

Heritage Conservation District Study

Walton Street Heritage Conservation District Municipality of Port Hope



Heritage Resources Centre
Centre des ressources du patrimoine



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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 the Walton Street Heritage Conservation District

- Located in the Municipality of Port Hope
- Consists of 72 commercial properties
- District was designated in 1997

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 not interviewed

Analysis of Key Findings

- The implied goal to preserve existing buildings and streetscapes has been met
- The high level of maintenance of the buildings indicates pride and satisfaction within the district
- Information about applications for alterations was not available
- Walton Street is a relatively stable area where designation seems to be a positive influence on property values
- Based on the data available, the Walton Street Heritage Conservation District has been 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

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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 Walton Street Heritage Conservation District

2.1 Description of the District

The Walton Street Heritage Conservation District is located in the Municipality of Port Hope. The district is situated along Walton Street, the main street, between Pine Street to the west and Mill Street to the east. It contains 72 commercial properties.

2.2 Cultural Heritage Value of the District

The Canadian Register, found at www.historicplaces.ca, describes the district as follows:

“The Walton Street Heritage Conservation District is one of the best-preserved and most complete 19th century commercial streetscapes in Southern Ontario. Built primarily between 1845 and 1870 alongside the Ganaraska River, the Walton Street Heritage Conservation District developed during a period of significant growth and prosperity that saw the development of the harbour, Grand Trunk Railway and viaduct, and Midland rail lines and roundhouse constructed. The subsequent growth of local industry saw the commercial buildings along Walton Street develop into substantial brick three and four-storey blocks, often replacing the wood frame buildings which had been destroyed by fire or flood. The execution of this formal main street within a third of a century is particularly noteworthy. □

The Walton Street Heritage Conservation District also retains a 19th century residential component, with a range of styles that includes modest frame cottages, brick mid-century terrace housing and Queen Anne. Located to the west of the commercial core, these residences complete the picture of 19th century life in an early urban centre, while providing a transitional mixed use for the current neighbourhood. At the west end of the Heritage Conservation District is St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, a significant landmark built late in the development of the downtown core in 1906. □The architectural value of the Walton Street Heritage Conservation District is illustrated in the various architectural styles of the Walton Street storefronts that have maintained a similar scale, site plan and compatible setbacks. The subtle variations of the Neo-Classical, Italianate and late Victorian styles exist in harmony due to their shared cornice lines, continuous fenestration patterns on the upper storeys, and balanced storefronts. The 19th century residences, with their variations in style and building materials contribute to the overall quality of this well-preserved community. □

The Walton Street Heritage Conservation District lies at the mouth of the Ganaraska River on the shores of Lake Ontario. The early community harnessed the power of the river for industry, as the harbour provided a gateway to the shipping lanes of the Great Lakes. The village was situated on

the Toronto-Kingston-Montreal land route, and subsequently became a hub for the railways. The substantial brick buildings on the commercial thoroughfare were constructed in co-ordinated block designs within a short period of time. The result was a continuous and harmonious stretch of commercial buildings transitioning into residences at the west. The side streets that emanate from Walton in T-junctions, as roads to the north and south, are staggered along the streetscape to avoid traffic congestions and provide continuity to the streetscape.”

2.3 Location of the District



Figure 2: Map of the Walton Street Heritage Conservation District.

2.4 Designation of the District

The Walton Street Heritage Conservation District was established by the passing of By-laws 44/97 and 45/97 on October 6th 1997.

3.0 Study Approach

3.1 Resident Surveys

Residents of the Walton Street Heritage Conservation District were not asked a series of questions relating to their experiences and satisfaction with living in the district. Volunteers were engaged in the process, but were unable to conduct the surveys.

3.2 Townscape Survey

A Townscape Survey of the Walton Street District was conducted in September 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 Walton Street (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 nine 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 with 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. Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts, no one from Port Hope responded to the request for interviews.

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 Walton Street Heritage Conservation District, the information regarding the number of applications for alterations and the time it took to receive approvals was not available.

4.0 Analysis of Key Findings

4.1 Have the goals or objectives been met?

The Heritage Conservation District Plan was not made available. However, as a heritage district, it is implied that the goal is to preserve existing buildings and streetscapes.

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, façade quality and maintenance all scored very well. In addition, there are few neglected historic features and no dereliction. Furthermore, the quality of new development category scored moderately well. In short, the area is well maintained and historic elements, buildings and the streetscape have been conserved (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Example of a well maintained building

4.2 Are people content?

Since door-to-door surveys were not conducted it is difficult to determine satisfaction levels. However, properties are well maintained and show a high level of pride. Therefore, it is assumed people are relatively satisfied with the district.

4.3 Is it difficult to make alterations?

There is no data to determine the number or length of time taken to approve applications for alterations.

4.4 Have property values been impacted?

The data from GeoWarehouse indicated that only 10 of the 72 properties had sales histories. Of these properties seven performed above average, two at average and one below average. Two of the ten properties show extreme price variations while the rest are modest. In addition, there are values both above and below the ambient absolute prices. In short, Walton Street is a relatively stable area where designation seems to be a positive influence.

4.5 What are the key issues in the district?

a) Participation

Though perceived to be active district with many volunteers, no volunteers were able to conduct the door-to-door surveys and requests for interviews were not responded to. This lack of cooperation hindered the analysis of the district.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

- The implied goal to preserve existing buildings and streetscapes has been met
- The high level of maintenance of the buildings indicates pride and satisfaction within the district
- Information about applications for alterations was not available
- Walton Street is a relatively stable area where designation seems to be a positive influence on property values

Based on the data available, the Walton Heritage Conservation District has been 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

Appendices

Appendix A

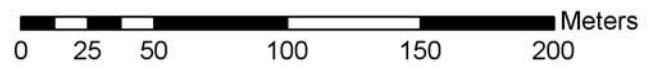
Land Use Map

Ground Level Land Use in Walton Street Heritage Conservation District, Port Hope



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	


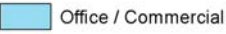


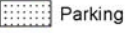
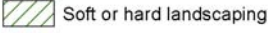


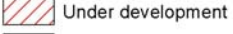

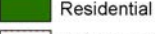


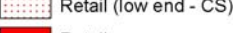
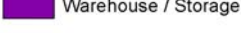




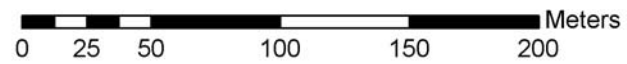
Heritage Resources Centre
 August 24, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_18N

Upper Level Land Use in Walton Street Heritage Conservation District, Port Hope



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_18N

Appendix C

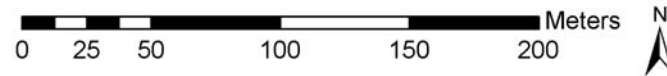
Map of Views

Views in Walton Street Heritage Conservation District, Port Hope



Legend

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



Heritage Resources Centre
 August 24, 2011
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_18N

Appendix D
Photographs of Views



View 1



View 2



View 3



View 4



View 5



View 6



View 7



View 8



View 9

Appendix E

Townscape Evaluation Pro Forma

A. Streetscape Quality				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
A1-Pedestrian friendly	23.5	45	52.22	2.6
A2-Cleanliness	34	45	75.56	3.8
A3-Coherence	37	45	82.22	4.1
A4-Edgefeature Quality	34.5	45	76.67	3.8
A5-Floorscape Quality	28	45	62.22	3.1
A6-Legibility	34	45	75.56	3.8
A7-Sense of Threat	35	45	77.78	3.9
A8-Personal Safety: Traffic	18	45	40.00	2.0
A9-Planting: Public	33.5	45	74.44	3.7
A10-Vitality	32.5	45	72.22	3.6
A 11- Appropriate Resting Places	35	45	77.78	3.9
A12-Signage	37	45	82.22	4.1
A13-Street Furniture Quality	43	45	95.56	4.8
A14-Traffic Flow. Appropriateness	28.5	45	63.33	3.2
SUM A	453.5	630	71.98	3.6

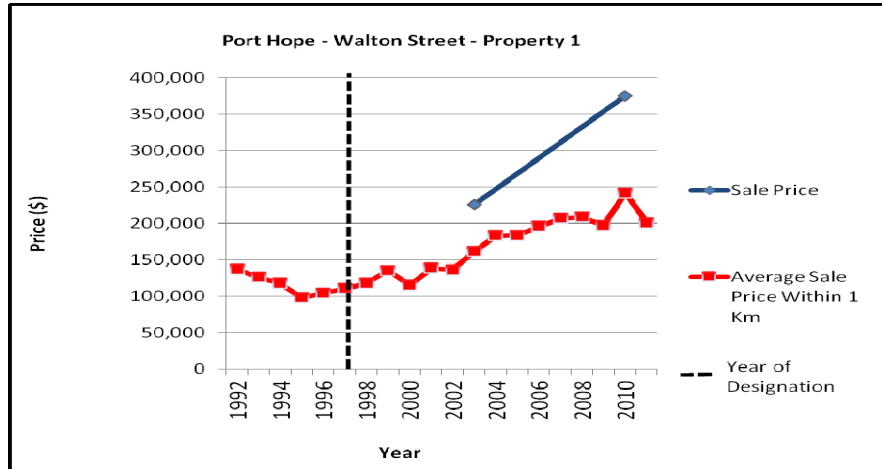
B. Private Space in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
B15-Advertising, in keeping	36.5	45	81.11	4.1
B16-Dereliction, Absence of	36.5	45	81.11	4.1
B17-Detailing, Maintenance	34	45	75.56	3.8
B18-Facade Quality	37	45	82.22	4.1
B19-Planting Private	12	25	48.00	2.4
SUM B	156	205	76.10	3.8

C. Heritage in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
C20-Conserved Elements Evident	43	45	95.56	4.8
C21-Historic Reference Seen	8	40	20.00	1.0
C22-Nomenclature/Place Reference	21	45	46.67	2.3
C23-Quality of Conservation Work	43	45	95.56	4.8
C24-Quality of New Development	3	10	30.00	1.5
C25-Neglected Historic Features	36	45	80.00	4.0
SUM C	154	230	66.96	3.3

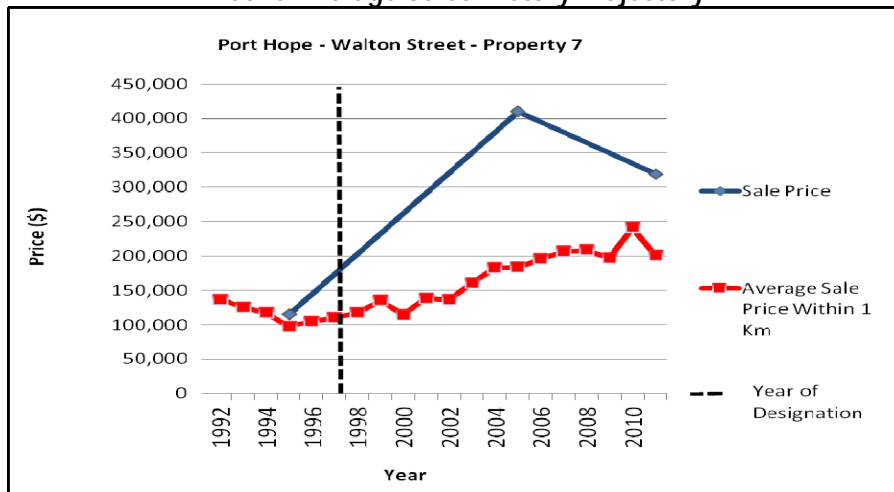
Impression Score				
Aggregate Score	763.5	1065	71.68	3.6

Appendix F

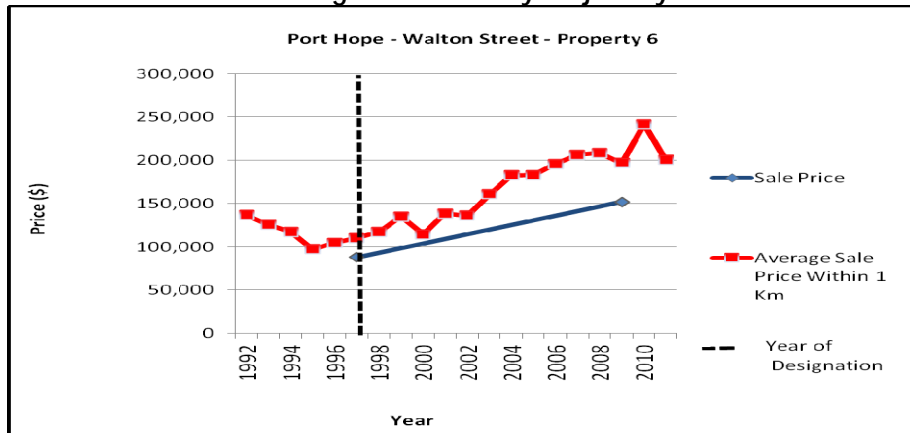
Real Estate Data



Above Average Sales History Trajectory



Average Sales History Trajectory



Below Average Sales History Trajectory