survey formed part of a middle to upper class residential area comprising a number of surveys, which extended from King Street East to the foot of the escarpment and from Wentworth Street South to Gage Park.

As was common practice in Hamilton at the time, the St. Clair Park Survey has building restrictions in the form of restrictive covenants registered on dead to the lots. Restrictions on the cost, construction and setback of the house account to a large extent for the cohesive character of St. Clair Boulevard's urban streetscape.

While the restrictive covenants associated with the St. Clair Park Survey has building restrictions on its social make-up, the social composition of St. Clair Boulevard was nevertheless very homogenous, comprising middle to upper-middle income families of Anglo-Saxon origins. In the course of its history the boulevard has attracted some of Hamilton's most prominent citizens; notably, he well-known and highly-respected judge, William F Schwenger and the successful construction company manager, Ralph W. Cooper. The Boulevard is also noteworthy for its social stability, owning to the long-term residence of most of the homeowners and continuous use of the houses as single-family dwellings" (pg. 30).

2.3 Location of the District



Figure 2: Map of St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District (Hamilton Heritage Volume 1, pg. 31).

2.4 Designation of the District

The designation of St. Clair Boulevard was initiated by local residents following the designation of the adjacent St. Clair Avenue district. According to the Background Study and Plan, "a petition requesting designation of the area...signed by all 37 homeowners, was presented to LACAC at its December meeting and was supported by this committee" (pg. 4).

The St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District Plan was prepared for the City of Hamilton by the Local Planning Branch, Planning and Development Department, Hamilton-Wentworth Region in consultation with the St. Clair Boulevard District Steering Committee. The St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District is protected by By-law 92-140, passed in 1992.

The Heritage Conservation District Background Study and Plan contain sections on the urban landscape and social history of the area, urban streetscape/architectural analysis, planning policies and regulations, implementation of a Heritage Conservation District, Heritage Conservation District guidelines and the St. Clair Boulevard Heritage District Plan.

3.0 Study Approach

3.1 Resident Surveys

Resident surveys of the St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District were not conducted due to the contentiousness of the district's designation at the time this study was being completed.

3.2 Townscape Survey

A Townscape Survey of St. Clair Boulevard was conducted in August 2011. 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 St. Clair Boulevard (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 six views were photographed and evaluated (see Appendices B and C). The summary of the scores is included as Appendix E.

3.3 Real Estate Data

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

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

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

3.4 Key Stakeholder Interviews

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. Four people were interviewed for the St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District. All four interviews were conducted over the phone. Those interviewed included Heritage Planners for the City of Hamilton, a member of the Municipal Heritage Committee as well as a member of the Heritage Permit Review subcommittee. A summary of the responses are 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 St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District, the information regarding the number of applications for alterations and the time it took to receive approvals were made available by the City of Hamilton. This list includes requests for alterations from 2001 to 2011. A summary of this information is presented in Appendix G.

4.0 Analysis of Key Findings

4.1 Have the goals or objectives been met?

There are no formal goals expressed in the Background Study and Plan. However, Section 7.2.1 indicates that the aim of the Plan is to "ensure that the heritage character of the St. Clair Boulevard's residential streetscape and its component buildings are maintained" (pg. 94).

The objective to maintain and conserve the streetscape and buildings appears to have been met. Drawing on measures collected in the Townscape Survey, coherence and edge feature quality scored well. Conserved elements evident, quality of conservation work, public and private planting all scored very well. There are also few neglected historic features and no dereliction evident. This means that visually the area is well maintained and historic elements and buildings have been conserved (Figure 3).



Figure 3: An example of the well maintained streetscape including historic buildings as well as private and public plantings.

4.2 Are people content?

Since resident surveys were not conducted in this district, contentment cannot be evaluated. However, there is a potential lack of contentment based on the uncertainty of the district's designation expressed in the interviews (see section 4.5 – Issues).

4.3 Is it difficult to make alterations?

The records from the City of Hamilton show all applications have been approved. The timeline on the City's chart shows that most applications are approved within a month. Clearly, the process for completing alterations to buildings in the St. Clair Boulevard HCD is neither difficult nor lengthy.

4.4 Have property values been impacted?

The data from GeoWarehouse indicated that 11 of 38 properties had sales histories. Of these 11 properties, five had above average sales value increases and four properties had average sales history trajectories. Only two of the properties performed below average. Almost all the properties had an above average sale price, indicating the district is performing better than neighbourhoods in its immediate surroundings.

4.5 What are the key issues in the district?

a) District Organization

Interview responses indicated that there is currently a misunderstanding about the Heritage Permit approval process and authority. According to interviewees, permits have been given out by a council set up in the

district residents. This has resulted in discontentment, and it has been reported that some residents now want to de-designate the area. However, a formal request for de-designation has not been made to the City.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

- The objective of the district to ensure that the heritage character of the St. Clair Boulevard's residential streetscape and its component building is maintained, has been met
- There is some perceived discontentment due to the current turbulent nature of the district's organization
- Nine of 11 properties in the district had average or above average sales history trajectories
- Properties in the district showed a wide fluctuation in sales prices
- Application for alterations process is not lengthy, most are approved within a month

Overall, the St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation District has been a successful planning initiative, however it is at risk due to organizational issues.

5.2 Recommendations

The following aspects of the district are areas for improvement:

Clarify roles and processes so the district can continue to function as intended

Appendices

Appendix A Land Use Maps

Ground Level Land Use in St. Clair Avenue and St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation Districts, Hamilton

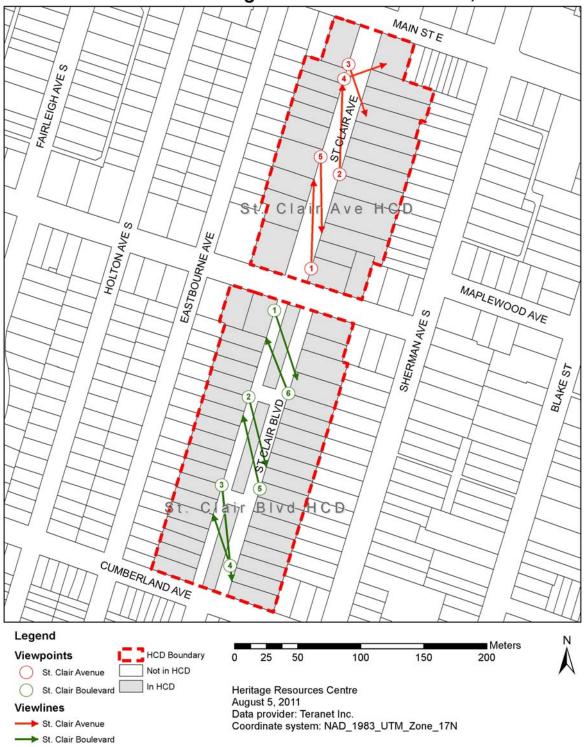


Upper Level Land Use in St. Clair Avenue and St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation Districts, Hamilton

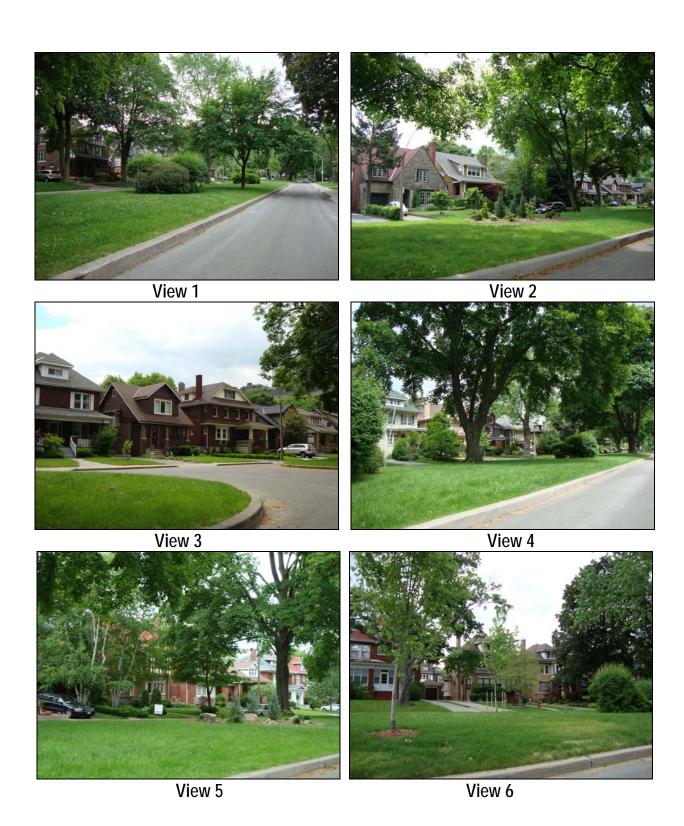


Appendix B Map of Views

Views in St. Clair Avenue and St. Clair Boulevard Heritage Conservation Districts, Hamilton



Appendix C Photographs of Views



Appendix D Townscape Evaluation Pro Forma

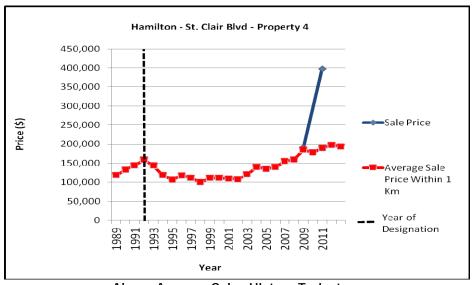
A. Streetscape Quality					
	Score	Out	%	Out of 5	
A4 Dadastrian friendly			, ,	-	
A1-Pedestrian friendly	20	30	66.67	3.3	
A2-Cleanliness	25	30	83.33	4.2	
A3-Coherence	28	30	93.33	4.7	
A4-Edgefeature Quality	26	30	86.67	4.3	
A5-Floorscape Quality	18	30	60.00	3.0	
A6-Legibility	21	30	70.00	3.5	
A7-Sense of Threat	21.5	30	71.67	3.6	
A8-Personal Safety: Traffic	24	30	80.00	4.0	
A9-Planting: Public	28.5	30	95.00	4.8	
A10-Vitality	19.5	30	65.00	3.3	
A 11- Appropriate Resting Places	30	30	100.00	5.0	
A12-Signage	25	30	83.33	4.2	
A13-Street Furniture Quality	12	30	40.00	2.0	
A14-Traffic Flow. Appropriateness	24	30	80.00	4.0	
SUM A	322.5	420	76.79	3.8	

Impression Score				
Aggregate Score	531	705	75.70887446	3.8

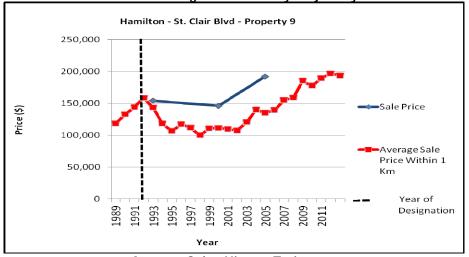
B. Private Space in View					
		Out		Out of	
	Score	of	%	5	
B15-Advertising, in keeping	1	5	20.00	1.0	
B16-Dereliction, Absence of	25	25	100.00	5.0	
B17-Detailing, Maintenance	26	30	86.67	4.3	
B18-Facade Quality	25.5	30	85.00	4.3	
B19-Planting Private	28	30	93.33	4.7	
SUM B	105.5	120	87.92	4.4	

C. Heritage in View					
		Out		Out of	
	Score	of	%	5	
C20-Conserved Elements Evident	27	30	90.00	4.5	
C21-Historic Reference Seen	6	30	20.00	1.0	
C22-Nomenclature/Place Reference	6	30	20.00	1.0	
C23-Quality of Conservation Work	26.5	30	88.33	4.4	
C24-Quality of New Development	11	15	73.33	3.7	
C25-Neglected Historic Features	26.5	30	88.33	4.4	
SUM C	103	165	62.42	3.1	

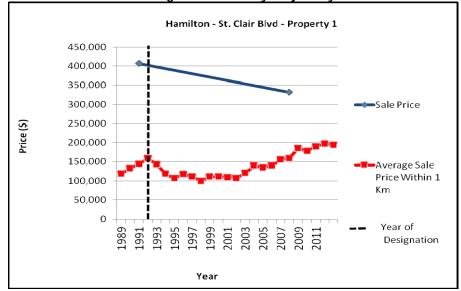
Appendix E Real Estate Data



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: St. Clair Boulevard Month(s) of Interviews: December 2011 and January 2012 Number of People Interviewed: 4

Question	Summary of Anguer
1. How are you	Summary of Answer Chairman of Haritaga Parmit Pavious Subcommittee
involved in the	Chairman of Heritage Permit Review Subcommittee Mambar of Municipal Haritage Committee
HCD?	Member of Municipal Heritage Committee Chair of Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC)
HOD:	Chair of Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC) Municipal administration of horitography and grants/leans.
	Municipal administration of heritage permits and grants/loans
	Staff liaison to Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee
	Review of applications under the Planning Act, Municipal Class Environmental Assessments of the property
0.11	Assessments, other planning administration
2. How did the	Community-driven, residents pushed for district designation to ensure they would be a varied in the alternation of their communities (2)
HCD come	would have a voice in the alteration of their communities (2)
about?	Development threats lead a focused group of residents desire to designate
	Study and plan completed by former Regional Municipality of Hamilton-
	Wentworth and St. Clair Homeowners' Association
3. In your	Residents seeking to de-designate the area
opinion how	Unhappy with guidelines, misunderstanding by owners of the Heritage Permit
has the HCD	approval process and approval authority
designation	New residents are resistant to following guidelines
been	Positive
accepted?	Some discontent with restrictions on driveway widths
	Fairly well received by residents that have lived in the district the longest
4. In your	Heritage permits for alterations process is guided by the Council-adopted
experience	HCD Plan (2)
what are the	Heritage Permit process guided by Council-adopted HCD Plan
HCD .	
management	
processes in	
place and how	
do they work?	Application for a Haritana Danieli buth a magnetic according (2)
5. In your	Application for a Heritage Permit by the property owner (3)
experience	Alteration request presented at Permit Review Meetings
what is the process for	In some cases larger projects can be granted approval at Permit Review
applications	Meetings
for alterations?	Review by staff and Heritage Permit Review Sub-committee (alterations) and
ioi alterations:	Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee/Planning Committee/Council
	(demolition, new construction) (2)
	Minor alterations
	- staff have delegated authority to grant approvals
	Major alterations Heritage page it is reviewed by the Device Subsection in the provider of the subsection in the subsectio
	Heritage permit is reviewed by the Review Subcommittee, meet with
	property owners, architects, etc.
	- Permit is referred to the MHC, grant/deny approval
	Approved permit is sent on to the Planning Committee and then Council for final
	approval (2)

	 Appeals process as provided for by OHA
6. Is there a communication process set up for the HCD?	 Residents in districts are sent a package once per year that outlines the process for obtaining heritage permits and addresses FAQs (2) Provision for a representative for St. Clair Ave/Blvd on the Heritage Permit Review Sub-committee (a St. Clair Ave/Blvd representative is currently appointed)
7. In your opinion, what are the issues that are unique to the HCD and how have they been managed?	 Residents want to de-designate the district (2) district had been operating under guidance of an illegal District Council disseminating approvals for alteration permits unrightfully Strong push for alterations to homes and landscaping widening driveways (3) new windows Aging trees Property owners lack of knowledge of what is required to live in a district
8. What are similar non designated areas?	 Maple Ave. James St. N. running from Murray St. to King St. and James St. S. running from King St. to Charlton Ave. Locke St. Ottawa St.
9. Other comments	 Higher property values than adjacent areas Council needs to be on board with heritage preservation efforts in Hamilton's HCDs

Appendix G Requests for Alterations

2001				
Total applications: NA	Total Approved: NA			
2002				
Total applications: 3	Total Approved: 3			
Approved?	Approximate Length of Process			
Yes	2 months			
Yes	2 months			
Yes	3 months			
2003				
Total applications: NA	Total Approved: NA			
Total applications 1171	Total Approvod. 147			
2004				
Total applications: NA	Total Approved: NA			
том ирриомент и	тошт грри отошти			
2005				
Total applications: 1	Total Approved: 1			
Approved?	Approximate Length of Process			
Yes	1.5 months			
2006				
Total applications: NA	Total Approved: NA			
2007				
Total applications: 1	Total Approved: 1			
Approved?	Approximate Length of Process			
Yes	1 month			
2008				
	Total Approved: 4			
Total applications: 1	Total Approved: 1			
Approved? Yes	Approximate Length of Process 1 month			
100	Timonui			
2009				
Total applications: 1	Total Approved: 1			
Approved?	Approximate Length of Process			
Yes	< 1 month			
2010				
Total applications: 4	Total Approved: 3			
Approved?	Approximate Length of Process			
Yes	< 1 month			

Yes	< 1 month
No- incomplete	NA
Yes	1 month

2011

Total applications: 1	Total Approved: NA
Approved?	Approximate Length of Process
Yes	1.5 months