

Old Burlington Heritage Conservation District Study

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Study Update:

The many unique and historical homes, buildings, streetscapes and open spaces downtown help make Burlington a vibrant community and are a big part of the quality of life we all enjoy.

Since 2002, the City of Burlington has been investigating the use of heritage conservation district designation as a planning tool to protect the buildings and streetscapes within a portion of the downtown core. Establishing such a district would give the city important tools to protect heritage spaces and buildings from unnecessary demolition and alterations that undermine the area's unique character.

While this initial study has produced some valuable insights, Burlington city council recently voted to make changes to the study process.

On July 4th, council passed a resolution that stated: *“THAT the Director of Planning be directed to only initiate Phase 2 of the Old Burlington Village Heritage Conservation District Study and Plan, including guidelines, for those neighbourhoods that submit a petition signed by a majority of property owners wanting the protection of an HCD, within the boundaries identified in the Carter/Oberst* report”*.

*Phillip H. Carter, architect and planner in association with Paul Oberst, architect have been assisting the City of Burlington with this study

N.B. For the purposes of council's resolution, council has defined a neighbourhood as at least ten residential or commercial properties in close proximity.

In addition to the heritage district designation option, the planning department will continue to review other planning tools and policies that can be used to protect heritage spaces in Burlington. Staff will also prepare background materials for residents and

business owners who may be interested in pursuing Heritage Conservation District designation. This work is currently underway.

Initiating Draft Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan Preparation:

At the direction of council, individuals who are interested in having a draft HCD plan prepared for their area must submit a signed petition (minimum 10 signatures) to the city's clerk's department. Please keep in mind that signing and submitting a petition does not necessarily mean that council will authorize the preparation of a draft HCD Plan. Rather, the petition will be referred to staff for review. Staff will then meet with the residents and businesses that have signed the petition to discuss next steps. After this meeting staff will make a recommendation to council about whether or not a draft HCD plan should be prepared. The preparation of a draft HCD plan does not equal designation: further staff and community review and input will be required before a district is designated.

Why establish a heritage district when people can designate individual properties if they want?

The purpose of individual designation is to recognize the importance of a single, specific property. The purpose of district designation is to *recognize the collective importance of a particular area*. Even if properties within a district are of varying degrees of significance, it is *the character as a whole that is important to conserve*. Although the designation of individual properties is a tool to conserve the unique features and/or integrity of a specific building, it is not a tool that can address the preservation and enhancement of a unique 'sense of place'. Site-specific designation cannot influence future development/redevelopment on surrounding properties.

What can a Heritage District achieve?

Heritage District designation is a planning tool that can be used to:

- a) Preserve existing heritage resources;
- b) Guide the alteration of heritage resources;
- c) Maintain and enhance the "character" of an area; and
- d) Regulate the aesthetic components of new development.

Heritage Conservation in Burlington:

As part of the ongoing Official Plan review, staff is working on a broad-based heritage conservation strategy for the City of Burlington. Staff is reviewing a range of land use planning tools that can be used, to varying degrees, to achieve the community's heritage conservation goals. If you would like more information about this component of the city's Official Plan review, please contact the planning department.

If you have any questions about heritage conservation efforts in Burlington, including heritage conservation district designation in general, please contact the City of Burlington's planning department at 905-335-7600, ext. 7870.