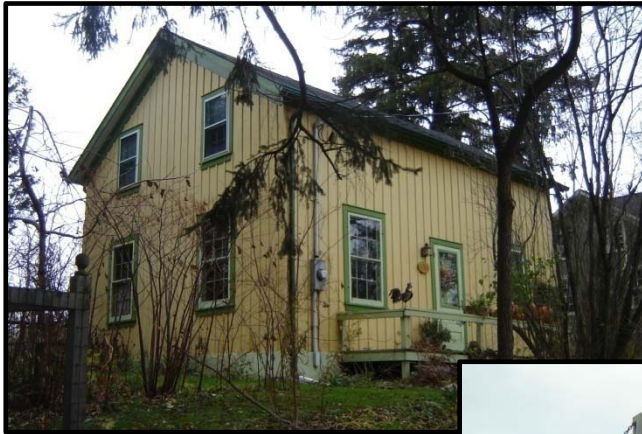


Heritage Districts Work!

Heritage Conservation District Study Whitevale - City of Pickering 2009



Heritage Conservation District Study 2009

Prepared By

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

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The efforts of the volunteers were assisted and coordinated through cooperation between the ACO and the Heritage Resources Centre (HRC) at the University of Waterloo. Professor Robert Shipley is the Director of the HRC. The Project Coordinator, report manager and principal volunteer facilitator was Kayla Jonas. Additional data collection and research analysis was conducted by Jason Kovacs, Beatrice Tam and Martha Fallis. Administration and help was also provided by Marg Rowell, Chelsey Tyers, Paul Dubniak and Kirsten Pries.

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Thanks!

Whitevale Executive Summary

Introduction

- 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
- The Ontario Heritage Act enables municipalities to designate Heritage Conservation Districts
- Heritage Conservation Districts allow municipalities to guide future changes in these areas of special character
- 32 districts designated in or before 1992 were examined

Background of Whitevale Heritage Conservation District

- Located in the City of Pickering
- Consists of 35 properties mainly residential, two retail and three public
- The district designation process began in 1992 and it was designated in 1993

Study Approach

- Resident surveys were conducted door to door by members of the Heritage Resources Centre
- Land use mapping and a streetscape evaluation were conducted
- Sales history trends were collected from GeoWarehouse™ and analyzed
- Data on requests for alterations was collected

Analysis of Key Findings

- The following objectives of the district plan have been met:
 - to encourage the maintenance and conservation of heritage buildings
 - to encourage new development which respects existing building stock
 - to maintain the rural character of Whitevale
- 100% of the people surveyed are very satisfied or satisfied with living in the district
- Most properties in the district had average or above sales history trajectories
- Alteration requests are neither difficult or lengthy
- Overall, the Whitevale Heritage conservation District Plan is a successful planning initiative

Recommendation

- Track alteration requests 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

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 92 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.

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, volunteers from branches of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) and Historical Societies were assisted by the Heritage Resources Centre (HRC) at the University of Waterloo to undertake 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?

Since it takes a period of time for the impacts of district designation to manifest this study concentrated on examining districts that are well established. Applying the criterion of residential, commercial or mixed use areas designated in 1992 or before there were 32 HCDs that the study examined. These districts are found in or near the following areas: Cobourg, Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Huron County, Brampton, Toronto, Ottawa, the Region of Waterloo and Thunder Bay.

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 which are part of the study are also evident.

Geographical Distribution		Community Size		Type	
Northern	1	Small Community	9 ~	Commercial	9~
Eastern	11 *	Medium Sized	11	Residential	18*
Central	12	Large City	12 *	Mixed	5
South Western	8 ~				
	32		32		32

* 5 of these districts make up the HCD known as Sandy Hill
 ~ 2 of these districts make up the HCD known as Goderich Square

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 Whitevale Heritage Conservation District

2.1 Description of the District

The Whitevale Heritage Conservation District is bounded by Altona Road to the east and Sideline 26 to the west in the City of Pickering. The district consists of 35 properties, mainly all one and two-and-a-half storey residential dwellings except for two retail and three public buildings.

2.2 Cultural Heritage Value of the District

According to the Whitevale District Guide:

“The hamlet of Whitevale is located in a scenic river valley along the banks of West Duffins Creek in the Town of Pickering. Dominated by its rural setting and modest vernacular buildings, the hamlet has not changed significantly in character since the 19th century. It had a small but thriving industrial centre until the 1870s, when a disastrous fire effectively destroyed most of the mill buildings except the feed mill. With the depopulation of rural Ontario during the late 1800s and early 1900s Whitevale’s role as a small service centre for the local farming community waned, resulting in the complete disappearance of its commercial enterprises on Main Street with the exception of the general store and the mill.

The building style in Whitevale is a mixture of typical rural Ontario vernacular architecture combined with Victorian influences and materials in common usage at the time of construction. The result is a distinctive cohesiveness of scale, mass, decorative detailing and building materials. Although many individual buildings and properties have been altered over the decades, the overall 19th century village has been retained.

Most of the existing 19th century buildings have wood frame structures and siding ranging from clap board, shiplap, to vertical board and batten. The majority of structures are one-and-a-half storeys in height with a three bay front facades and centre gables.

The rural character of Whitevale, with its narrow tree-lined streets, scenic views over the surrounding agricultural lands and the West Duffins Creek and its steep river valley, provides a distinctive context and setting for its buildings. The community has a rich diverse character within a relatively small area. Archaeological remains located in and around attest to its enduring attractiveness as a settlement area”⁴.

⁴ Whitevale Heritage Conservation District Guide, page 5

2.3 Location of the District

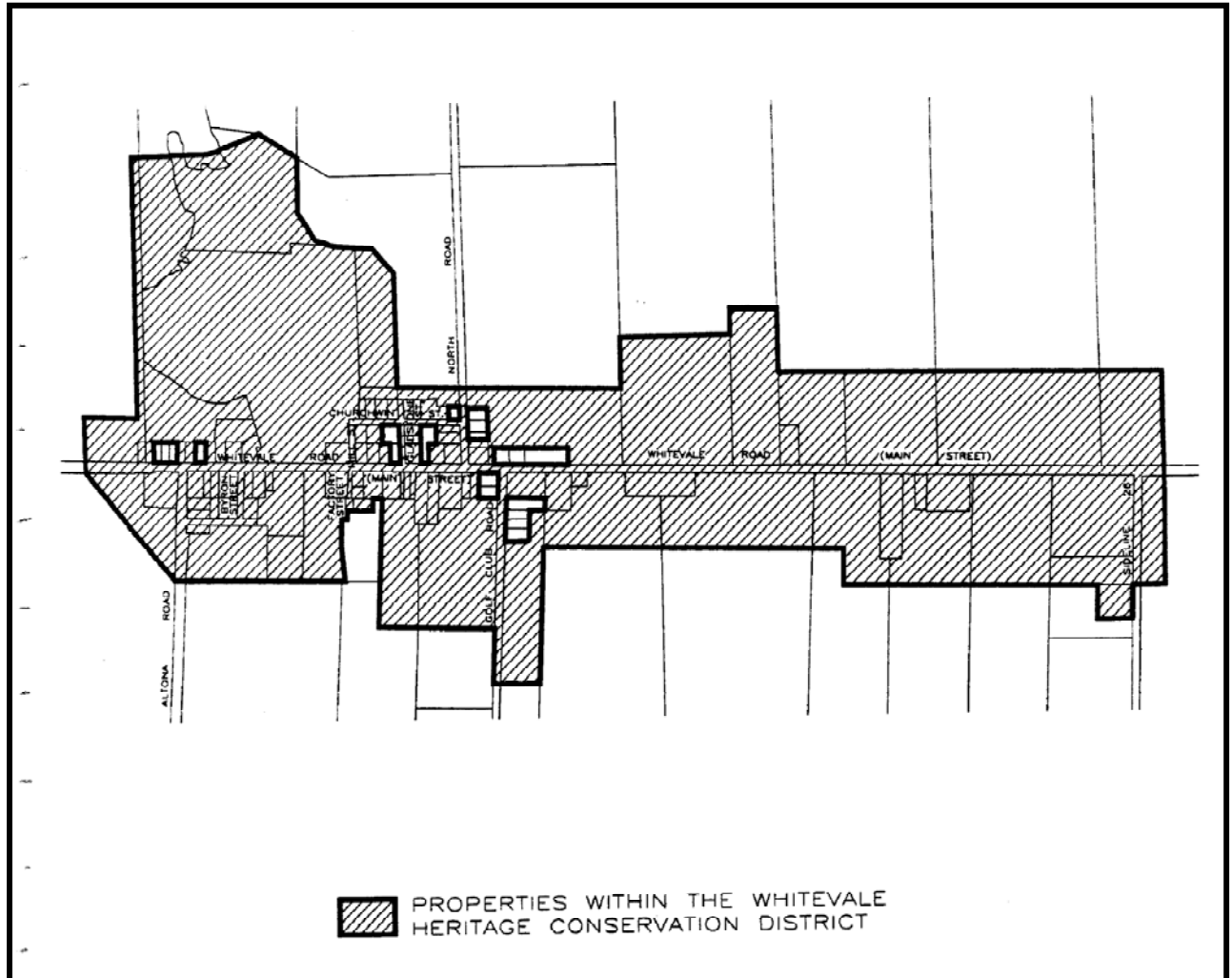


Figure 2: Map of Whitevale Heritage Conservation District

2.4 Designation of the District

The designation of Whitevale was established to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the special character of Whitevale.

The Whitevale Heritage Conservation District is protected by By-law 4074-92 which was passed on June 7, 1993 by the City of Pickering. Although the By-law was approved in 1993, the By-law number and the district guide indicate that the critical time of approval was in 1992.

The Heritage Conservation District Guide contains sections on the objectives, the district character, a heritage building inventory, conservation guidelines, and heritage district permits.

3.0 Study Approach

3.1 Resident Surveys

Residents of the Whitevale 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 members of the Heritage Resources Centre. Thirteen of thirty-five residents answered surveys, representing a 37.14% response rate. The tabulated findings of the survey are presented in Appendix A.

3.2 Townscape Survey

A Townscape Survey of Whitevale was conducted in November 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 Whitevale (see Appendix B). The streetscape evaluation involves the use of a view assessment pro forma which generates scores between one and five for 25 factors in view. A total of 11 views were photographed and evaluated (see Appendices C and D). 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 range were identified for individual HCD properties using GeoWarehouse™, an online subscription database commonly used by real estate professionals.

Properties with more than one record of sale were plotted on graphs and compared with the average sales figures for non-designated properties. A number of sales property averages were obtained for each “non-designated area” within a 1 km radius from the HCDs. The mean selling price for these property averages, which were also obtained through GeoWarehouse™, were calculated and plotted against each HCD unit sales record (see Appendix F)⁵. It was expected that the use of average sales prices from the immediate vicinity of a district as opposed to the use of city-wide sales trends would provide a more accurate comparative record to show how the HCD designation status itself affects property values. Aside from the locational factor (*i.e.* properties located within an HCD), 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, *etc.*)

3.4 Key Stakeholder Interviews

People of who 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. No one was available to be interviewed for the Whitevale Heritage Conservation District.

⁵ The method for obtaining the average sales price for non-designated areas within the 1km radius was adjusted according to the number of properties within an HCD. For example, to obtain figures on non-designated areas, average sales histories within a 1 km radius from the largest HCDs (201-600 properties) were obtained using every fiftieth HCD property as a basis for calculating each area sales record. The mean average of these sales records were subsequently calculated and used as the comparative sales history trend on each graph. Every fifth, tenth, and twenty-fifth property were used to find the immediate average sales histories within a 1 km radius for smaller HCDs with 1-10, 11-100 and 101-200 properties respectively.

3.5 Requests for Alterations

With respect to the requests for alterations within the Heritage Conservation Districts, 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 Whitevale Heritage Conservation District the information regarding alteration requests was not available.

4.0 Analysis of Key Findings

4.1 Have the goals or objectives been met?

Based on the Heritage Conservation District Guide prepared in 1992, the guide states that the goals will be met through objectives that fall within three categories:

a) To encourage the maintenance and conservation of heritage buildings

The objective to encourage the maintenance and conservation of heritage buildings has been met. Drawing on measures collected in the Townscape Survey, detailed maintenance and conserved elements scored high. This means that visually the area is well maintained and historic elements and buildings have been conserved. High scores in the categories of absence of dereliction and facade quality also contribute to the visual confirmation that buildings have been well maintained (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: An example of a well maintained building

b) To encourage new development which respects existing building stock

High scores in the categories of quality of conservation work and new development show that development is compatible with the rest of the district. Coherence also scored high on the Townscape Survey which shows that the district accommodates new development reasonably well.

c) Maintain the rural character of Whitevale

The second objective, to maintain the rural character of Whitevale has been met. There has been no change in land use from the map created for the district guidelines (Section 2.3) and the current land use maps (Appendix B). The area is predominantly residential with the exception of two retail properties and three public buildings. According to the Townscape Surveys traffic flow and cleanliness scored high which demonstrates that the area has maintained its rural character. Public and private planting also scored high which contributes to the integrity of the landscape (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: An example of the rural character of Whitevale

4.2 Are people content?

Two questions in the resident survey addressed people's contentment with living in the district. At the time of designation, of the five people who answered all expressed positive feelings. Now, 100% of the residents are either very satisfied or satisfied with living in the district. One resident stated that "they are glad to have a district".

4.3 Is it difficult to make alterations?

Of the residents surveyed only five said they had made an alteration request and of those all were approved within three months. This indicates that alterations are not difficult or lengthy. There is no data from the City of Pickering to support this statement.

4.4 Have property values been impacted?

According to the resident surveys six out of 13 people felt the designation would increase their property values and no one thought it would decrease their value.

The data from GeoWarehouse™ indicated that eight of the 35 properties had sales histories. Of these eight properties five had above average sales value increases. Two properties had average sales history trajectories and one of the properties performed below average. Almost all the properties had an above average sale price which indicates the district is a better neighbourhood than its immediate surroundings (see Figure 6).

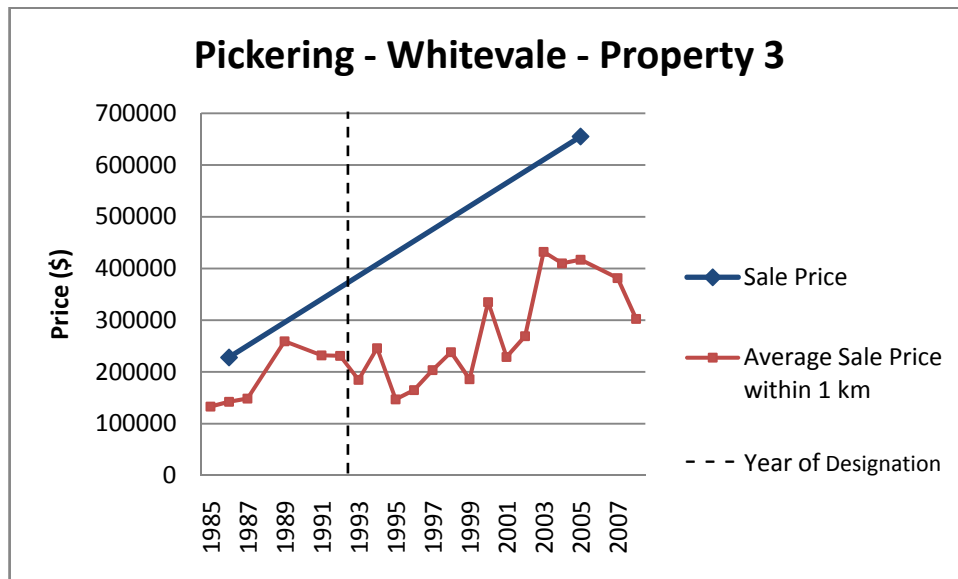


Figure 6: Above Sales History Trajectory

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

- The following objectives of the district plan have been met:
 - to encourage the maintenance and conservation of heritage buildings
 - to encourage new development which respects existing building stock
 - to maintain the rural character of Whitevale
- 100% of the people surveyed are very satisfied or satisfied with living in the district
- Most properties in the district had average or above sales history trajectories
- Alteration requests are neither difficult or length

Overall, the Whitevale Heritage Conservation District is a successful planning initiative.

5.2 Recommendations

The following aspects of the district are areas for improvement:

- Track alteration requests in a comprehensive and easily accessible manner

Appendices

Appendix A

Tabular Results of Resident Surveys

Heritage Conservation District Name: Whitevale (Pickering)

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

Responses

	Owner	Tenant-Commercial	Tenant - Residential
Counts	13	0	0
Percentage	100.00	0.00	0.00

2. Are you aware you live within a HCD?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	13	0
Percentage	100.00	0.00

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

Responses

	Before	After
Counts	6	7
Percentage	46.15	53.85

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

Responses

Positive	5
Negative	0
Neutral	0
Mixed Feelings	0

5. If you came after the designation did the designation affect your decision to move here?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	1	5
Percentage	16.67	83.33

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

Responses

Preserve	8
Restrict	4
Guidelines	1
Committee	3
Good	1

Additional Comments: Keep district intact (1), stay sensitive to the original (1), easements (1)

Note: Residents could provide more than one response to question 6

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

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	5	8
Percentage	38.46	61.54

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

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	5	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	4
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	4.92	12	1	0	0	0	0
Percentage		92.31	7.69	0.00	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	3.58	1	5	4	0	0	3
Percentage		7.69	50.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	23.08

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

Responses

No	8
Yes	1
Yes, easier	2
Yes, harder	0
Don't know	0
Maybe	1

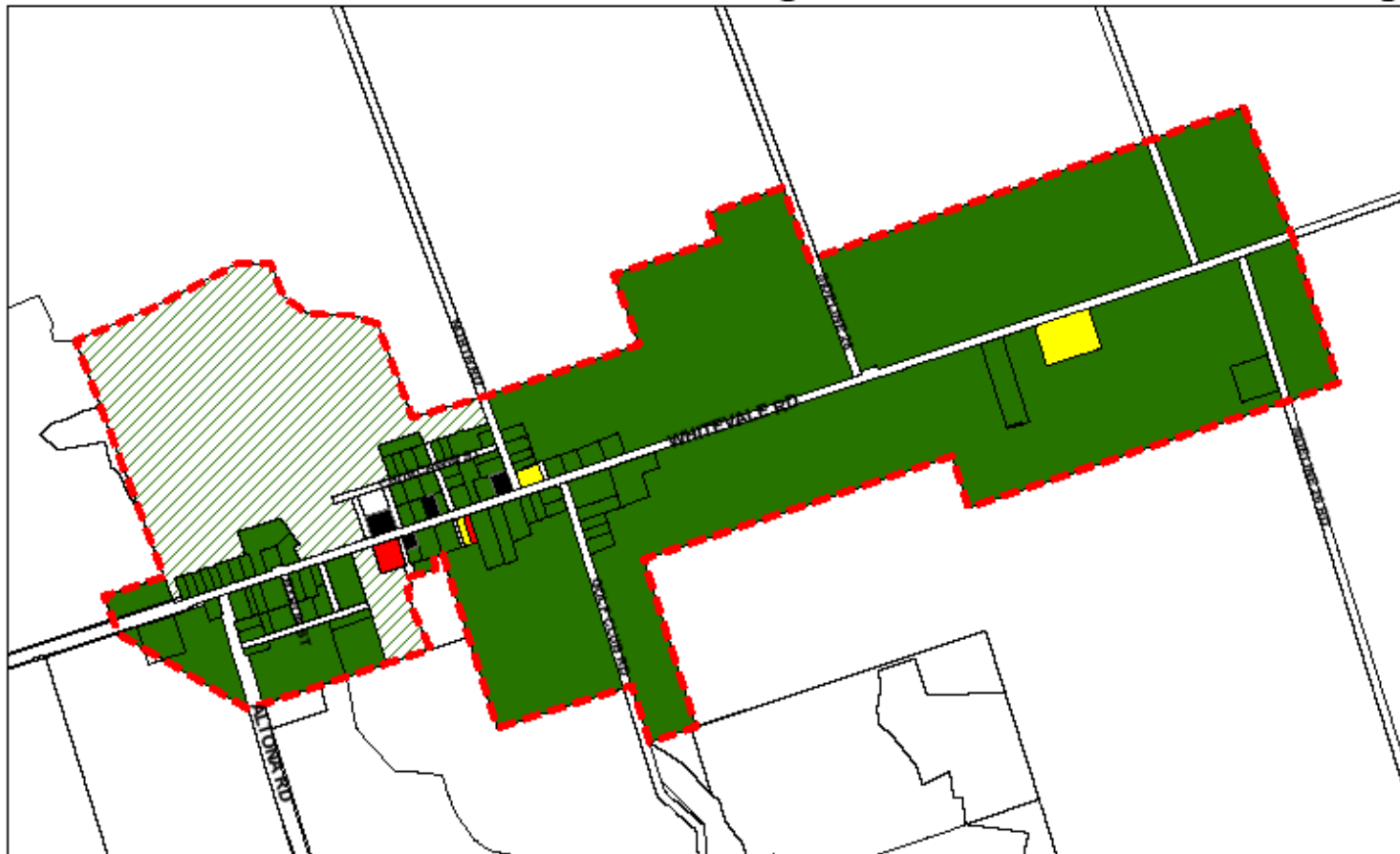
13. Comments

Additional Comments: property taxes are too high (1), there is a lack of infrastructure due to the guidelines (1), them vs. us (1), could sell quickly (1), glad to have a district (1)

Total Population	35
Participants	13
Participation Rate	37.14

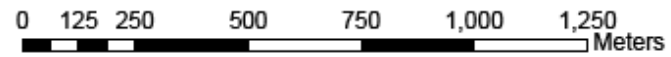
Appendix B
Land Use Maps

Ground Level Land Use in Whitevale Heritage Conservation District, Pickering



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 - DB)	Warehouse / Storage
Leisure	Retail	

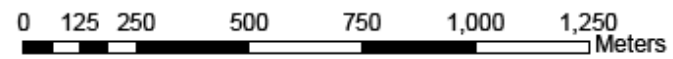


Author: Heritage Resources Centre
 April 15, 2009
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

Second Floor Land Use in Whitevale Heritage Conservation District, Pickering



Legend



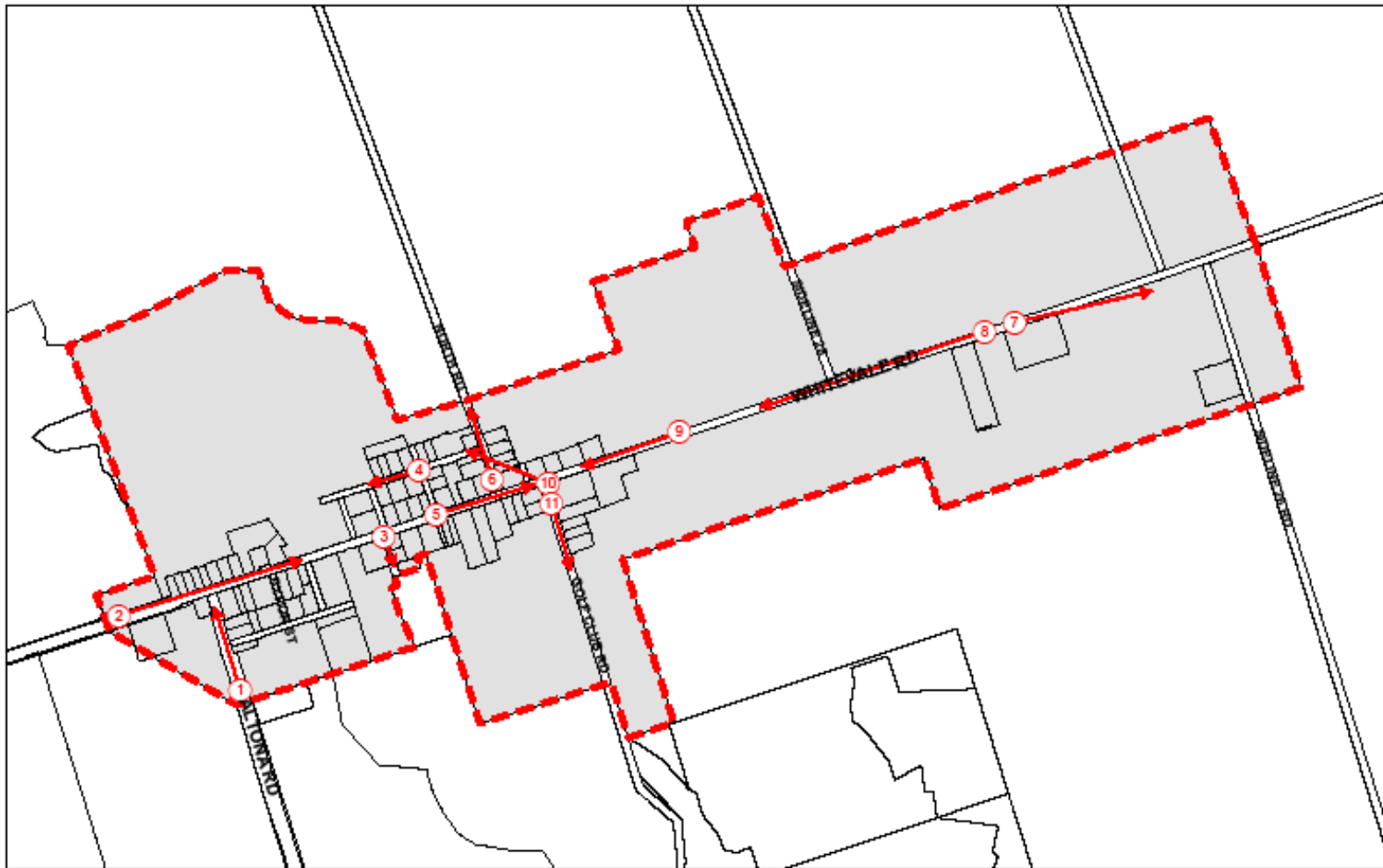
Author: Heritage Resources Centre
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 Data provider: Teranet Inc.
 Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N








Appendix C

Map of Views

Views in Whitevale Heritage Conservation District, Pickering



Legend

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

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 1,250
Meters

Author: Heritage Resources Centre
April 15, 2009
Data provider: Teranet Inc.
Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N



Appendix D

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

Appendix E

Townscape Evaluation Pro Forma

Heritage Conservation District Townscape Summary

Name of District: Whitevale Pickering HCD

Date: November 11, 2008

A. Streetscape Quality				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
A1-Pedestrian Friendly	23.5	55	42.73	2.1
A2-Cleanliness	42	55	76.36	3.8
A3-Coherence	40.5	55	73.64	3.7
A4-Edgefeature Quality	33	55	60.00	3.0
A5-Floorscape Quality	29	55	52.73	2.6
A6-Legibility	41	55	74.55	3.7
A7-Sense of Threat	25	55	45.45	2.3
A8-Personal Safety: Traffic	43.5	55	79.09	4.0
A9-Planting: Public	4.5	5	90.00	4.5
A10-Vitality	16	55	29.09	1.5
A11- Appropriate Resting Places	15.5	25	62.00	3.1
A12-Signage	21	25	84.00	4.2
A13-Street Furniture Quality	33.5	55	60.91	3.0
A14-Traffic Flow, Appropriateness	44	55	80.00	4.0
SUM A	412	660	62.42	3.1

B. Private Space in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
B15-Advertising, In keeping	13.5	15	90.00	4.5
B16-Dereliction, Absence of	36.5	45	81.11	4.1
B17-Detailing, Maintenance	42	55	76.36	3.8
B18-Facade Quality	34.5	45	76.67	3.8
B19-Planting: Private	24	30	80.00	4.0
SUM B	150.5	190	79.21	4.0

C. Heritage in View				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
C20-Conserved Elements Evident	36.5	45	81.11	4.1
C21-Historic Reference Seen	22.5	55	40.91	2.0
C22-Nomenclature/Place Reference	26	50	52.00	2.6
C23-Quality of Conservation Work	34	45	75.56	3.8
C24-Quality of New Development	7.5	10	75.00	3.8
C25- Historic Features, Maintained	37.5	45	83.33	4.2
SUM C	164	250	65.60	3.3

Impression Score				
Aggregate Score	726.5	1100	66.05	3.3

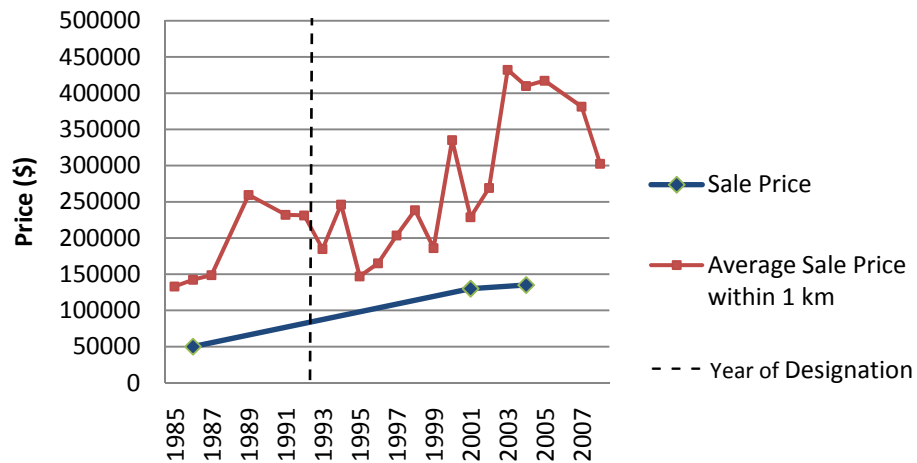
Weather: Cold, cloudy

of Views: 11

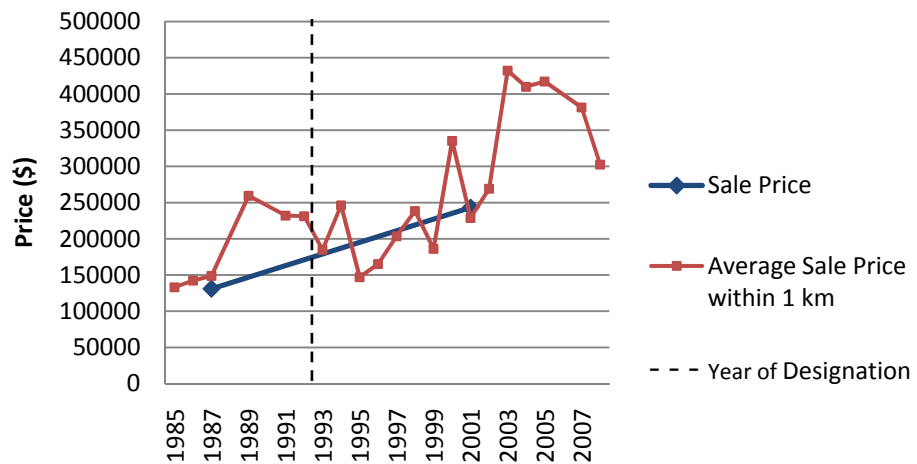
Appendix F

Real Estate Data

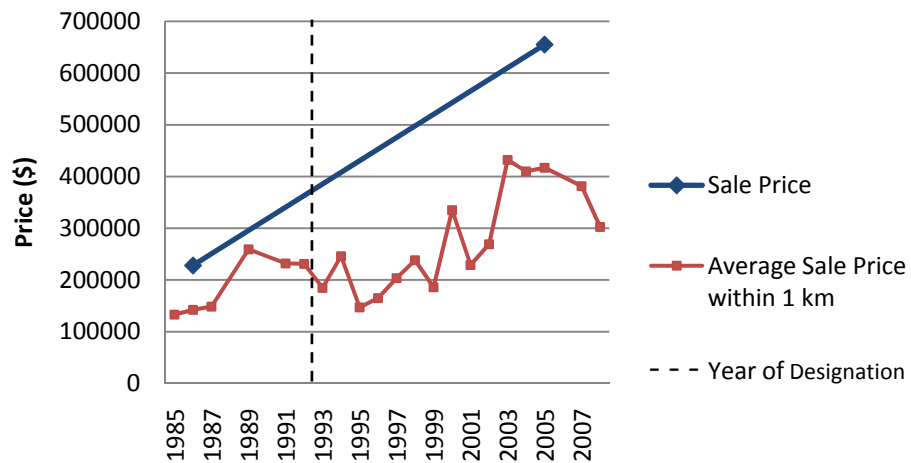
Pickering - Whitevale - Property 1



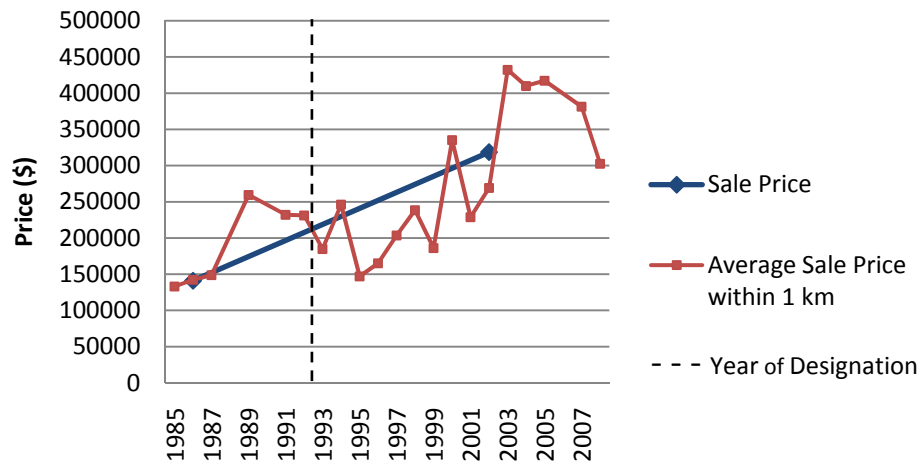
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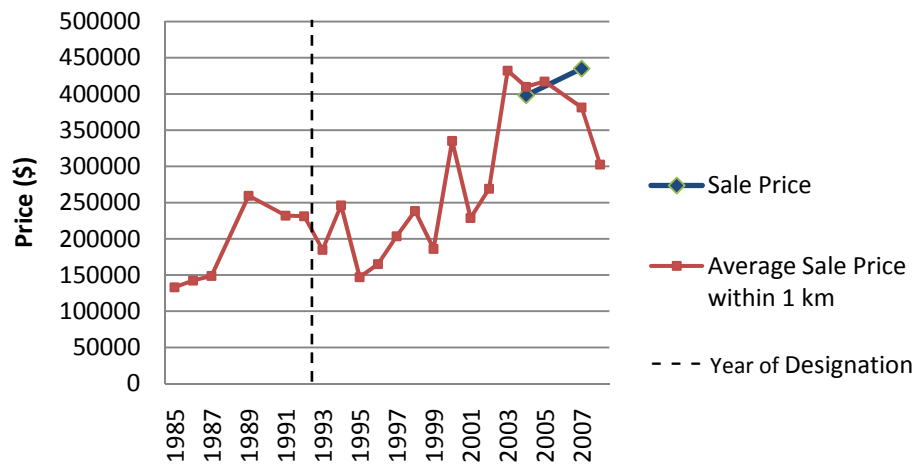
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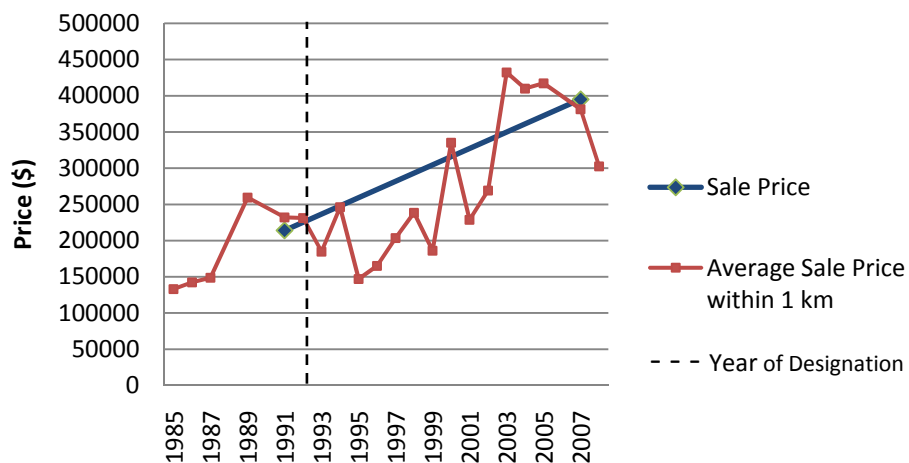
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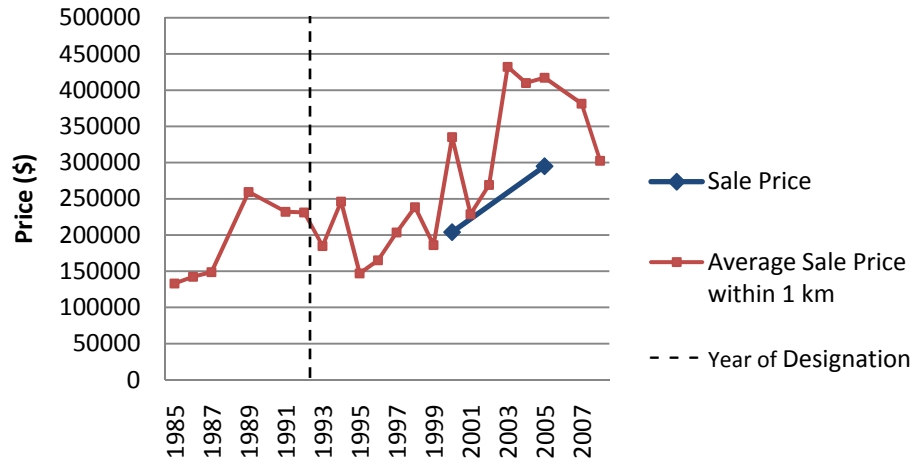
Pickering - Whitevale - Property 5



Pickering - Whitevale - Property 6



Pickering - Whitevale - Property 7



Pickering - Whitevale - Property 8

