

HALTON HILLS CULTURAL HERITAGE STRATEGY

PLANNING FOR HERITAGE IN AN EVOLVING LANDSCAPE

Fall 2023



Prepared for:

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*COVER PAGE: Aerial view of Halton Hills, looking southeast from
Limehouse to Georgetown (Google Earth, 2022).*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The town of Halton Hills is a dynamic place. Defined by geographical features including the Credit River and Niagara Escarpment, for almost two centuries the town consisted of a collection of small urban settlements buffered by rural rolling hills and fields. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, emerging trends in urban and suburban residential development and regional transportation linkages have brought new growth and evolution to its population and built environment.

In this ongoing moment of evolution, this Cultural Heritage Strategy has been prepared to guide the Town of Halton Hills (“the Town”), including Town Council (“Council”) and municipal heritage staff, in defining, managing and conserving Halton Hills’ cultural heritage while looking to the opportunities and challenges of the future.

Historic Context Statement for Halton Hills

Section 2.0 includes an Historic Context Statement (“HCS”) for Halton Hills, which consolidates historical research and community engagement conducted in Summer-Fall 2021. The HCS provides an overview of Halton Hills’ history and evolution, and an analysis of three key themes:

- Halton Hills’ **transportation networks**, both natural and human-made, have influenced its development and evolution;
- Halton Hills’ **natural systems and resources** have laid the foundation for evolving local economies; and
- **Immigration and migration** has shaped the social fabric of Halton Hills’ communities.

Heritage attributes for the full town are identified in Section 2.0.

Heritage Planning Framework and the Conservation Toolbox

Section 3.0 provides an overview of Ontario’s heritage planning framework, and the conservation toolbox available in Halton Hills. It outlines regulatory tools and components of the heritage program under the *Ontario Heritage Act* (“OHA”), as well as regulatory and non-regulatory tools that may be used for heritage conservation outside the scope of the OHA.

Vision and Objectives

Section 4.0 sets out a vision for the Halton Hills’ heritage program. It includes the following objectives for the Town to establish and/or promote a heritage program that:

- Recognizes, celebrates, emphasizes and conserves the character and identity of Halton Hills’ historic settlement areas.
- Recognizes and conserves the rural character between Halton Hills’ historic settlements.
- Embodies a cultural landscape approach, and relies on a variety of tools to conserve cultural landscapes of heritage value.
- Reflects community interests and values, and conducts active outreach to engage underrepresented voices, including those of Indigenous rights holders.
- Accepts that urban density and heritage conservation can co-exist, and models best practices for intensification in the right places.
- Helps to facilitate cultural economic development and programming in Halton Hills.

- Recognizes that the Halton Hills climate emergency necessitates high-priority responses that must be balanced and embedded with heritage conservation.
- Is transparent, balanced and defensible.

Recommendations

Section 5.0 includes 30 recommendations for the Halton Hills heritage program, derived from the vision and objectives. The recommendations are supported by explanatory and advisory context in Section 5.0, and consolidated in a summary list in Section 6.0 of this Strategy.

The six general recommendations in Sections 5.1-5.3 are considered foundational to the heritage program; they address the development of local Historic Context Statements at a neighbourhood / hamlet scale, the conservation of individual heritage resources, and the conservation of character areas, nodes and corridors. These recommendations should be pursued in the immediate term.

The 18 recommendations in Section 5.4 are specific to recommended strategic program areas for the Halton Hills heritage program, including Truth and Reconciliation, farmstead conservation and adaptation, heritage in the context of climate change, conservation of historic community institutions, and cultural economic development. These program areas are derived from the opportunities and challenges identified in the information-gathering phase of this project (2021), which included thorough community engagement, and they aim to address the vision and objectives outlined in Section 4.0.

The remaining seven recommendations in Sections 5.5-5.7 address additional heritage program elements, the Heritage Halton Hills committee, the Heritage Planning webpage, and the Official Plan heritage policies.

The 25 recommendations in Section 5.4-5.7 may be addressed in the medium and long term, subject to available time and resources, and Halton Town Council (“Council”) direction.

Implementation

Upon adoption of this Cultural Heritage Strategy, recommendations for its implementation include:

- Council to update the cultural heritage policies in the Halton Hills Official Plan to reflect the content and program recommendations in this Strategy;
- Council to authorize municipal heritage staff to implement the recommendations in Section 5.1-5.3 of this Strategy;
- Council to subsequently authorize municipal heritage staff to implement additional recommendations in this Strategy that are considered high priority, subject to available time and resources.

Many of the recommendations in Section 5.4 of this Strategy will require coordination with other municipal departments at the Town of Halton Hills, in the spirit of an holistic and interdisciplinary approach to heritage conservation going forward.

FOLLOWING PAGE: 70 Mill Street, Georgetown (ERA, 2021)



70 Mill Street

70 Mill Street

NO PARKING
ANYTIME

FOR INFORMATION
CONTACT THE
CITY OF
MILBURN
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In Spring 2021, the Town engaged ERA Architects (“ERA”) to develop a municipal Cultural Heritage Strategy.

The Town sought a Cultural Heritage Strategy to provide the tools and guidance needed to recognize and manage its cultural heritage resources. In particular, the Town sought guidance on:

- Articulating a cohesive vision and broad objectives for heritage conservation and management in Halton Hills;
- Establishing a relationship with Indigenous communities, and identifying and conserving resources valued by those communities;
- Identifying potential cultural heritage landscapes;
- Establishing policies for the identification, conservation, and ongoing stewardship of the Town’s cultural heritage resources, building on its existing policy framework;
- Synthesizing current research and best practices to inform Council and municipal staff decisions on cultural heritage resources;
- Identifying strategies to overcome any barriers to the conservation of the Town’s cultural heritage resources; and
- Developing approaches for the prioritization for designation of properties on the Halton Hills Heritage Inventory and Register.

1.2 Purpose of this Strategy

This Cultural Heritage Strategy has been developed to provide long-range strategic direction for the Halton Hills heritage program. It is structured to address existing context and challenges, as well as anticipated future challenges and opportunities for the conservation of Halton Hills’ cultural heritage resources.

This Strategy was informed by six months of information gathering and direct stakeholder engagement, the results of which were synthesized in an Existing Conditions Report produced by ERA in Fall 2021.

The Strategy consolidates a vision and objectives with program and policy recommendations for the municipal heritage program.

The direction in this Strategy is structured to foster a municipal heritage program that functions and contributes holistically to the Town’s achievement of its broader strategic priorities and focus areas, including long-term sustainability in the face of climate change, and the development of a robust cultural economy.

1.3 Policy Context

The authority to develop a Cultural Heritage Strategy is nested in the Halton Hills Official Plan (“Official Plan”) policy F5.1.1:

In order to implement the objectives of this [Official Plan], Council may prepare a Cultural Heritage Master Plan (CHMP). Such a Master Plan would survey, inventory, examine and study the Town’s cultural heritage

resources. The purpose of the CHMP is to make recommendations on how the cultural heritage resources of the Town should be enhanced and protected in accordance with the goals and objectives of this [Official Plan]. In addition, the CHMP shall make recommendations on:

a. the need for the designation of Heritage Conservation Districts in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act and as described in Sections F5.2.4 and F5.2.5 of this [Official Plan]; and,

b. the need for area-specific Official Plan policies and/or zoning by-law regulations for cultural heritage areas as described in Section F5.2.6 of this [Official Plan].

The direction in this Cultural Heritage Strategy is intended to complement the existing strategic direction in other municipal planning documents, including the:

- Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2020);
- Community Improvement Plan (“CIP”) (2022);
- Cultural Master Plan (2013, to be updated in 2020s);
- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2021);
- Low-Carbon Transition Strategy (2021); and
- Public Art Master Plan (2018).

1.4 How to Read this Strategy

This Cultural Heritage Strategy is organized as follows:

- Sections 2.0 - 3.0 provide important background information to understand cultural heritage value within Halton Hills, and the existing Halton Hills heritage planning framework that applies;
- Sections 4.0 - 6.0 set out a proposed approach for the Halton Hills heritage program. They include a vision and objectives for the program, and a set of 28 recommendations that may be implemented over time to achieve the recommended approach;
- Section 7.0 provides direction on implementing this Strategy;
- Section 8.0 provides a glossary of key terms, largely consolidated from higher-order policies including the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Halton Hills Official Plan.

Throughout the document, dark blue sidebars provide additional information and context for the text they accompany. Other coloured sidebars provide examples and case studies to help illustrate the contents of the Strategy.

2 HISTORY & EVOLUTION OF HALTON HILLS

2.1 Historic Context Statement

2.1.1 Historical Overview

Pre-Treaty Indigenous Territory (Pre-1818)

The enduring history of First Nation Peoples in Halton Hills can be traced back through time immemorial before contact with Europeans in the 1600s. Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the Credit River was central to Indigenous ways of life, supporting settlements, fisheries, horticulture, transportation, and trade.

Iroquoian-speaking peoples, ancestors of the Wendat, occupied the Credit River Valley for hundreds of years until approximately the mid-1600s, establishing semi-permanent villages. There are numerous archaeological sites in Halton Hills dating from this period, ranging from village sites to burial grounds, which reveal a rich cultural heritage. The Wendat were displaced by the Haudenosaunee around 1649-50, amid the conflicts that arose between European colonial powers and their First Nation allies (MCFN, 2018, pg. 6).

The Mississaugas (part of the Anishinaabe Nation) arrived in southern Ontario in the 1690s, settling in two groups along the north shore of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. The western group, occupying the area between Toronto and Lake Erie, became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. Until the early 19th century, the Mississaugas of the Credit followed a seasonal cycle of movement and resource harvesting along the Credit River (Missinnihé, meaning “trusting creek”), and other rivers. In the winter months, extended family groups hunted in the Halton Hills area, travelling



Mississauga place-names at the Western end of Lake Ontario. The Credit River is highlighted in orange (MNCFN, 2018, pg.3).

Note: This Historic Context Statement has been crafted with input from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.



View of the Credit River in today's Glen Williams (ERA, 2021).

south towards the mouth of the river in the spring for the salmon run (MCFN, 2018, pg. 11; Rowe, 2006, pg. 14).

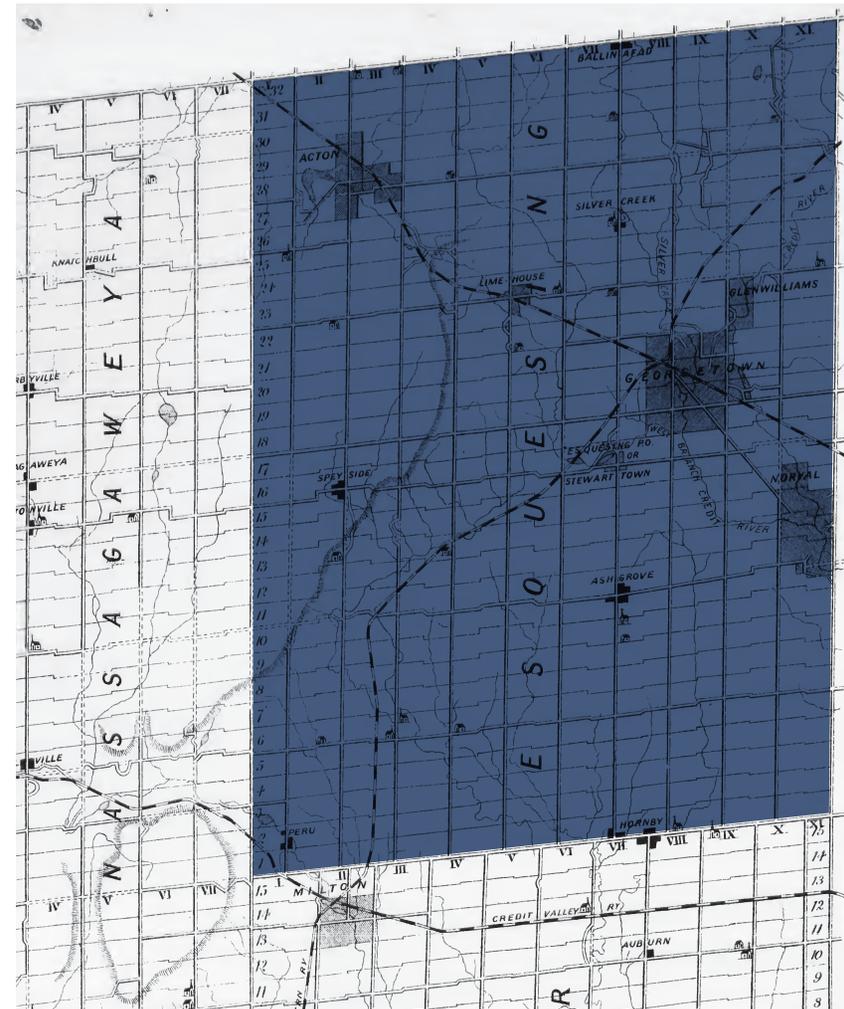
The Mississaugas' fisheries and traditional economies were diminished as a result of increased Euro-colonial settlement, leading to a state of impoverishment and dramatic population decline (Duric, MCFN website, 2017). In 1818, the British Crown negotiated the purchase of 648,000 acres of land from the Mississaugas of the Credit, including present-day Halton Hills, under the Ajetance Treaty (No. 19), named after Chief Ajetance. This left the Mississaugas with three small reserves on the Lake Ontario shoreline.

The legitimacy of early land “surrenders” to the Crown is questionable when considering the Mississaugas' traditional understanding of property ownership. Unlike the British, the Mississaugas understood land in spiritual terms, and did not share the idea that access to land and resources could be given up permanently (MCFN, 2018, pg. 13).

Early Euro-Canadian Settlement (1819-1850s)

In 1819, shortly after the Ajetance Treaty, the Crown initiated the survey of the new Townships of Nassagaweya, Esquesing, and Chinguacousy, awarding the surveying contract to Timothy Street and Captain Abraham Nelles. Esquesing Township – a Mississauga name translating to “land of the tall pines” or “last creek out” – was laid out on a common grid pattern, with 11 concessions and 352 farm lots, divided by concession roads and side roads. The grid pattern superimposed a colonial understanding of land over the seasonal and resource-dependent relationship held by the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Most of the early European settlers in Esquesing Township were Scottish and Irish (Palatine) farmers, primarily of Presbyterian or Methodist faith,



1877 Walker & Miles Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton. Esquesing Township is highlighted in blue (Canadiana; annotated by ERA).

and English retired military or tradespeople (Browne Carter, 2006, pg. 28). The southwest section of the township became known as the Scotch Block, due to the concentration of Scottish settlers there. As a condition of the Crown patent, settlers were required to clear land, build a dwelling house, and clear a portion of the road allowance. By the 1840s, the township was known for its excellent land, good farms, and wheat of superior quality (Smith, 1846, pg. 56).

Generally speaking, the establishment of villages was tied to the development of mills along the Credit River and its tributaries in the 1820s. Georgetown, Stewarttown, Norval, and Glen Williams all began as mill sites, providing important services to early settlers by transforming grain into flour, logs into lumber and wool into woollen products, all using water power. Both Acton and Limehouse emerged as early industrial centres in the 1840s, with their respective tanneries and lime kilns drawing on Esquesing's vast natural resources – bark from hemlock trees, and limestone from the Niagara escarpment.

From the 1820s until 1850s, Trafalgar Road was the principal transportation and trade route, along which grain and other goods were shipped to the port in Oakville. Crossroads hamlets like Ashgrove and Hornby greatly benefitted from their location on Trafalgar Road, and became pioneer centres for business, education, and religion (Rowe, 2017). Stewarttown, the earliest village in the township, was also situated in an advantageous position along this important north-south route. In 1849, township officials selected Stewarttown as the site for the permanent Township Hall.



Pre-1907 photograph of the Lawson flour mill in Stewarttown (EHS p461f).



c. 1912 photograph of a stump pulling (Esquesing Historical Society 10301).



c. 1895 photograph of the Sprowl farm on the 3rd Line near Acton (Esquesing Historical Society).

The Railway Boom (1850s-1890s)

In 1856, the Grand Trunk Railway line was laid through Esquesing Township, linking Georgetown, Limehouse and Acton with Toronto and Guelph. Many of the raw materials used in its construction, such as rock and pine, were sourced locally from the Niagara Escarpment (Rowe, 2002, pg.13). The building work was carried out primarily by Irish Catholic labourers, who also built the first Catholic church in Georgetown in 1858 (Rowe, 2006, pg. 27).

The advent of the railway brought important changes to the township, shifting the flow of transportation from north-south to east-west, while influencing the industrial and commercial success of its settlements (McDonald, 1996, pg.3). Georgetown soon overtook Stewarttown as the principal village in the township, despite the Township Hall remaining in Stewarttown. Acton also gained prominence over nearby communities because of its railway connections, and both were incorporated as independent villages in 1864 and 1874 respectively. As communities grew and prospered, each specialized in the production of a particular good: paper in Georgetown, flour in Norval, wool in Glen Williams, lime in Limehouse, and leather in Acton (Rowe, 2002, pg.19).

With access to the railway and local natural resources, these and other industries flourished; some even achieved national and international importance. The Barber Paper Mill in Georgetown, powered by the Credit River, was the largest wallpaper manufacturer in North America by 1864 (Rowe, 2006, pg.33). At its height, the Beardmore Tannery in Acton was the largest in the British Empire (McDonald, 1996, pg.94). The Noble Flour Mill in Norval, which opened in 1868, was largely supplied with grain from local farms and became synonymous with Canada's flour industry (McDonald, 1996, pg. 84). The growth of industries led to a demand for workers' housing, a notable example being the 10 semi-detached houses on Bower Street in Acton, built in 1883.



1908 photograph of the Grand Trunk Railway bridge over the Credit River in Georgetown (Esquesing Historical Society 00150).



c. 1900 photograph of two Syndicate houses on Bower Street in Acton (Esquesing Historical Society 003654261f).



c. 1880 view of the Barber Paper Mill on the Credit River (Esquesing Historical Society 21607).

Another railway line was laid through Esquesing Township in 1877, this time following a north-south route through Georgetown. Like its predecessor, the Hamilton and North-Western Railway added to Georgetown's regional importance and facilitated the movement of goods and people. Credit Valley limestone from local quarries, used in the construction of many Ontario buildings, was shipped on the new line (Rowe, 1994). The 1870s and 1880s saw the transformation of Georgetown's built fabric, as brick and stone replaced wood as the primary building material for new houses, churches, schools, stores and other buildings (McDonald, 1996, pg.6). A substantial number of Halton Hills' listed or designated heritage buildings date from the railway era.

Early 20th Century: Prosperity and Stagnation (1900s-1930s)

The prosperity of the railway era continued into the early 20th century, a time when existing industries were expanding, new industries were emerging, and villages were growing. In Acton, an increasing number of migrants from Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe, and East Asia, came to work in the tanneries during the early 20th century, a reflection of Canada's relatively open immigration policy at the time (Rowe, 2002, pg.42). With workers' housing in short supply, Beardmore built a village for its workers on the outskirts of Acton in 1905.

Two experimental initiatives brought orphans from Eastern and Southeastern Europe to farms in Esquesing Township during the early 20th century: the Canadian Jewish Farm School, and the Armenian Boys' Farm Home. The former was established by Morris Saxe in 1927 on a farm south of Georgetown, serving as an agricultural training school for Polish war orphans. The latter brought 109 orphan boys – survivors of the Armenian Genocide – to the Cedarvale Farm near Georgetown, where they were



1900 bird's-eye view of Main Street, Georgetown, from the Knox Presbyterian Church bell tower (Esquesing Historical Society 003711847f).



c. 1908 view of the Beardmore Tannery in Acton (Esquesing Historical Society 00326).

educated in Canadian agricultural practices, before being placed with farming families across Ontario.

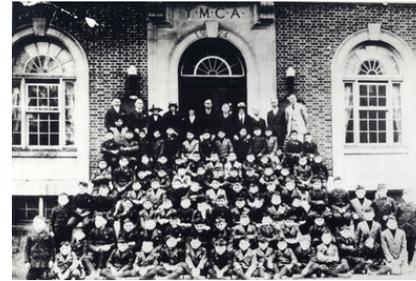
One of the Township's most famous residents, author Lucy Maud Montgomery, was herself a migrant. Montgomery lived in Norval between 1926 and 1935, when her husband was a minister at the Norval Presbyterian Church. Although her best known work, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), was written while she was living in PEI, she wrote five novels during her time in Norval (McDonald, 1996, pg. 91).

In 1917, the electric-powered Toronto Suburban Railway was built between Toronto and Guelph, passing through Norval, Georgetown, Limehouse, and Acton. The railway provided passenger and freight service and added yet another option for the shipment of goods produced in the area (McDonald, 1996, pg.82). Ultimately, the line closed in 1931 due in part to the Great Depression, a period of relatively slow growth and stagnation that would last until the late 1930s.

Post-World War Two Boom (1940s-mid-1970s)

The onset of World War Two brought new life to the area as industries and residents redirected their attention toward the war effort. Many local men and women served overseas, and many that remained supported the war effort through fundraising, war work and farming (Rowe, 2002, pg.62). At the conclusion of the war, the returning veterans were met with an acute housing shortage, prompting the construction of low-cost Victory Housing on Churchill Crescent and Normandy Boulevard in Georgetown, and McDonald and Mason Boulevards in Acton.

In the 1950s, the construction of Highway 401 and the relocation of several major companies to the area ushered in a new era of prosperity



1924 photograph of the Armenian Boys on the steps on the YMCA in Georgetown (Esquesing Historical Society 082093).



1908 postcard of the Norval Flour Mill (Esquesing Historical Society p10273f).



1947 photograph showing victory houses under construction on Normandy Boulevard in Georgetown (Esquesing Historical Society 003311870f).

(McDonald, 1996, pg.4). To accommodate the influx of new residents, developers built auto-oriented residential subdivisions on the edges of Acton and Georgetown. Rex Heslop, the developer behind Etobicoke's Rexdale neighbourhood, started construction on the Delrex development in Georgetown in 1955, eventually building more than 2,000 homes (McDonald, 1996, pg.66).

The post-war period also gave rise to the Credit Valley Conservation Authority ("CVC"), which was established in 1954 by the provincial government to manage the natural resources of the Credit River Watershed. Following Hurricane Hazel and subsequent amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act, the CVC acquired the Terra Cotta, Limehouse and Silver Creek Conservation Areas in Halton Hills. The Bruce Trail, a public footpath spanning the Niagara Escarpment, was officially opened in 1967, traversing these three Conservation Areas.

Three important events took place in 1974 that would shape the future of Halton Hills: the County of Halton was succeeded by the Regional Municipality of Halton; Halton Hills was incorporated as a new municipality through the amalgamation of Georgetown, Acton, and Esquesing Township; and finally, the GO Train line to Georgetown was opened along the former Grand Trunk Railway corridor.

Shifting Economies (late 1970s-Present)

Change came in the 1970s as local industries began to contract under pressure from an increasingly globalized marketplace. Between the late 1970s and early 1990s, the Georgetown Coated Paper Company, Provincial Papers, Glen Williams Knitting Mills, and Beardmore Tannery all closed their doors, resulting in the loss of hundreds of jobs.



1968 aerial view of the east end of the Delrex subdivision in Georgetown (Esquesing Historical Society 003326593f).



1994 photograph of the Olde Hide House in Acton (Esquesing Historical Society EHS003681262f).

At the same time, new cultural economies were beginning to take shape. In the 1970s, Glen Williams was transformed into a hub for antique shops, craft boutiques and artisans. In 1980, three local entrepreneurs opened the Old Hide House in Acton, a tourism flagship and retail leather goods outlet, located in a former Beardmore warehouse. The Chudleigh's farm in Scotch Block also rose to prominence during this period by introducing "Pick Your Own" and entertainment farming to their apple farm. Andrews Farm Market & Winery, another farm based around agritourism, opened in Halton Hills in the 1980s.

The suburbanization of Acton and Georgetown, which began in the post-war era, has continued into the 21st century, driven by their proximity to Toronto, access to transportation (Highway 401, GO Train), supply of developable land, and demand for housing. The Georgetown South subdivision, started in 1989, now comprises a significant portion of Georgetown's built-up area.



Antique shop in the former Beaumont Knitting Mills in Glen Williams (ERA, 2021).

2.1.2 Key Themes

Halton Hills' transportation networks, both natural and human-made, have influenced its development and evolution:

- Prior to the arrival of European settlers in Esquesing Township, the Credit River determined the settlement patterns of Indigenous Peoples. For the ancestors of the Wendat, the river supported the development of villages and horticulture in the Credit River Valley. For the Mississaugas of the Credit, the river was central to their seasonal cycle of movement and resource harvesting. The 1818 Ajetance Treaty, and subsequent land surveys, superimposed a colonial understanding of land over the seasonal and resource-dependent relationship held by the Mississaugas of the Credit.
- After the establishment of Esquesing Township in 1819, Trafalgar Road became the principal route for transportation and trade. Due in part to its strategic location on Trafalgar Road, Stewarttown was selected as the permanent location for the Township Hall over Georgetown. Crossroads hamlets like Ashgrove and Hornby came into existence because of their location along this important north-south route.
- The arrival of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1856 shifted the flow of transportation from north-south to east-west, and influenced the industrial and commercial success of Georgetown, Limehouse and Acton. As a result of the railway, Georgetown overtook Stewarttown as the principal village in the township; Acton also gained prominence over nearby settlements. As villages grew and prospered during the railway era, each specialized in the production of a particular good: paper in Georgetown, flour in Norval, wool in Glen Williams, lime in Limehouse, and leather in Acton.
- Completed in 1877, the Hamilton and North Western Railway helped to further define Georgetown's regional importance. A third railway, the Toronto Suburban, added yet another option for transporting people and goods through Norval, Georgetown, Limehouse and Acton in 1917.
- In the 1950s, the completion of Highway 401 allowed for the development of auto-oriented residential subdivisions on the edges of Acton and Georgetown, a trend that has continued into the 21st century. The GO train line, opened in 1974, also contributed to Georgetown and Acton's emergence as commuter suburbs.



c. 1944 outside the British-American gas station at the general store in the crossroads community of Hornby (Trafalgar Township Historical Society).

Halton Hills' natural systems and resources have laid the foundation for evolving local economies:

- The Credit River was central to the traditional economies of Indigenous Peoples, supporting fisheries and horticultural practices for hundreds of years. The vast forests that once covered Halton Hills were an important source of large and small game, birds, and fur bearing animals, which were hunted for food and pelts.
- For early European settlers, the Credit River was instrumental in the development of the milling economy in the 1820s. The river's water power was used by the mills to transform grain into flour, logs into lumber, and wool into woollen products. Many of the Township's villages began as mill sites, and later became commercial and business centres.
- Esquesing Township's high-quality farmland attracted early European settlers and laid the groundwork for a thriving agricultural sector. By the 1840s, the township was known for its excellent land, good farms, and high-quality wheat.
- The establishment of the lime kilns and tanneries in Limehouse and Acton in the 1840s was also tied to the availability of local natural resources. The lime kilns relied on limestone from the Niagara escarpment, while the tanneries relied on bark from local hemlock trees.
- In the 1850s, the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway was made possible with local natural resources, including rock and pine from the Niagara Escarpment. The Credit River remained a crucial natural resource for the specialized paper, flour, and knitting mills of Georgetown, Norval and Glen Williams during the railway era and into the 20th century.
- Although the mills, tanneries and lime kilns have largely since closed, Halton Hills' contemporary economy still relies in part on its natural systems and resources. Agriculture, agritourism and real estate development are all tied to the availability of land. Conservation Areas serve as local and regional recreational opportunities for visitors within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.



c. 1891, the Grand Trunk Railway at Limehouse (Esquesing Historical Society 21847).

Halton Hills’ social fabric has been shaped by immigration and migration:

- The Wendat, whose ancestors had occupied the Credit River Valley for hundreds of years, were displaced by the Haudenosaunee around 1649-50. This laid the groundwork for the migration of the Mississaugas of the Credit into Southern Ontario by the end of the 17th century.
- In 1818, the British Crown negotiated the purchase of 648,000 acres of land from the Mississaugas under the Ajetance Treaty (No. 19), displacing the Mississaugas and setting the stage for large-scale European settlement.
- Most of the early European settlers in Esquesing Township were Scottish and Irish Palatine farmers, and English retired military and tradespeople. They brought with them new religions, primarily Presbyterianism and Methodism, and built churches across the township.
- For many decades, Scottish, Irish and English settlers of Protestant faith made up the bulk of the township’s population. Change came in the 1850s, when Irish Catholic labourers arrived in the township to construct the Grand Trunk Railway. Some of the labourers ultimately settled in Georgetown and built the first Catholic church there in 1858.
- Drawn by economic opportunities, an increasing number of migrants from Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe, and East Asia, came to work in Acton’s tanneries during the early 20th century.

- The Canadian Jewish Farm School and the Armenian Boys’ Farm Home were two early 20th century initiatives that brought orphans from Eastern and Southeastern Europe to farms in Esquesing Township.
- One of Esquesing Township’s most famous former residents was herself a migrant, originally from Prince Edward Island. Lucy Maud Montgomery, the author of Anne of Green Gables, lived in Norval between 1926 and 1935 while her husband was a minister at the Norval Presbyterian Church.



Scottish heritage expressed in Georgetown at the Second Annual Highland Games in 1936 (Esquesing Historical Society 00369).

2.2 Heritage Attributes

Heritage attributes are the physical features associated with a place's cultural heritage value that should be conserved in order to continue to convey the place's value.

Heritage attributes associated with the themes of significance described in the broad, Town-wide Historic Context Statement in Section 2.1 are listed below. These are existing features and places that may merit protection using the tools of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and/or others in the conservation toolbox (see Section 3.0).

These heritage attributes may include:

- The Credit River (*Missinnihe*) and its river-valley topography;
- The Niagara Escarpment, and its topography of rolling hills;
- Grand Trunk Railway (now Canadian National Railway and RailAmerica) infrastructure, including tracks, rail bridges and train stations;
- Historic inter-community thoroughfares including Trafalgar Road;
- Historic urban settlements, with their distinct street grids, lot patterns, tree canopies, and mix of historic institutional, commercial, residential and ecclesiastical built forms. These include Acton, Georgetown, Glen Williams, Limehouse, Norval, and Stewarttown, and may include Ashgrove, Hornby, Scotch Block, Silver Creek and Speyside subject to community feedback;
- Agricultural landscapes along the concessions and sideroads between the historic urban settlements, typically characterized by open fields, linear driveways lined with mature trees, farmhouses, outbuildings including a barn and silo, and coniferous windrows delineating property lines;
- Numbered rural school section schoolhouses located along concessions and sideroads, typically single storey with front-gabled roofs;
- Pioneer heritage cemeteries;
- Historic economic and industrial sites, including flour, paper and woollen mills, lime kilns, agricultural fairgrounds, and tanneries;
- Parks, trails and sites for outdoor recreation, including the Bruce Trail, the Limehouse, Silver Creek and Terra Cotta Conservation Areas, Fairy Lake, Prospect Park, the Old Seed House Garden, the Lucy Maud Montgomery Heritage Garden / Children's Garden of the Senses, Scotsdale Farm, and Hungry Hollow trails.

3 ONTARIO’S HERITAGE PLANNING FRAMEWORK & THE CONSERVATION TOOLBOX

3.1 The Ontario Heritage Act

In municipalities in Ontario, heritage conservation is regulated by the *Ontario Heritage Act* (the “OHA”). The OHA provides municipalities with the authority and mechanisms to conserve heritage properties.

In order to apply the conservation tools that are available under the OHA, a cultural heritage resource must be recognized as a “heritage property” using the mechanisms available in the OHA: listing or designation.

The OHA’s scope is limited to real property; Section 26(1) clarifies that “property” means “real property, and includes all buildings and structures thereon”. Section 1 also notes that “heritage attributes”, defined as the attributes of a property that contribute to its cultural heritage value or interest, are understood in relation to real property, and to the buildings and structures on real property. The OHA does not provide mechanisms for the conservation of intangible heritage.

Municipal Designation under the OHA

Designation of properties by a municipality occurs either under Part IV, Section 29 of the OHA (for individual properties) or under Part V of the OHA (for Heritage Conservation Districts, or “HCD”s). When a property is designated by a municipality, the designation is registered on title in perpetuity, and can only be removed through an application under the OHA and approval by the council of the municipality.

Designated properties are included on the municipality’s “register of property situated in the municipality that is of cultural heritage value or

interest”, which the clerk of the municipality is required to maintain under Section 27 of the OHA. In Halton Hills, this is known as the Halton Hills Heritage Register (“the Heritage Register”).

Criteria for Designation

Part IV, Section 29 of the OHA authorizes the council of the municipality to designate individual properties as having cultural heritage value or interest if they meet the prescribed criteria, where criteria have been prescribed.

As of 2023, criteria for designation are prescribed by the Province of Ontario under Ontario Regulation 9/06 (“O. Reg. 9/06”). O. Reg. 9/06 sets out nine criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, and notes that a property may be designated if it meets at least *two criteria*.

As of 2023, the O. Reg. 9/06 criteria are also applied to determine the candidacy of an area for designation under Part V of the OHA as an HCD. A minimum of 25% of the properties in the proposed HCD must meet two or more of the criteria in order to establish the HCD. The language of the O. Reg. 9/06 criteria includes minor revisions for application under Part V of the OHA.

The Halton Hills Official Plan (“Official Plan”) policy F5.2.3 offers five additional criteria for the designation under Parts IV and V of the OHA. Those criteria can be considered to complement or expand on the prescribed criteria in O. Reg. 9/06, for the purposes of interpreting the prescribed criteria.

PRESCRIBED CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST (O.REG. 9/06)

1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has a direct association with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area. *[For Part V: ...because they define, maintain or support the character of the district.]*
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings. *[For Part V: ... because they are physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to each other.]*
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark. *[For Part V: ... because they are defined by, planned around or are themselves a landmark.]*

COMPLEMENTARY CRITERIA (OFFICIAL PLAN F5.2.3)

Prior to the passage of [a by-law to designate cultural heritage resources], Council shall be satisfied that:

(a) the building or property is strongly associated with the life of a person who played an integral role in the development of the Town and/or is well-known locally, nationally or internationally;

(b) the building or property is the location of, or is associated in a significant way, with a significant local, national or international event;

(c) the building has an architectural style that is distinctive and representative of a period of history and/or is the work of a recognized architect;

(d) the building or property is considered to be an easily recognizable landmark in the Town and contributes to the character of the community; and/or

(e) the neighbourhood contains a collection of buildings and properties described in Sections a, b, c and d above, and which collectively contribute to the character of the Town.

The Ontario Heritage Tool Kit guide booklet on *Heritage Property Evaluation* (in draft as of March 2023) also offers explanatory guidance for the interpretation of the O. Reg. 9/06 criteria.

Timelines for Designation (Individual Properties)

Individual properties may generally be designated at any time; however, Section 29(1.2) establishes a specific process and timeline if a prescribed event under the *Planning Act* has occurred in respect of the property. As of 2023, prescribed events include Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, and Draft Plan of Subdivision applications.

If a prescribed event has occurred in respect of the property, the council of the municipality may not issue a notice of intention to designate the property after 90 days have elapsed from the event, unless the property owner agrees to a timeline extension. Further, in such cases, the council of the municipality may only issue a notice of intention to designate the property if the property was already listed on the municipality's register of property of cultural heritage value or interest, under Section 27 of the OHA.

Implications of Designation

Per Sections 33 and 34 of the OHA, Council approval is required for the demolition of, or alteration to, buildings, structures or heritage attributes on properties designated under Part IV of the OHA. Heritage attributes are itemized in the property's designation by-law.

Properties designated under Part V of the OHA are subject to Council's approval to demolish, erect or alter the exterior of a building, structure, or

heritage attribute (which may be identified in the HCD Plan) on the property. Demolitions, erections and alterations are guided by the objectives and policies outlined in an HCD Plan (Section 41.1 of the OHA).

Listing on the Heritage Register

Part IV, Section 27(3) of the OHA authorizes the municipal heritage register to include non-designated properties if the council of the municipality believes them to be of cultural heritage value or interest, and where the properties meet the prescribed criteria. As of April 2023, the prescribed criteria are included in O. Reg. 9/06, and properties must meet at least *one criterion* to be included on the heritage register. In Ontario, this is often described as "listing" on the municipal heritage register.

Listing properties on a municipal heritage register provides a level of interim protection for properties that have not yet been designated, and functions as a first step toward designation. In order to demolish a building or structure on a listed property, the owner must provide 60 days' notice to the municipality, during which time the municipality can choose whether or not to elevate the property's protection through designation.

In order for a property to remain on the municipal heritage register, a notice of intention to designate must be issued by the council of the municipality within two years of the date the property was listed on the heritage register. For any properties listed on the municipal heritage register prior to January 1, 2023, a notice of intention to designate must be issued by January 1, 2025 to retain its position on the municipal heritage register.

If a property is removed from the municipal heritage register, either because the council of the municipality does not issue a notice of intention to designate, issues one but withdraws it, or passes a designation by-law that is subsequently repealed, the property cannot be re-listed on the municipal heritage register for a period of five years.

Municipal Heritage Committee

Section 28 of the OHA authorizes municipalities to pass a by-law to establish a municipal heritage advisory committee to “advise and assist the council” on heritage matters. The advisory committee is composed of five or more members appointed by Council. In Halton Hills, this advisory committee is known as the Heritage Halton Hills Committee.

Easements and Covenants

Section 37 of the OHA authorizes the council of a municipality to pass by-laws to enter into easements or covenants with property owners for the conservation of property of cultural heritage value or interest. The easement or covenant is registered against the property, and may be structured to provide additional layers of protection and oversight beyond the council’s general authority to approve or deny demolitions or alterations.

Grants and Loans

Section 39 of the OHA authorizes the council of a municipality to pass a by-law providing for the making of a grant or loan to an owner of a property

designated under Part IV of the OHA, for the purpose of paying for the whole or part of the cost of an alteration.

3.2 Additional Tools for Heritage Conservation

As noted in Section 3.1, the scope of the OHA is focused on the identification of properties with cultural heritage value or interest, and their protection through listing or designation under Parts IV and V of the OHA. The conservation tools within the OHA are available to properties protected under those mechanisms.

However, cultural heritage resources may exist and have value despite not being identified or conserved using the tools and mechanisms available under the OHA.

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (“PPS”), the highest-order policy in Ontario under the *Planning Act*, directs that “significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved”. Under the PPS:

- Significant means “resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest” using O. Reg. 9/06.
- Conserved “means the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained. This may be achieved by the implementation of recommendations set out in a conservation plan, archaeological assessment, and/or heritage impact assessment that has been approved,

accepted or adopted by the relevant planning authority and/or decision-maker. Mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches can be included in these plans and assessments.”

Notably, since O. Reg. 9/06 does not mandate listing or designation of properties that meet one or more of its criteria, the PPS definitions of “significant” built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes could include places that are neither listed nor designated under the OHA.

Accordingly, listing or designation under the OHA is not a precondition for conservation in accordance with the PPS. In this way, the PPS leaves the door open to protecting cultural heritage resources through other means, including the use of tools developed in accordance with the *Planning Act* or municipal official plan policies.

In its definitions for “built heritage resource” and “cultural heritage landscape”, the PPS acknowledges that these cultural heritage resource types may be (but are not required to be) protected through certain mechanisms, including Parts IV or V of the OHA for “built heritage resources”, and official plan, zoning by-law, or other land use planning mechanisms for “cultural heritage landscapes”.

Although the relationship between the OHA heritage policy framework and the broader *Planning Act* policy framework may cause uncertainty for municipal heritage programs, a common principle underpins both approaches: places of heritage value can and should be conserved in ways that are responsive to context and rooted in heritage conservation best practices, including, but not limited to, listing and designation under the OHA.

3.2.1 Regulatory Tools

The *Planning Act* regulates the use of various planning tools by municipalities. Some of these tools may be useful for the conservation of resources that have been recognized to have cultural heritage value, whether or not they are listed on the Heritage Register or designated under the OHA.

The Ontario Heritage Tool Kit guide booklet on *Heritage Resources in the Land Use Planning Process* identifies tools available for the conservation of built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.

The booklet acknowledges that significant built heritage resources may be conserved through OHA tools including heritage property listing and designation provisions, heritage conservation easements, architectural design guidelines (within an HCD), recognition / role of the municipal heritage committee, and grants and loans for heritage conservation, but also acknowledges tools under the *Planning Act* including, but not limited to:

- Demolition control by-laws
- Interim control by-laws
- Subdivision development agreements
- Financial incentives such as Community Improvement Plans

Official Plan policy F5.1.6 expands on this idea:

It is the intent of this Plan to encourage the restoration or rehabilitation of significant cultural heritage resources by assisting with funding applications, establishing grant programs and creating special taxation districts. Council may also encourage the restoration and retention of heritage properties

through the use of bonusing and density transfers and other means as permitted by the Planning Act. Council may lead by example by restoring, rehabilitating, enhancing and maintaining municipally owned cultural heritage resources, through appropriate heritage stewardship practices.

The *Heritage Resources in the Land Use Planning Process* guide booklet interprets OHA and *Planning Act* regulations to provide guidance that various tools are available for the conservation of significant cultural heritage landscapes. Its list of tools includes not only HCD policies, guidelines and studies under the OHA, but also planning tools including, but not limited to:

- Area design guidelines;
- Height and setback restrictions / site plan control;
- Landscape impact assessments;
- Secondary plan policies for special areas;
- Special zoning by-laws with heritage criteria overlay;
- Subdivision development agreements;
- Community improvement plans;
- Stewardship;
- Financial incentives;
- Landscape conservation plans; and
- Park area / corridor management plans.

3.2.2 Non-Regulatory Tools

A number of non-regulatory tools are also available to municipalities to assist in the conservation and celebration of cultural heritage values and resources.

Inventory of Prospective Heritage Properties

The Town may keep an inventory of properties of prospective heritage interest or value that are not included on the Halton Hills Heritage Register. This inventory currently exists in Halton Hills, and is known as the Inventory of Prospective Heritage Properties, or the “Halton Hills Heritage Inventory”.

As of 2023, non-regulatory municipal heritage inventories may take on new status within municipal heritage programs.

Prior to 2023, the listing of non-designated properties on municipal heritage registers was intended to provide a long-term record of properties of prospective heritage interest or value that had not yet been formally evaluated. A 60-day demolition control period allowed municipalities time to evaluate properties proposed for demolition and determine their candidacy for designation, before they could be demolished. In 2023, the OHA was updated so that properties must be formally evaluated prior to inclusion on the register (see Section 3.1 of this Strategy) and they cannot remain on the register in the long term; Council must issue a notice of intention to designate within a two-year period.

The result is that there is no longer a regulatory tool that functions as a permanent roster of properties of prospective heritage interest that have

not yet been evaluated. Municipalities may thus be inclined to establish or maintain a formal roster of properties that they have not yet had the opportunity to study for designation.

Such a roster may be used as a multi-pronged non-regulatory tool, e.g. as a simple record-keeping tool, as a prioritized list for future evaluation under O. Reg. 9/06 and designation, and/or as a flag to prompt immediate evaluation if a property is identified for redevelopment in the context of a pre-application consultation meeting for development applications identified as prescribed events under the *Planning Act*.

Heritage Incentive Programs

Incentive programs, including awards programs like the Halton Hills Heritage Conservation Award, can help encourage public- and private property owners to retain, restore and/or rehabilitate valued cultural heritage resources.

Standards & Guidelines

Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, 2010* ("Standards and Guidelines") offers a non-regulatory guidance document for the conservation of cultural heritage resources across the country. Originally developed to support a federal grant program for conservation work, the Standards and Guidelines outline three conservation treatment types specific to existing physical fabric: preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation. Many municipalities have adopted the Standards and Guidelines in their official plans, which allows

them to function as a regulatory tool, enabling the municipality to require that any conservation work be undertaken in accordance with their guidance.

Interpretation Plans

The conservation and celebration of cultural heritage values and resources can also be achieved through interpretation, as noted in the International Council on Monuments and Sites' ("ICOMOS") *Burra Charter, 2013* (the "Burra Charter"). The Burra Charter defines interpretation as "all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place". Article 25 of the Burra Charter acknowledges:

The cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent, and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and engagement, and be culturally appropriate.

An Australia ICOMOS Practice Note on the Burra Charter explains:

The aim of interpretation is to reveal and help retain the significance - natural, cultural or both - of that place. It is often thought of as an action or an activity and the international ICOMOS Ename Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites defines interpretation as the "full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage sites".

Interpretation Plans may be developed by public-sector actors for broad areas (e.g. historic settlements), or by private-sector actors for individual properties. In both cases, interpretation may be appropriate to either complement or supplement the conservation of physical fabric through

preservation, restoration or rehabilitation. Interpretation Plans may outline broad strategies or specific installations / media that might contribute in “reveal[ing] and help[ing to retain] the significance” of the place.

3.3 Summary

There are many tools available for the conservation of cultural heritage values and cultural heritage resources in Halton Hills.

The Halton Hills heritage program, which is carried out by Halton Hills’ Town Council, municipal planning and heritage staff, and the Heritage Halton Hills Committee, derives its authority from both the OHA and the *Planning Act*.

For each cultural heritage resource, the municipality should select the tool, or set of tools, that is most appropriate for the conservation of that resource. The selection should factor in other planning objectives and considerations, in order to achieve the right balance of protection and flexibility that will be required in the short- and long term.

4 VISION & OBJECTIVES

4.1 Vision for the Heritage Program

The vision for the Halton Hills heritage program has been informed by extensive community engagement and contemporary best practices in heritage conservation.

- The Halton Hills heritage program will centre on the conservation, celebration, interpretation and communication of places, stories and practices of cultural heritage value.
- It will strive to conserve small-town urban and rural landscape character while acknowledging and managing growth and change.
- It will embed local community engagement as a core practice in defining the Town's cultural heritage values, attributes and priorities for conservation as they evolve over time.
- It will apply a cultural landscape lens, which acknowledges that all places are cultural landscapes (i.e. they reflect the interplay of culture and nature), and that many of these places hold cultural heritage value.
- It will recognize that there are tangible and intangible elements of Halton Hills' valued cultural heritage, including buildings, natural landscapes, uses, cultural practices and programs. It will rely on tools within and outside the OHA, as appropriate, to conserve them.
- It will operate holistically within a broader municipal planning framework, recognizing that conservation of tangible attributes and intangible values may often be achieved by heritage planning in concert with other municipal departments, including land-use planning, economic development, parks and open space, arts and culture, and others.

4.2 Objectives for the Heritage Program

Eight objectives will guide the Halton Hills heritage program in achieving the Vision in Section 4.1.

The objectives offer broad direction for the heritage program, based on contemporary best practices in heritage conservation, and the anticipated challenges and opportunities facing the Town.

The program recommendations that follow in Section 5 of this Strategy are each intended to support the heritage program objectives.

This Cultural Heritage Strategy sets forward the following objectives for the Halton Hills heritage program.

Objective 1: The heritage program will recognize, celebrate, emphasize and conserve the character and identity of Halton Hills' historic settlement areas.

The town of Halton Hills is rooted in several small historic urban settlements, located along water systems and at the intersections of historic roads. Although some are being enveloped into growing urban areas, locals value the distinct identities and historic built and landscape features (e.g. clusters of early buildings, street and lot patterns) of these settlements.

The Halton Hills heritage program will employ tools to conserve physical elements of these historic settlements, and to communicate, highlight and celebrate their distinct locations, identities and stories.

Objective 2: The heritage program will recognize and conserve the rural character between Halton Hills’ historic settlements.

The historic settlements found throughout Halton Hills are complemented by and reliant on the green open spaces between them. Locals and visitors value the landscape of rural rolling hills and vast fields, accentuated by historic agricultural built forms.

The heritage program will acknowledge rural green-space as a valued element of Halton Hills’ heritage character, and will employ tools to conserve it in the context of growth and change.

Objective 3: The heritage program will embody a cultural landscape approach, and rely on a variety of tools to conserve cultural landscapes of heritage value.

While cultural landscapes are often understood as discrete, delineated sites or collections of sites (including in the Standards and Guidelines), contemporary best practices in heritage conservation recognize that all places are cultural landscapes.

In its broadest sense, a cultural landscape is a place that reflects the interplay between people and place. As a result, any place that reflects people’s actions (uses, cultural practices, etc.), or is associated with people’s cultural values and identities, is a cultural landscape. Cultural landscapes can be difficult to delineate or define, may overlap, and may not have any physical components or evidence other than the natural setting of the place itself.

Some policy and guideline documents, including the PPS, distinguish between cultural landscapes (all places) and cultural *heritage* landscapes,

i.e. places that reflect the interplay of culture and nature *and carry cultural heritage value.*

In order to make this distinction and identify cultural heritage landscapes that should be conserved, it is necessary to identify which cultural practices and associations are considered valuable from a heritage perspective, and which are not.

This can be relatively straightforward in less dynamic places throughout the world, where traditional lifeways have been maintained over hundreds of years, and continue to be practised in the present and deeply valued by the local community. The physical landscapes that reflect these practices may be easily recognizable as cultural heritage landscapes to be conserved; for example, the docks, structures, building typologies and complexes that support fisheries that have been active in certain waterside villages over hundreds of years.

It is less straightforward in dynamic urban places, where both local residents and cultural practices evolve and are replaced on an ongoing basis.

To account for this challenge, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (“UNESCO”) developed the Historic Urban Landscape approach, which eschews the expert identification of architectural monuments to be preserved, and relies instead on ongoing community engagement to set heritage conservation goals amid an holistic context of emerging planning priorities, including liveability and sustainability.

Halton Hills is one of these dynamic place, with local communities, development trends and economic practices that have evolved over 250+ years and continue to evolve rapidly today.

As such, the Halton Hills heritage program will aim to employ an urban cultural landscape approach. It will recognize that many different types of places and practices may be considered valuable by contemporary stakeholders, that preservation or restoration of an original condition not always the most appropriate conservation strategy, and that a variety of tools may be used instead to conserve cultural heritage resources flexibly and holistically in concert with other municipal partners.

Objective 4: The heritage program will reflect community interests and values, and conduct active outreach to engage underrepresented voices, including those of Indigenous rights holders.

As reflected in a cultural landscape approach, community engagement is necessary to determine which places and stories should be conserved and celebrated in Halton Hills.

The Halton Hills heritage program should integrate community engagement as a core component of its practice, sourcing data from non-heritage municipal community engagement processes in addition to its own.

Acknowledging that early settler-colonial histories typically dominate municipal heritage programs and rosters in Ontario, reflecting the era during which most were established, the Halton Hills heritage program will undertake intentional measures to offset a longstanding imbalance.

The heritage program will incorporate specific strategic initiatives to ensure that the values and histories of traditionally underrepresented

communities are reflected, whether they are Indigenous communities with historic rights to the Halton Hills area, or contemporary ethnocultural or other communities living in Halton Hills today.

Objective 5: The heritage program will accept that urban density and heritage conservation can co-exist, and will model best practices for intensification in the right places.

Halton Hills exists today in a context where both provincial policy and environmental best practices dictate that historic settlements are appropriate locations for residential intensification.

Given this context, Halton Hills will have the opportunity to model best practices in sensitive intensification. The Halton Hills heritage program will acknowledge that both landmark cultural heritage resources and historic character can be conserved amid intensification, and will work to achieve appropriate balances and high-quality architectural standards.

Objective 6: The heritage program will help to facilitate cultural economic development and programming in Halton Hills.

A cultural economy is understood as the integration of culture and economic development to establish a place-based economy through cultural industries- and tourism. In order to help build a cultural economy in concert with other municipal departments and initiatives, the Halton

Hills heritage program can use its available tools, including designation, grant funding and storytelling / interpretation, to help foster and highlight Halton Hills' valued historic land uses, traditional practices and economies.

Objective 7: The heritage program will recognize that the Halton Hills climate emergency necessitates high-priority responses that must be balanced and embedded with heritage conservation.

The Halton Hills heritage program will operate holistically with other municipal departments, and will acknowledge when other planning priorities may take precedence.

Council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 means that climate-change responses may constitute the highest-priority action in the coming decades. Cultural heritage resources may require flexibility and support in order to address climate change impacts at the individual property-owner level, e.g. through energy retrofits and other property alterations that still conserve cultural heritage value.

Objective 8: The heritage program will be transparent, balanced and defensible.

The Halton Hills heritage program will be structured and publicized in ways that are clear for local stakeholders, and to facilitate easy navigation through any heritage processes. The heritage program will be consistent with provincial policy and legislation.



Listed heritage resource at 115 Main Street South, Georgetown (ERA, 2021).

5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HERITAGE PROGRAM

The following sections include recommendations for the Halton Hills heritage program to support the vision and objectives in Section 4 of this Strategy. The recommendations are organized by subject area within the Halton Hills heritage program.

5.1 Local Historic Context Statements

An Historic Context Statement (“HCS”) is a planning document, written in a narrative style, that provides a concise overview of a place’s history, the key themes associated with its development and current context, and a list of physical heritage attributes that convey its cultural heritage value.

HCSs are developed through a combination of historical research and community participation. Once developed, they serve as multi-functional tools for heritage planning, integrating heritage within wider urban planning processes.

They do this by taking the identified themes and physical heritage attributes, and using them to guide all kinds of future planning processes, like Secondary Plans, Public Art Strategies, Culture Plans, Heritage Interpretation Plans, heritage designations, and more. The information in the HCS becomes an important input, identifying what’s valued in the community, and what should be conserved and highlighted moving forward.

The physical heritage attributes play an important role. Heritage attributes can be buildings, structures, or natural landscape features. They can be publicly owned and located within the public realm, or privately owned. Once they’ve been identified as key character-defining elements of the community, they might be prioritized for designation or reactivation through adaptive reuse, or conservation through other planning methods.

Although a broad HCS has been developed in this Strategy for the full town of Halton Hills, HCSs are typically developed at a neighbourhood- or hamlet scale. This is because they are critically informed by community engagement, which happens most effectively on a smaller scale.

Local stakeholders participate in identifying the themes and heritage attributes that they value today, so that their shared vision for the future of their community can help direct heritage planning decision-making moving forward.

Recommendation 5.1.1: Develop a strategic program of rolling Historic Context Statements for settlement areas in Halton Hills.

The Town should integrate HCSs as a foundational tool within the heritage planning program. An HCS should be developed for each existing hamlet or settlement area. Larger-scale urban settlement areas like Georgetown may be split into distinct HCS catchment zones.

The program should be carried out on a rolling and ongoing basis. Each HCS should be refreshed or replaced every 15-20 years. HCS writing will require staff resources to (a) undertake local historical research; (b) coordinate public engagement; and (c) synthesize and produce the written documents.

While municipal funding is recommended to support this foundational element of the Halton Hills heritage program, efficiencies may be achieved through engagement of volunteers, e.g. to conduct and prepare historical research, which offers the benefit of further democratizing the exercise.

HCS development should capitalize on existing community engagement processes, rather than imposing parallel participation expectations. Community engagement processes for new planning initiatives should

DURAND NEIGHBOURHOOD, HAMILTON

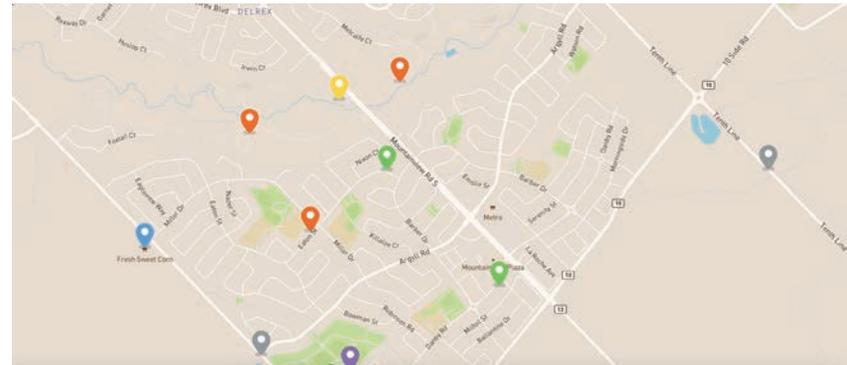
In 2016-17, ERA worked with the City of Hamilton on the Durand neighbourhood Built Heritage Inventory, a planning process informed by the development of an HCS.

- 1 Historical and archival materials were first reviewed to help identify major eras and themes of the neighbourhood's development.
- 2 Additional mapping analysis was conducted to help identify distinct sub-areas, each shaped by specific uses and development patterns, and with distinct attributes today.
- 3 Community members were engaged to share local perceptions of the neighbourhood's unique qualities and identity. Cognitive mapping exercises and facilitated discussions helped identify patterns of use and places of meaning (cultural and architectural landmarks, gathering places). Three local subject-matter experts led the team on walking interviews in the neighbourhood.
- 4 The HCS was drafted. It featured an Introduction; Historical Overview; Historical Themes; Attributes of the Study Area; Attributes of the Sub-Areas; and Community Observations.
- 5 The HCS was used as a planning tool for the inventory and classification of heritage resources in the neighbourhood.

be designed to include questions to help inform an HCS. The first HCSs may rely on data collected and heritage attributes identified from recent or ongoing public engagement processes, e.g. the Glen Williams and Stewarttown Secondary Plans in 2021-2022.

In the future, existing HCSs will help inform planning studies and new policies for distinct areas. They will become the method and framework through which cultural heritage resource inventories are undertaken, and they have the potential to help inform municipal planning for cultural economic initiatives and public art.

Local HCSs provide the opportunity to engage traditionally underrepresented voices in helping to define the local cultural heritage values that should be conserved. When HCSs are being developed, Town staff should explicitly engage representatives of key demographic groups beyond the typical heritage constituencies, to ensure that the resulting HCS reflects a full array of contemporary values and practices.



Summer-Fall 2021 community engagement to inform the Existing Conditions Report for this Cultural Heritage Strategy revealed the contemporary value attributed to the recreational trails at Hungry Hollow, among other places (Let's Talk Halton Hills, 2021).

5.2 Conservation of Individual Properties

The conservation of tangible heritage in Ontario centres on two distinct but overlapping objectives: the conservation of individual cultural heritage resources of value, and the conservation of collections of cultural heritage resources that form a broader contextual character. This section offers three recommendations for the conservation of individual resources of cultural heritage value.

Recommendation 5.2.1: Maintain the Halton Hills Inventory of Prospective Heritage Resources as an official, permanent record of prospective heritage properties, and undertake rolling evaluations of the inventoried properties for designation, guided by a prioritization framework.

It is recommended that the Town acknowledge the Halton Hills Heritage Inventory as the formal, permanent record of all prospective heritage properties in Halton Hills that have not yet been subject to in-depth historical research or evaluated using the O. Reg. 9/06 criteria.

It is further recommended that the Town develop a prioritization framework for the proactive evaluation of properties on the Halton Hills Heritage Inventory, assessing their candidacy for designation under Part IV of the OHA. The prioritization framework may consider factors including relative heritage value, public engagement and nominations, and risk of proposed demolition or loss. As of March 6, 2023, Council has approved a prioritization framework that addresses this recommendation.

Based on January 2023 updates to the OHA, there will be a transition period in 2023-2024 during which hundreds of non-designated properties

on the Halton Hills Heritage Register (listed properties) will be either designated, or removed from the Heritage Register at the end of 2024. The prioritization framework should first be applied to listed properties on the Heritage Register, recognizing that those removed from the Heritage Register at the end of 2024 cannot be listed again until 2030, and will not be subject to the interim protective measures of listing in the context of redevelopment during that five-year period.

Any properties removed from the Heritage Register within or at the end of the 2023-2024 period should be shifted to the Halton Hills Heritage Inventory.



The Birches, at 75 Mill Street in Georgetown, is one of hundreds of properties listed on the Halton Hills Heritage Register that will be up for evaluation in 2023-2024 (ERA, 2021).

Recommendation 5.2.2: Establish an official process for heritage evaluation of properties on the Halton Hills Heritage Inventory when they are proposed for redevelopment.

Official Plan policy F5.1.2 notes:

Council shall require the submission of a Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (CHIS) to support an application for development if the affected lands are the site of an identified or significant cultural heritage resource or are located in close proximity to a significant cultural heritage resource or are on adjacent lands to a significant cultural heritage resource.

It is recommended that the Town request a CHIS as a submitted material with any development application that includes a property on the Halton Hills Heritage Inventory, subject to municipal staff discretion. The CHIS should include comprehensive historical research and analysis of the property, applying the O. Reg. 9/06 criteria, and concluding in a Statement of Significance with identified heritage attributes if the property is found to meet two or more of the O. Reg. 9/06 criteria.

Where the Town is alerted to a forthcoming proposed development that involves a property on the Heritage Inventory, for example through a Pre-Consultation Meeting, the Town may concurrently decide to proceed with its own research and analysis in order to list the property on the Halton Hills Heritage Register. Properties are required to be listed first if the Town intends to designate them following the submission of an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment or Draft Plan of Subdivision application.

In such cases where municipal staff intend to conduct their own research and analysis, they may decline to require the submission of a CHIS by the application’s proponent, to avoid the duplication of work.

Notwithstanding the recommendations above, municipal heritage staff are encouraged to develop and build on their own processes for heritage evaluation of proposed developments that involve properties on the Heritage Inventory, as the implications of the January 2023 timelines and processes in the OHA become clearer through experience.

Recommendation 5.2.3: Engage a research intern to collect archival information on priority listed / inventoried properties in service of municipal cultural heritage value assessments.

Per the prioritization framework recommended in 5.2.1, there will be properties listed on the Heritage Register and included on the Heritage Inventory that are priorities for designation.

The Town should engage an intern to undertake historical research on properties prioritized for designation. The research intern would work under the Town’s Senior Heritage Planner, in collaboration with the Heritage Halton Hills Committee. All research collected would be consolidated as a research report, to directly inform a cultural heritage value assessment and designation recommendation developed by the Senior Heritage Planner and municipal staff.

Municipal funding should be set aside for an annual four-month internship, which may be supplemented or covered by grant funding from programs like the federal government’s Young Canada Works in Heritage Organizations.

5.3 Conservation of Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors

The conservation of tangible heritage in Ontario centres on the conservation of individual cultural heritage resources of value, and the conservation of collections of cultural heritage resources that form a broader contextual character.

This section offers recommendations and case studies for the conservation of collections of broader contextual character: places of heritage value that span multiple properties, public lands, or both.

Recommendation 5.3.1: Use Historic Context Statements to develop an inventory of character areas of significance, of varying types and scales.

Official Plan policy F5.2.2 states that Council may prepare an inventory of cultural heritage landscapes. It notes that “[l]andscapes such as existing rural and agricultural areas, historic hamlets, and heritage roads will be identified in the inventory”.

The Town should develop an inventory of Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors that are identified as carrying cultural heritage interest or value, informed by the heritage attributes identified in the Town-wide HCS (see Section 2) and in future HCSs developed at more local scales.

As a starting point, an inventory of Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors of cultural heritage value might include the historic

LARGE-SCALE AREAS AS “CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPES”

In its definitions and policies, the PPS identifies two ‘types’ of cultural heritage resource:

Built Heritage Resource: *a building, structure, monument, installation or any manufactured or constructed part or remnant that contributes to a property’s cultural heritage value or interest as identified by a community, including an Indigenous community...*

Cultural Heritage Landscape: *a defined geographical area that may have been modified by human activity and is identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by a community, including an Indigenous community...*

In many policy documents, these two types are treated as binaries, including in the Halton Hills Official Plan, which notes in policies F5.2.1 and 2.2 that the Town may develop distinct inventories of Built Heritage Resources and Cultural Heritage Landscapes.

By the PPS definitions, however, a Built Heritage Resource can exist within a Cultural Heritage Landscape. Similarly, a Cultural Heritage Landscape can exist on a single property (e.g. a farmstead), or on a collection of properties (e.g. an historic settlement). Despite often being interpreted this way, the PPS definitions do not, in fact, describe two binary types of resources: single properties vs. larger-scale collections of properties.

In this Cultural Heritage Strategy, we apply the cultural landscape lens instead to all properties and lands, and when describing larger-scale groupings of properties for inventory and/or conservation, they are identified as Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors, not as Cultural Heritage Landscapes.

settlements of Acton, Georgetown, Glen Williams, Norval, Stewarttown and Limehouse, the Trafalgar Road corridor, the Credit River and any related infrastructure (e.g. bridges crossing it), and the historic Grand Trunk railway corridor and related infrastructure.

Sections of rural streetscapes with multiple intact historic farmsteads might also qualify as early additions to the inventory. The Syndicate Housing HCD, already conserved through designation under Part V of the OHA, should also be acknowledged as a Character Node on the inventory.

By practical necessity, the inventory of Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors (large-scale landscapes) should carry different implications for conservation than the identification of individual properties on the Heritage Inventory. The identification of a Character Area, Node or Corridor does not automatically imply that the area is proposed to be conserved using the OHA. The inventory should carry no legal weight, and should function simply as a list, allowing an appropriate combination of policy tools to be applied to conserve each Character Area, Node or Corridor.

After valued Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors have been added to the inventory, the Town may identify the highest-priority Areas, Nodes or Corridors for conservation, and may seek Council authorization to apply a coordinated set of tools to their conservation.



HCS exercises will help to determine if certain areas merit Character Area conservation as heritage attributes of Halton Hills, e.g. the historic settlement of Hornby (ERA, 2022).

MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREAS (MTSA)

MTSAs are defined in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe as lands within a 10-minute walk or approx. 500-800 metre radius of an existing higher-order transit station or stop in a settlement area. They are intended for transit-supportive development and increased density.

In Halton Hills, two MTSAs have been established, at the core of the historic settlements in Acton and Georgetown. Because they are not located on a provincial priority transit corridor, the Town may work with Halton Region to set density targets for these areas. While both MTSAs currently contain lower-scale historic forms, in the near future the Town will set increased density targets for these areas within its Official Plan.

If deemed to be of heritage value, the Town could develop HCSs for these zones, then select the tools for their conservation. The tools should facilitate compatible gentle intensification, through the addition of units in existing buildings (e.g. with relaxed parking requirements, increased lot coverage), the highly-selective designation of landmark and character-defining resources, and the replacement of fabric buildings with multi-unit housing built at a neighbourhood scale and with compatible building and landscape design.



Urban design guidelines in the Georgetown MTSA might include precedents for multi-unit additions on large lots that use compatible scale and materials (ERA, 2022).

Recommendation 5.3.2: Study Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors of significance to identify the degree to which the properties within them contribute in defining or supporting their character, and prioritize the highest-contributing resources for conservation.

Within each character area, node and corridor, there are properties of varying levels of heritage value. These properties contribute to their area’s physical character and sense of place to varying degrees.

Within a given character area, node or corridor, it is important to understand which properties are instrumental in *defining* the area’s character, and which are less impactful but still help to *support* the character.

The City of Hamilton’s Built Heritage Inventory Strategy, highlighted below, provides an instructive case study in developing a classification system to assess a character area of significance.

HAMILTON’S BUILT HERITAGE INVENTORY STRATEGY

As of 2023, the City of Hamilton manages its roster of heritage resources through a Built Heritage Inventory Strategy, developed in part through two pilot projects with ERA in the 2010s.

The Built Heritage Inventory (“BHI”) Strategy provides a standardized process for evaluation of properties of interest. First used in ERA’s pilot projects with the City, heritage staff now apply the framework in coordinated BHI studies in identified neighbourhoods.

The BHI studies rely on HCSs to identify themes and heritage attributes. The HCS provides a basis to understand each property’s contribution to its context. A standardized classification system is then applied to assess whether properties carry considerable heritage value, contribute to the fabric of their historic context, or do not contribute to the context:

Significant Built Resource (SBR): *the property is of considerable historic, aesthetic and / or contextual value; it is likely well known to local, regional or national communities.*

Character-Defining Resource (CDR): *the property strongly reinforces its historic context, clearly reflecting a characteristic pattern of development or activity, property type or attribute of the area.*

Character-Supporting Resource (CSR): *the property maintains or supports its historic context and can be related to a characteristic pattern of development or activity, property type or attribute of the area.*

Inventoried Property (IP): *the property is not currently considered to contribute to its historic context but could acquire value in the future, or the property has been heavily modified to the point that its heritage value may have been lost. Cultural heritage value may be identified through further research or detailed field investigation.*

In Hamilton, these classifications are applied as Step 4 in a seven-step inventory process in study areas (other steps include the development of an HCS, and subsequent designation), but these classifications or similar could be applied to any roster of properties where an HCS exists to describe a place’s character and attributes.

The properties that stand out as unique landmarks (significant built resources) or are instrumental in defining their area's character may be prioritized for the most stringent conservation measures, i.e. designation under Part IV of the OHA.

Properties that are less significant but still support the area's character could be retained on the Halton Hills Heritage Inventory, but not be immediately prioritized for designation. This would allow the Town the flexibility to choose whether or not to pursue designation in the future, in response to potential proposals to replace them.

For instance, if a proposed replacement building would similarly support a valued contextual character and would achieve other key planning goals, the Town would retain the flexibility to remove the property from the Heritage Inventory if the redevelopment was considered appropriate. This approach reflects the broader recommendations of this Strategy to undertake heritage planning holistically in concert with other departments to achieve municipal strategic priorities.

Other planning tools may also be considered, in conjunction with inclusion on the Heritage Inventory, to help conserve cultural heritage resources that do not rise to the highest level of landmark physical value or contextual contribution; see Recommendation 5.3.3.

Recommendation 5.3.3: Develop a process for the conservation of Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors that includes consideration of the range of tools available within and outside the OHA, and selection of the most appropriate tool or set of tools for each specific area.

As reviewed in Section 3.2.1, there are many tools available to conserve larger-scale Character Areas, Nodes or Corridors of value.

Certain tools may be more appropriate than others based on the nature of the Area, Node or Corridor - and in most cases, the character of the place may be best conserved using a combination of tools, based on its distinct attributes.

For instance, a corridor that conveys historic rural landscape character or boasts a distinctly special tree canopy might be best served by a corridor management plan, a requirement for landscape impact assessments, and the select designation of properties or sets of properties along the corridor.

In another example, an historic settlement in an increasingly dynamic urban context might be best served by a combination of tools including:

- A Secondary Plan, with Urban Design Guidelines providing direction on the design of infill / replacement buildings;
- A zoning by-law directing lot coverage, density, heights and setbacks;
- Select designation of significant built resources and character-defining resources; and retention of character-supporting resources on the Heritage Inventory as appropriate;

- Private tree by-laws to protect select landscape features like specific mature trees, or distinct groupings of mature trees;
- An Interpretation Plan and/or public art plan communicating the place’s cultural heritage value according to a coordinated strategy.

The Town should consider the nature, context, and heritage value and attributes of the Area, Node or Corridor, and select the most appropriate tool or combination of tools to conserve it.

SYNDICATE HOUSING HCD, ACTON

The Syndicate Housing HCD, located at 69-89 Bower Street, Acton, consists five contiguous duplexes designated under Part V of the OHA in 2005.

In this case, Part V designation applies conservation tools including demolition (subject to Council permission); limits on alterations that would affect the heritage attributes of the HCD (subject to Council permission); and guidance for public works in the HCD.



Houses in HCD (ERA, 2021).

Part V designation is an appropriate tool in this context for four reasons: (1) the area exhibits unique design character and high aesthetic value; (2) every lot is a “contributing property”; (3) none are considered candidates for replacement; and (4) the area (five lots) is of such a small scale that it is reasonable to limit its evolution despite its downtown context.

As of January 2023, the OHA mandates that in future proposed HCDs, 25% of properties must meet two or more of the O. Reg. 9/06 criteria, in order to ensure that there is a consistent and defined character within the HCD. The Syndicate Housing HCD would meet this expectation.

GLEN WILLIAMS HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT AND CHARACTER AREA CONSERVATION TOOLS

The historic hamlet of Glen Williams has been identified as a heritage attribute of Halton Hills in the town-wide HCS in Section 2 of this report.

The Town is already modelling the use of layered planning and heritage tools for the conservation of this Character Area.

In the Glen Williams Secondary Plan (2021), the hamlet’s heritage values and attributes have been defined in a fashion similar to the HCS recommended in Section 5.1. The Secondary Plan identifies the following heritage attributes:

- *Topography and natural features (including the Credit River);*
- *Bridges, fording, and river crossings;*
- *Public spaces, parks and streetscapes (i.e. the public realm);*
- *Historic industrial and mill complexes and their component parts (i.e. mill races, mill ponds)*
- *Settlement patterns, including (but not limited to) circulation, streets, trails, lot configuration*
- *Significant views and vantage points;*
- *Significant Cultural Heritage resources included on the Town of Halton Hills Heritage Register.*



Attributes of Glen Williams, including heritage resource, river crossing, industrial complex (ERA, 2021-22).

Planning and heritage tools for Glen Williams’ conservation include:

1 Listings and Designations under Part IV of the OHA

The attribute of “significant cultural heritage resources” is conserved through 36 property listings on the Heritage Register, and 10 property designations under Part IV of the OHA. All these properties are subject to demolition control, and the designated properties to alteration control, under the OHA. The listed properties will need to be evaluated for designation in 2023-24.

2 Official Plan and Zoning By-law: Mature Neighbourhood Area Overlay

The Official Plan sets out policies for Mature Neighbourhood Areas (“MNAs”) requiring new construction to be “compatible, context sensitive, and respectful of the existing character of the neighbourhood”. Much of Glen Williams is zoned under the Mature Neighbourhood overlay, which sets out guidance for lot coverage, building height, setbacks, and attached garages to ensure the compatibility of new construction.

3 Glen Williams Secondary Plan, and Appendix 6: Hamlet Design and Heritage Protection Guidelines (“HDHPGs”)

The Secondary Plan sets out development policies for three character areas: the Historic Core, Mature Neighbourhoods, and New Planned Areas.

The HDHPGs provide guidance on street pattern, gateways, public realm (including signage and lighting, parks and trails, and view protections), cultural heritage resources, lot configuration, setbacks, houses at focal locations, auxiliary buildings, architectural design guidelines for new development, landscaping, and universal design.

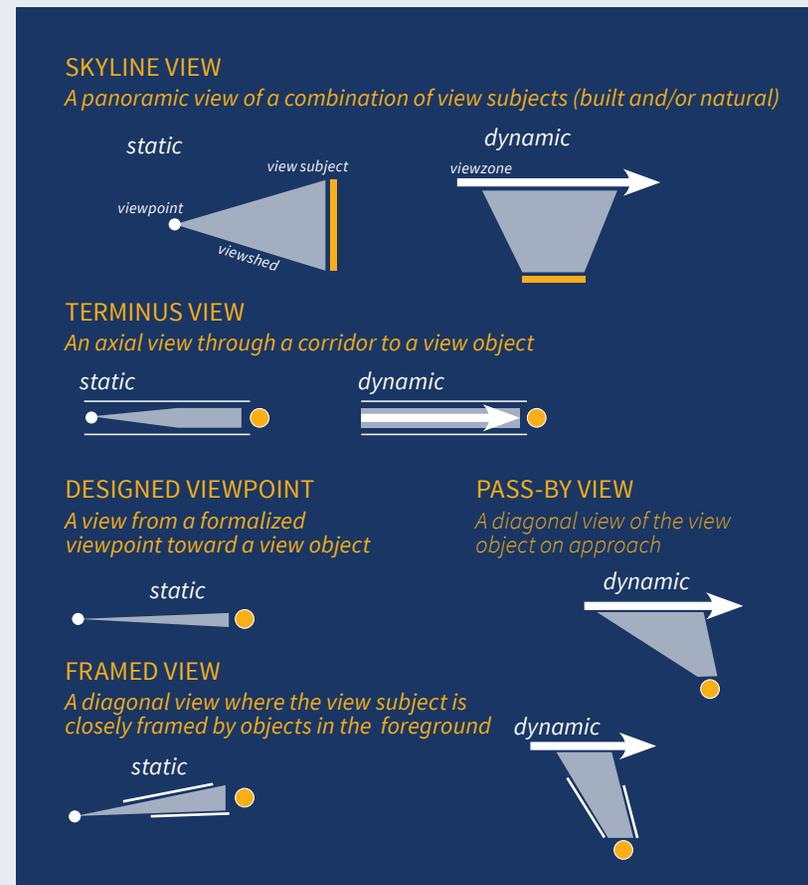
The HDHPGs function similarly to an HCD Plan, but unlike an HCD Plan, the Secondary Plan to which they are appended and the implementing Zoning By-law offers flexibility for site-specific variances and/or planning appeals.

PROTECTING VIEWS AS HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES OF CHARACTER AREAS, NODES OR CORRIDORS

In developing HCSs for Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors of significance, the Town and/or community members may identify views that are considered heritage attributes of the place.

In cases where views will be identified as heritage attributes and view protections built into the policy documents that follow, consider the following three recommendations:

- Set out a standardized vocabulary for the different types of significant views that may exist in Halton Hills. The first step in recognizing and conserving views is to set out definitions. Depending on the type of view, different view protections may be warranted (e.g. foreground or background controls). The diagrams at right¹ may be useful in determining Halton Hills' own set of locally-relevant view types. The Niagara Escarpment Plan should also be consulted for relevant view definitions and policies.
- For any view identified as an attribute to be conserved, conduct a view study to clearly describe the nature of the view to be protected. Set out clear parameters for what elements of the view will be protected, and from where. Diagrammatic representations are useful. Ensure that the protections are reasonably balanced to anticipate expected change over time and development policies in the view's vicinity.
- Where policies require that a view be conserved, develop Terms of Reference for measuring impact on the view. The Terms of Reference may lay out the requirement for proponents to undertake and submit a Visual Impact Assessment. The parameters of impact assessments should be clear for all public and private proponents.



¹Developed by ERA, according to a literature review, including Baird et al. (1974) *On Building Downtown: Design Guidelines for the Core Area - A Report to the City of Toronto & Planning Board* and National Capital Commission (2007) *Canada's Capital Views Protection*.

5.4 Strategic Program Areas

In addition to the baseline processes of the Halton Hills heritage program described in Sections 5.1 - 5.3, the Town is encouraged to develop and fund heritage projects or programs in the following subject areas.

5.4.1 Truth and Reconciliation in Heritage Planning

As a country, Canada has acknowledged a long history of colonialism resulting in significant impact on Indigenous communities, including but not limited to disenfranchisement from traditional lands and forced relocation to reserves, prohibition of cultural practices, the systematic eradication of language and culture, and the severing of family connections

THE CANADIAN BASIS FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

In the mid-2000s, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (“TRC”), which operated between 2007-2015 and concluded in a six-volume final report that included 94 Calls to Action. Call to Action No. 79 asks the federal government to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration, revising policies, criteria and practices “to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values and memory practices into Canada’s national heritage and history”.

Canada has also endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UNDRIP”), which affirms and outlines a range of collective and individual rights to self-determination, culture and language, and identity.

and loss of tradition through forced multi-generational attendance at Indian Residential Schools.

Communities across Canada have recognized the need to redress these impacts. As acknowledged in the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action, Truth and Reconciliation falls within the purview of many different jurisdictions and subject areas. Described at right, Call to Action No. 79 recognizes that there is a clear place for Truth and Reconciliation within heritage and commemoration frameworks.

Local stakeholders in Halton Hills have also acknowledged that the Town’s heritage framework should reflect Indigenous histories and values. It is not, however, within the purview of the Town to undertake storytelling, conservation or commemoration of Indigenous cultural heritage without the direct involvement or authorization of the Indigenous communities whose stories would be told.

As a key principle, it is recommended that the Town continues to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination by allowing Indigenous communities to engage with sites, places and initiatives in Halton Hills on their own terms.

However, the Town is in the position to facilitate the conservation, interpretation and celebration of Indigenous cultural heritage values through the ongoing active development of meaningful working relationships and partnerships with Indigenous rights holders.

On any project and within any municipal program, the Town has the capacity to foster space-making for Indigenous rights holders, inviting them to engage on their own terms, ideally from the starting point of an existing relationship based in trust, information-sharing and collaboration.

“STAKEHOLDERS” VS. “RIGHTS HOLDERS”

What is a “rights holder”, and how are they different from a typical “stakeholder”? A stakeholder is a person who may have stake in a particular place. A rights holder, by contrast, is someone who holds legal or traditional rights to that place.

In Halton Hills, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (“MCFN”) are the official treaty partners of the Town and Crown (i.e. provincial and federal governments), as signatories to the Ajetance Treaty (No. 19) with the Crown in 1818. The Town of Halton Hills exists and has rights to operate and develop as a direct result of the MCFN’s permission to do so through the Ajetance Treaty.

As a result, the MCFN are acknowledged as rights holders in Halton Hills. Indigenous communities with traditional territory in and around Halton Hills may also be considered rights holders in Halton Hills, including the Nation Huronne-Wendat, currently based in Wendake, QC.

Rights-holder perspectives may be weighted differently than stakeholder perspectives, as people with cultural values intimately tied to the lands and natural systems in and around Halton Hills, and as people whose separation from these lands merits redress and Reconciliation.

Because rights holders do not necessarily live in Halton Hills as a community today, and because there are great demands on their time from communities across Southern Ontario, targeted and funded outreach is required to assist rights holders to care for and interpret their own heritage in Halton Hills.

Consider the following recommendations in continuing to incorporate Truth and Reconciliation into Halton Hills heritage program:

Recommendation 5.4.1.1: The Town of Halton Hills should undertake outreach to develop meaningful long-term relationships with Indigenous rights-holder communities outside the context of any project.

The Town of Halton Hills should play its own role as an agent of Truth and Reconciliation by recognizing Indigenous rights-holder communities as key partners in its future development and evolution. The Town should approach such partnerships from the perspective of a nation-to-nation relationship.

To this end, the Town should commit to establishing and maintaining mutually respectful, nation-to-nation relationships with all rights-holder communities that are based on trust, reciprocity and collaboration.

The initiative should be embedded within the Town’s forthcoming Truth and Reconciliation Strategy. It might manifest as a group of 3-5 municipal representatives including councillors and key staff (e.g. in culture, heritage, climate change resiliency, economic development) tasked with outreach to rights-holder communities in their own spaces, e.g. a request to visit the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for a meeting, or for future events or ceremonies.

Once initiated, the Town should communicate the initiative so local stakeholders understand that the Town will be their formal representative in this nation-to-nation outreach, pre-empting parallel outreach.

The Town’s outreach is recommended to occur outside the context of any project or any other situation where the relationship-development may be self-serving (i.e. only engaging in order to get something from the community). The objective is solely to begin building a nation-to-nation

WHO ARE THE RIGHTS HOLDERS IN HALTON HILLS?

At the outset of this Cultural Heritage Strategy project in Summer 2021, the Town and ERA reached out to 12 Indigenous communities whose traditional territory might include today's Halton Hills:

- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (“MCFN”)
- Nation Huronne-Wendat
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council
- Seven Williams Treaties First Nations: Alderville First Nation; Beausoleil First Nation; Curve Lake First Nation; Georgina Island First Nation; Chippewas of Rama First Nation; Hiawatha First Nation; Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Metis Nation of Ontario

Of the 12 communities contacted, the MCFN and Nation Huronne-Wendat both indicated interest in participating, and further engagement was conducted with both.

The Chippewas of Rama, Alderville, and Curve Lake First Nations all replied indicating that Halton Hills was predominantly the traditional territory of the MCFN and the Six Nations of the Grand River, although they indicated appreciation for having been contacted.

A lack of response during this engagement period does not necessarily indicate a lack in interest or stake in Halton Hills going forward. At minimum, the Town is encouraged to continue building relationships with the MCFN, Nation Huronne-Wendat, Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Metis Nation of Ontario.

relationship with the communities that hold traditional cultural associations and values with the land on which Halton Hills exists today.

While this is not a recommendation specific to the heritage program, it is a foundational requirement for any future heritage program initiatives. Meaningful conservation or interpretation of Indigenous histories should not be undertaken without the communities' direction and involvement.

Recommendation 5.4.1.2: Establish a ‘capacity fund’ for Indigenous rights holders to be engaged on municipal projects.

Rights-holder communities and their public-consultation officers are in regular demand on projects across Ontario, some where engagement is mandated through legislated Duty to Consult, and others where engagement is optional. No group can be expected to have the capacity to engage and provide feedback on such a breadth of projects without compensation for their time and staff resources.

If the Town wishes to meaningfully engage with Indigenous rights holders on a project-specific basis, it is reasonable to compensate Indigenous rights-holder participants for their time, labour, and sharing of traditional knowledge and perspectives. Although the Town currently provides for Indigenous engagement *processes* as a component of most project budgets, this compensation could be provided through a capacity fund made available to support rights-holder participation directly, where required.

The capacity fund could be developed as a broader municipal partnership fund under the forthcoming Truth and Reconciliation Strategy, allowing relevant departments to engage with rights-holder communities particularly where their participation is not mandated by law. For instance, rights-holder engagement may be especially relevant on natural heritage projects, as Indigenous communities often hold deep cultural associations with large-scale natural systems, e.g. Niagara Escarpment, Credit River.

Within the Halton Hills heritage program, the capacity fund might be applied to a strategic initiative like a cultural mapping exercise, where the Town would partner with rights-holder communities to map places of significance according to their cultural heritage. A cultural mapping exercise could serve to identify the need for Indigenous engagement on future development proposals within the bounds of the places of significance.

The development of strategic initiatives to undertake in partnership with Indigenous rights-holder communities could serve as a building block in developing long-term working relationships.

INDIGENOUS HERITAGE CONSERVATION FOR WHOM?

One of the key goals of heritage conservation, and in particular interpretation, commemoration and storytelling, is to educate contemporary audiences on a place's history. These audiences are most frequently non-Indigenous.

In collaboration with rights-holder communities, consider the broader goals of conservation and interpretation of Indigenous cultural heritage. One goal may be to educate non-Indigenous audiences about Indigenous histories (e.g. see case study at right). Another may be to redress historical injustices through spacemaking for rights holders today, e.g. by creating physical places for gathering and ceremony.

The Town should recognize that these two goals may be addressed through very different responses, and should remain open to the idea that space-making initiatives may be instrumental in conserving cultural heritage, even if they don't serve non-Indigenous stakeholders.

THE MOCCASIN IDENTIFIER PROJECT

The Moccasin Identifier is a project developed in the 2010s by former MCFN Chief Carolyn King, in partnership with the MCFN and the Greenbelt Foundation. According to its website, its goal is to promote public awareness of significant cultural historic sites and the ancestral presence of First Nations, Metis and Indigenous Communities.

The Moccasin Identifier comes in two forms: educational kits for classrooms, and site installations, both working with four stencils of moccasins traditional to the peoples of this region (Anishinaabe, Seneca, Huron and Cree), created by artist Philip Cote.

The site installations are meant to be placed on cultural historic sites, which may include treaty / territorial lands; Indian Reserves; ancestral villages; burial grounds; sacred sites; medicine sites; trails, summer / winter camps; hunting / fishing / gathering / harvesting sites; and almost always along waterways. Site installations present opportunities for Indigenous-led communication of ancestral presence and cultural heritage value.



Trillium Park, Toronto Waterfront (West8).



MCFN Hagersville EarlyON Child Care Centre (Earthscape).

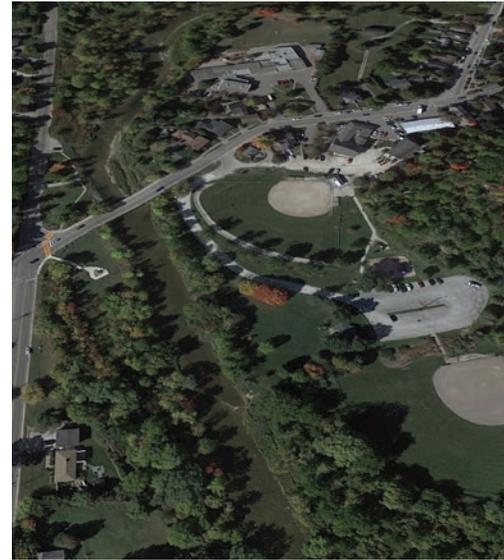
Recommendation 5.4.1.3: Explore opportunities and mechanisms to jointly recognize, conserve, steward and celebrate the Credit River as a Character Corridor of significance in Halton Hills.

The Credit River is a key heritage attribute of Halton Hills. From time immemorial, it has shaped the ways people have lived on this land. It has fostered sustenance and economic development as a place for fishing, trade, water-powered milling, and recreational tourism, and its river-valley topography has defined the location, built form and development patterns of the settlements built alongside it over time.

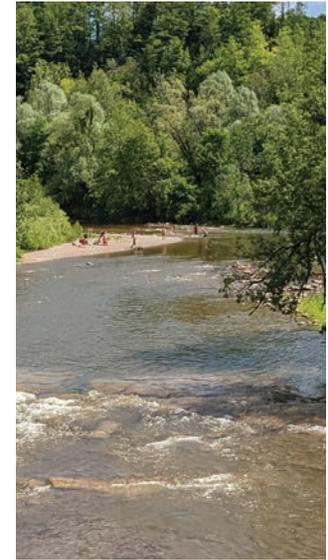
Today, the Credit River carries substantial social value. It carries value for local community stakeholders as a place of beauty, a point of access to nature, a place for gathering and for four-seasons recreation. It carries value too for Indigenous rights-holders; it has defined the identity of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (“MCFN”), for whom the Credit River (*Missinnihe*) is a living being that has sustained their lifeways and cultural practices throughout their history. Today, they continue to seek regular access to the Credit River as a place for ceremony.

The Town is encouraged to collaborate with the MCFN to explore methods of recognition, celebration and joint stewardship for the Credit River into the future. Examples of such methods include:

- Multi-jurisdictional pursuit of a Canadian Heritage River designation, which could recognize the Credit River’s outstanding natural, cultural and recreational heritage, and identify opportunities for its long-term joint stewardship;
- Design and/or enhancement of riverside sites for flexibility, universal accessibility, physical access and views to the Credit River, so that



The riverside access at Glen Williams Park and Shelagh Law Parkette offers a key opportunity for Indigenous space-making and storytelling (Google Earth, 2023).



Recreation in July on the Credit River (ERA, 2021).

the sites might be used by both Indigenous communities and local community stakeholders as places for gathering and ceremony;

- A jointly-hosted annual or bi-annual event, where local community stakeholders and Indigenous rights-holders might come together to celebrate the Credit River and continue building relationships;
- Continued development of interpretive installations or signage along riverside paths and trails, telling the stories and highlighting the significance of the Credit River to many communities throughout its history, with text in both English and Ojibwe.

5.4.2 A Strategy for Farmsteads

Farmsteads are considered a heritage attribute of Halton Hills. The built and landscape features that comprise individual farmsteads, as well as the geographical areas characterized by groupings of farmsteads, are considered significant cultural heritage landscapes for what they convey about agriculture as a foundational economic practice here.

Today, the community values associated with farmsteads may be less rooted in agricultural practices and traditions over 200+ years, and more in the open landscapes of green, rural spaces between historic settlements. Many stakeholders identify these green, often-rolling landscapes buffering urban places as a defining attribute of the community.

Many farmstead landscapes in Halton Hills are protected from redevelopment through layered policies and legislation associated with the Greenbelt and the Niagara Escarpment. These landscapes are located in the northwestern two thirds of the municipality.

The farmstead landscapes located in the southeastern third of the municipality, however, may be expected to see redevelopment in the form of residential, industrial and commercial growth in the future. These areas may eventually be identified as locations for urban expansion by high-order provincial, regional and municipal policies seeking to accommodate new residents in proximity to existing urban centres. Some are already zoned for such changes in land use.

Today, the existing farmsteads in this area provide the valued green landscape buffers between Brampton and Halton Hills, Milton and Halton Hills, Norval and Georgetown, and still somewhat between Georgetown and Stewarttown.

Municipalities throughout Southern Ontario face the same challenge, where urban expansion may occur on formerly-agricultural landscapes.

Many of these municipalities pursue heritage conservation by listing or designating individual properties, which not only poses implications for property owners and their land values, but also generally results in the retention of only the historic farmhouse and not attributes like green rural landscapes or barns.

In addressing this challenge in Halton Hills, the Town should treat its farmsteads as a portfolio, rather than as individual properties, and to develop a strategy that aims to conserve the tangible and intangible aspects of their cultural heritage value.

Recommendation 5.4.2.1: Establish farmstead-specific criteria to identify which farmsteads are candidates for protection under the OHA.

Any farmstead that reflects most typological farmstead features (see diagram on following page) might be considered a “representative example of an Ontario Farmstead”, qualifying it for designation under O. Reg. 9/06.

In places with large-scale evolving land uses, it may not be reasonable to designate every farmstead property.

The Town should establish a set of criteria to assist in identifying which farmsteads may merit the highest level of protection through designation under Part IV of the OHA. Consider the following:

- In addition to being a representative example of a farmstead, does the *farmhouse* meet one or more O. Reg. 9/06 criteria in its own right?

The Historic Ontario Farmstead Typology

- A** Farmhouse
- B** Barn
- C** Outbuildings
- D** Silo
- E** Entrance Driveway Framed by Vegetation
- F** Front-yard Mature Trees
- G** Rear Fields
- H** Drive Lanes
- I** Rear Woodlot
- J** Wind Rows Along Property Edge
- K** Orchard

ERA

For example, is it exceptionally early, or architecturally notable, and does it retain the integrity to convey this value?

- Does the farmstead reflect an unusually intact or complex collection of typological features, e.g. a notable farmhouse, an early barn or set of barns, and a linear tree-lined driveway, in close enough proximity to be conserved together even if the lands are subdivided?
- Is the farmstead located within a stretch of similarly intact farmsteads that together form a significant cultural heritage landscape? For example, a set of five high-integrity farmsteads along a concession road may serve to create a valued contextual character for passersby to experience that feels more intact or special than areas with less consistent agricultural character.

The Town may use these draft criteria as guidance, but should develop its own internal criteria, and then use them to prioritize the designation of specific farmsteads in response.

Recommendation 5.4.2.2: When designating a farmstead under Part IV of the OHA, identify attributes that reflect both the built and landscape features of the site; but acknowledge that some of these attributes may be conserved only through interpretation.

A representative farmstead is typically valued for its collection of built and landscape features that contribute to the significant cultural landscape. A designation by-law for such a property should identify both built and landscape heritage attributes for conservation.

However, given the scale of most farmstead properties and the expectation that they might evolve to accommodate new uses, the Town must acknowledge that some attributes may be ultimately conserved not through retention, but through interpretation.

For instance, if a tree-lined driveway were identified as a heritage attribute, the driveway might one day be interpreted as a tree-lined street running off the concession road, past the farmhouse, into a new neighbourhood.

Similarly, if swaths of rear fields were identified as an attribute of a representative farmstead, they might be best conserved through interpretive media communicating the historic practice of agriculture on the site.

Recommendation 5.4.2.3: Develop an incentive program for redevelopments that retain non-designated farmhouses, and/or outbuildings with or without heritage status.

In Halton Hills, whether or not a farmstead is designated, it may still contribute to the broader cultural heritage landscape. As such, even when a farmhouse is not deemed to merit the highest protection through designation, the Town is recommended to incentivize its retention.

Similarly, outbuildings like barns are rarely conserved in the context of a redevelopment, even on designated properties. However, there are contexts in which they may reasonably be reused, e.g. in new public park spaces.

In conjunction with planning staff, the Halton Hills heritage program should develop incentives for the retention and reuse of these structures,

which could manifest as additional permissions or relaxed regulations elsewhere in the property’s development scheme.

Recommendation 5.4.2.3: Develop a set of urban design guidelines for farmstead redevelopment.

In order to conserve Halton Hills’ agricultural heritage landscape as redevelopment occurs, the Town is recommended to develop a set of urban design guidelines for proponents in cases of farmstead redevelopment.

The urban design guidelines should incorporate best practices to conserve the aesthetic and intangible values of the agricultural landscape. Consider:

- Retention of farmhouses as landmarks visible along the historic concession roads, and activation with community-centric uses like restaurants / cafes, parks and recreation buildings, or community hubs;
- Community design that could facilitate the retention of farmstead outbuildings like barns as functional elements of community park spaces, ideally in ways that retain the spatial relationship and/or paths between the farmhouse and outbuildings;
- Retention of varied topography and extant mature trees where possible; this could be prioritized in the vicinity of the retained farmhouse even if major earthworks were required to facilitate new construction;
- Retention of a substantial green buffer around the farmhouse, and large setback from the concession road where one originally existed;
- Rural-style landscape treatments along the historic concession road, e.g. swales, low wood fencing, coniferous windrows or mature trees to

obscure or soften the appearance of sprawling new neighbourhoods, or designed views or retained portions of rural landscape;

- Rural-style landscape treatments* / softscaping at key locations in the new development, e.g. gravel or other porous materials for roads, alleys, driveways, or parking in proximity to the farmhouse;
- Coniferous windrows (and/or swales and biodiversity corridors) used to delineate historic farmstead property lines, and some current property lines, e.g. the farmhouse’s new green lot.

**Rural-style landscape treatments may require balance with, or creative solutions to address, typical development standards including AODA requirements, but they have potential to address both cultural heritage and climate-change resiliency goals.*



Consider how green landscape treatments, whether in retained pockets of rural landscape or tree-lined roads, can conserve the character and sense of place driving along Halton Hills’ concessions and sideroads, in areas that may change (ERA, 2022).

5.4.3 A Strategy for Climate Change

Halton Hills' Climate Change Adaptation Plan ("CCAP"), 2020, identifies climate change as a key emerging threat that will require increased resilience and mitigation in the coming decades. Growing risks including extreme weather, higher temperatures, and increased precipitation and flooding.

Flood risk is particularly high in areas that sit within the floodplains mapped by Credit Valley Conservation, Conservation Halton, and the Grand River Conservation Authority. These include the historic hamlets of Stewarttown (where there are only a few heritage resources) and Glen Williams and Norval (where there are large clusters of heritage resources). These hamlets are identified as heritage attributes of Halton Hills that should be conserved, and can be understood as significant cultural heritage landscapes.

In order to facilitate the conservation of heritage resources and landscapes in the face of climate change, the Halton Hills heritage program will need to be proactive, but also flexible, recognizing that there may be instances where climate change mitigation may be the highest-priority objective.

Recommendation 5.4.3.1: Establish a grant for climate change resiliency-related retrofits on designated heritage properties, to facilitate upgrades compatible with cultural heritage value.

As a complement to the (a) Town's existing grant program for restoration work involving heritage attributes and (b) the CIP's energy retrofit grant for commercial properties, a grant program is recommended in order to facilitate property owner-driven upgrades that will achieve energy efficiency for buildings on designated heritage properties.

A grant of this nature is recommended in the CCAP Action Plan item 2.1.2, which recommends the exploration of an incentive program to support climate-change resiliency retrofits. A heritage-specific grant is appropriate because in many cases it will be more onerous for heritage property owners to make retrofits compatible with their cultural heritage value.

Such a grant could cover works including in-kind window replacement or storm window installation, solar panel installation, water conservation retrofits like rain barrel installation, and/or building envelope consultation with a professional to identify areas of heat loss.

Town heritage staff should also exercise flexibility in reviewing proposed resiliency-related upgrades to heritage properties, balancing impacts on heritage value with the benefits of the mitigation achieved.

Recommendation 5.4.3.2: Collaborate with Climate Change & Asset Management staff to establish incentives to manage flood risk for properties in the floodplain, in order to conserve Glen Williams, Norval and other historic settlements as cultural landscapes.

A core theme of Halton Hills' cultural heritage value is the establishment of historic settlements along major waterways, capitalizing on the energy source for water-powered mills. As a result, several of the Town's historic settlements are located in the floodplain.

In hamlets like Glen Williams and Norval, many of the properties in the floodplain are heritage resources. In others, properties that are not listed or designated may still contribute to the cultural heritage value of the place.

In order to conserve these cultural heritage landscapes, Halton Hills heritage program is encouraged to collaborate with the Climate Change & Asset Management division to incentivize residents to undertake flood-risk mitigation measures on their properties, e.g. through a grant or tax rebate.

Eligible work might include installation of sewage back-flow preventers, the elevation of interior mechanical systems above the expected flood line, dry floodproofing measures to make buildings watertight (e.g. barrier and shield systems, sealing of openings), and/or landscape alterations to facilitate drainage away from the building (e.g. regrading, a sunken patio).

Again, Town heritage staff should exercise flexibility in reviewing proposed impacts of flood-risk management works on a property's heritage value.

Recommendation 5.4.3.3: Coordinate across municipal departments to pursue landscape-based flood-management strategies for historic settlements in the floodplain.

Flood risk to heritage resources in settlement areas like Glen Williams, Norval and Stewarttown can also be mitigated via landscape-based public works to facilitate stormwater management during major weather events.

Landscape-based public works might include the use of permeable pavers, bioswales, rain gardens and other forms of softscaping wherever possible.

Green landscape character and softscaping is rarely incompatible with historic character and the cultural heritage value of a place, particularly an historic urban settlement. However, Halton Hills heritage staff should work with the relevant departments to coordinate strategies that are compatible with the settlements' cultural heritage value as described in their HCSs. They should also ensure that in crafting HCSs and subsequent

policies to conserve historic settlements, there is flexibility for the Town to undertake the types of landscape-based public works described here.

Recommendation 5.4.3.4: In the long term, undertake a Cultural Resource Vulnerability Assessment and Strategy, which might recommend flood adaptation strategies based on building typology and/or materials.

Long term, the Town should undertake a Cultural Resource Vulnerability Assessment, which would identify heritage resources and/or cultural heritage landscapes at risk in the floodplain. The subsequent Strategy might include recommendations for buildings based on their type or style, their original materials, or other factors.

ADAPTATION IN HIGH-FLOOD-RISK ZONES

In Florida municipalities like St. Augustine and Miami-Dade County, flood risk is a frequent challenge in cultural resource management. Their guidance documents recommend two major strategies for flood risk management: the elevation of buildings above the flood line, and wet floodproofing, which allows water to permeate buildings and rise within them, later to drain.

The right strategy is building specific; e.g. masonry and concrete buildings are better suited to wet floodproofing, while wood-frame buildings are easier to elevate. Simpler building styles are easier to elevate than those with more complex massing. Updates to the CCAP could investigate and make recommendations around approaches in Halton Hills if/when flooding poses a more significant risk.

5.4.4 A Strategy for Historic Community Institutions

Historic community institutions contribute both tangible and intangible cultural heritage value in Halton Hills.

As recognizable building typologies (e.g. schoolhouses, churches, town halls), they form part of the built environment of historic urban settlements and rural concession roads. They also offer intangible value through their long history as hubs for public- and/or community uses.

Today, the use of these historic building typologies is changing. Rural numbered schoolhouses and urban town halls have been consolidated into larger institutions in Acton and Georgetown. Many churches continue to be operated by their congregations, but in line with trends across North America, they are broadly experiencing changing demographics and diminished financial security to maintain their often 100+ years old buildings (see examples, two pages ahead).

Historic community institutions require targeted strategies to conserve both their tangible contribution to Halton Hills' built environment, and their intangible contribution as community gathering places.

Recommendation 5.4.4.1: Designate the full roster of rural schoolhouses, providing they retain the integrity to convey their value as representative examples of their type.

The Town is recommended to conserve representative examples of early schoolhouses as landmarks along concessions and sideroads throughout Halton Hills, through designation under Part IV of the OHA. Note that properties should retain the architectural integrity to convey the value that has been identified if they are to be designated; an historic



The schoolhouses for School Sections #5 (Waterloo School, 10421 Fourth Line), left, and #12 (Lorne School, 14021 Regional Road), right. Both properties are currently listed on the Heritage Register, but are not designated (ERA, 2022).

schoolhouse that has seen irreversible modifications to its form, materials, and general appearance does not convey value as an example of a schoolhouse. Buildings that exhibit lower architectural integrity, but with potential for reversibility and restoration, may be retained on the Heritage Inventory and designation may occur in conjunction with restoration as part of a future development process.

Recommendation 5.4.4.2: For historic community institutions up for redevelopment, build on existing incentives to encourage adaptive reuse that incorporates public or community uses.

Even as the historic uses of early community institutions may no longer be relevant today, these sites are often located at the heart of historic communities, and can continue to be activated with vibrant community uses. In encouraging community uses in these historic building typologies, the Town can help to activate historic settlements and neighbourhoods throughout Halton Hills.

The Town may see very different proposals for these different building typologies. Given their scale, it is common today to adapt historic schoolhouses as residential buildings. Conversely, redevelopment proposals may come forward for large-scale churches that include a mix of uses, including, but not limited, to multi-unit residential uses.

Existing and future incentives can promote opportunities for adaptive reuse that continues community-facing uses in these historic institutional buildings, ones well suited to the scale of the building. Existing incentives include the CIP's Building and Property Renovation Program, Planning Fees and Building Permit Grant, and Non-Residential Development Charge Deferral Program Interest Grant. Others could be developed in order to specifically incentivize community hub-type uses.

Recommendation 5.4.4.3: Develop a set of criteria for the designation of historic church properties in Halton Hills.

Like farmsteads, churches are mainstays of the built environment throughout Halton Hills. Most churches may meet O. Reg. 9/06 criterion 1.i. as “representative examples” of a church type, but it is not clear that every one should be a candidate for designation.

The Town should consider developing an internal set of criteria to evaluate which church properties should be designated. The criteria could include landmark status (e.g. due to scale), architecturally high-style and high-integrity buildings, relative age, adaptive reuse potential, and community perspectives on value (where the primary stakeholders must be the congregation in question).

Recommendation 5.4.4.4: Provide congregations with the support required to maintain their designated church properties and remain active on site in the long term.

In Halton Hills, designation comes with both demolition control, and the expectation that property owners maintain their buildings to certain standards.

On church sites, congregations often struggle to maintain their aging buildings with revenue streams that may be dwindling. At the same time, many find that their sanctuaries and/or community spaces, designed for larger congregations 100+ years ago, provide much more space than they may require today.

As a result, while some congregants may perceive designation to be an opportunity to celebrate and conserve a beloved resource, others may see designation as a trap that will limit their flexibility to remain solvent and on site sustainably in the long term.

Where the Town chooses to designate an active church site under Part IV of the OHA, it is important that the designation be accompanied by the supports and flexibility required to help the congregation maintain its heritage resource. Recommended supports include:

- Grant funding suitable for the scale of the work required on large-scale places of worship; this may require a review of the current maximum grant funding available per application;

CONTINUING THE VITALITY OF LANDMARK CHURCHES

In Spring 2022, three congregations in landmark churches in Halton Hills were consulted to understand their current contexts and explore what resources would be needed to: (a) conserve bricks and mortar spaces and (b) sustain the vitality of services, programming and other offerings. Representatives spoke about the following ideas:

- Congregations are historically and practically ingrained in their buildings, and feel a strong sense of connection, responsibility, and desire to shape the future of their spaces;
- As congregation numbers decrease, churches may benefit from multiple funding streams (outside of congregant donations) to cover costs associated with maintaining their buildings and/or programming;
- A one-sized-fits-all approach cannot be used to support churches and their congregations; needs vary based on location (urban or rural), size of congregation, financial context and many other factors;
- Churches offer much needed low-cost or free meeting space to not-for-profit organizations and community groups;
- The location, design, acoustics and amenities of many churches in the Town lend themselves to hosting wider community events, such as musical shows, fundraisers, community gatherings and a variety of cultural programming;
- Some events could benefit from cross-promotion with other arts institutions in Town, such as the Helson Gallery and the Library;
- Designation under the OHA should be paired with opportunities to apply for financial assistance for building maintenance and a streamlined process for approving routine repairs and replacements;

- Flexible land use and zoning permissions could allow churches explore alternative funding streams, such as renting office space to local businesses, or proposing other new uses on their premises;
- Congregations are seeking more partnerships with businesses, organizations, public institutions and the Town, in order to engage with the wider community.

St. John's United Church, Georgetown



Built in 1880, St. John's has ~270 congregants today. The Church hosts programs ranging from quarterly concerts to Food for Life pre-packaged grocery bags. Some church spaces have been rented to not-for-profit organizations (ERA, 2022).

Boston Presbyterian Church, Scotch Block



The church, built 1868 with adjacent cemetery c. 1820s, is designated under Part IV of the OHA, and included on the Canadian Register of Historic Places. Its congregation includes ~50 families. The church hosts several not-for-profit organizations as well as Sunday Worship Services (Town of Halton Hills, n.d.).

Norval Presbyterian Church, Norval



Built in 1873, the congregation hosts ~55 families. In addition to worship services and local- and international outreach, the Church is known for its association with Lucy Maud Montgomery and her reverend husband. In 2017, the congregation sold their home (the manse) to the Heritage Foundation of Halton Hills (ERA, 2022).

- Zoning flexibility to allow congregations to bring in new users / share their space with other actors in the community and generate ongoing revenue streams;
- Planning approvals flexibility and/or streamlining in cases where redevelopment is contemplated that will allow the congregation to generate revenue and remain on site in the long term;
- An infosheet resource outlining supports available for active church sites that are designated. It should include information on how to generate revenue by sharing space with new users, and options available for adaptive reuse (e.g. partnering with a developer but remaining on site, adaptive reuse that integrates new community uses, etc).

CHURCH ADAPTIVE REUSE IN URBAN AND RURAL CONTEXTS

Bloor Street United Church, Toronto is a prominent downtown corner landmark, built in 1890. In the mid 2010s, the congregation, in conjunction with the Downtown Jewish Reform congregation, City Shul, which had been sharing its space since 2013, partnered with a developer to redevelop the site as a multi-unit residential property with a reconfigured multi-faith place of worship at its base. The redevelopment project is ongoing in 2022.



Rendered views of the ongoing multi-unit residential adaptive reuse project at Bloor Street United Church (urbantoronto.ca).

Chapleau Hub is located in the former St. John’s Anglican Church in Chapleau, 200km west of Timmins. In 2016, a local entrepreneur bought and converted the building into a community hub. The conversion created cafe / restaurant space for local operators, and the Hub programs the site with yoga, markets, movie nights and more. Despite having sold the building, the congregation continues to worship in the sanctuary.



Cafe use and live music at the Chapleau Hub, exterior at left (Algoma Country, left / @chapeauhub on Instagram, centre and right).

5.4.5 Cultural Economic Development

The Halton Hills Cultural Master Plan identifies the concept of a Cultural Economy: the potential for culture to support Halton Hills’ local economy through the development of cultural industries and cultural tourism. Vibrant arts and culture sectors are recognized as drivers for economic investment and for their contribution to high quality of life.

The heritage program has a role to play in cultural economic development in Halton Hills, in conserving, highlighting and celebrating Halton Hills’ valued tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In fact, development of a cultural economy may contribute toward an Historic Urban Landscape approach, which identifies culturally-sensitive economic development as an opportunity to conserve urban cultural landscapes and practices.

Cultural economic development is an interdisciplinary project that should continue to be undertaken holistically by Town Council and municipal staff, through partnerships between multiple municipal departments. For example, consider a scenario where:

- the heritage program protects a landmark site through designation;
- the economic development department helps develop a user group through grant or incentive funding to local entrepreneurs; and
- the planning department then streamlines the approvals process to facilitate the site’s adaptive reuse.

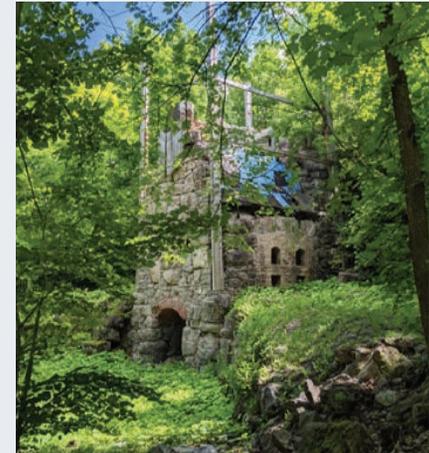
Similarly, the heritage program can work with communities to develop HCSs that outline their history and cultural heritage values, and departments like arts and culture may then rely on the HCSs to inform public art strategies for creative storytelling of the place’s intangible heritage.

CELEBRATING TRADITIONAL ECONOMIES TODAY

The Town has an opportunity to support cultural economic development not only through the heritage program’s protection of built resources that can be activated with cultural uses, but also by conserving intangible heritage, by leveraging tourism to foster longstanding economic practices, e.g. agriculture via agri-tourism.

By facilitating traditional economic practices in the modern era, sharing them with visitors, and using tourism to support locally-owned businesses, the Town can build on Halton Hills’ historic economic identity and the ways the economy has shaped the community’s sociocultural practices, e.g. agricultural fairs.

This may be particularly applicable in Halton Hills’ more rural areas, which are not expecting to see dynamic growth in the next several decades.



The Limehouse Kilns, connected by the Bruce Trail, tell the story of centuries of resource extraction in Halton Hills (ERA, 2021).

ACTON FALL FAIR

Dubbed the “Best Little Fair in Ontario”, the Acton Fall Fair is a 3-day annual agricultural fair held in Prospect Park, celebrating Acton’s rural heritage. This community event showcases agricultural activities and competitions, offering learning opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages.

Although the Fall Fair dates back to 1913, the tradition of agricultural fairs in the area began in 1846 when local communities took turns hosting the annual fair. Now, the Acton Fall Fair includes a yearly theme, the Fall Fair Parade on the Saturday, and craft, baking and vegetable-growing competitions, with entries displayed through the weekend. The Friday is Education Day, where children can visit the petting zoo, livestock and poultry barn, and learn about agricultural practices and farm animals.

A highlight includes the horse- and tractor pulls, and the 4H competitions. These events showcase the work of the enduring local agricultural community. The Acton Fall Fair is an example of both a cultural landscape,



furthering traditional agri-economic practices that helped build and continue to sustain this community, and of an event that helps provide interpretation of a key theme in Acton’s cultural heritage.

Youth present cattle at the Fall Fair (Acton Fall Fair, 2019).

The recommendations that follow are largely directed toward the Halton Hills heritage program, but almost all will require partnerships with other municipal departments to carry them forward.

Recommendation 5.4.5.1: Contribute to cultural economic development by using Historic Context Statements to identify local heritage landmarks and protect them through designation.

As directed in Section 5.1, the Town should partner with local communities to develop HCSs that will serve as tools to guide various heritage policies and strategic initiatives going forward.

One outcome of the HCS process will be the designation of heritage attributes that are identified as landmarks by the communities. By ensuring that each community’s foundational heritage landmarks are retained in the long-term, by applying the highest form of protection in designation under Part IV of the OHA, the Halton Hills heritage program can lay the groundwork for their future use and adaptive reuse in ways that will activate and revitalize their communities.

Most historic economic drivers that remain in the built environment can be expected to be included as attributes, e.g. the mills, tanneries and other major employers that drove the development and shaped the social fabric of Halton Hills’ historic urban settlements for generations.

Recommendation 5.4.5.2: Build on an inter-departmental incentive structure for the adaptive reuse of large-scale historic economic resources (e.g. mills, farms) with cultural drivers and public-facing uses.

Once large-scale historic economic drivers are designated under Part IV of the OHA, a complementary policy framework should facilitate their activation with uses that will draw tourists and contribute toward contemporary economic development relevant to the place’s history.

Municipal heritage staff should work with the Planning department, and/or with Economic Development, to build on and promote incentives for the adaptive reuse of these sites with cultural drivers, which may include businesses, and/or community uses and programs.

Existing incentives include the CIP’s Agricultural Building Renovation Grant Program, Mutli-Stream Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program, and Non-Residential Development Charge Deferral Program Interest Grant. These incentives and others could be complemented with a streamlined or fast-tracked heritage approvals process for adaptive reuse projects that are likely to become major cultural economic drivers.

There is great opportunity to support and facilitate cultural economic development in the northwest of Halton Hills, on sites where development is limited by environmental conservation policies under the Greenbelt and Niagara Escarpment planning frameworks. Farmsteads, for example, may be seeking ways to diversify and complement the agricultural economic offering on their properties, and may benefit from such an inter-departmental incentive structure.

EVERGREEN BRICK WORKS, TORONTO

Evergreen Brick Works is a community hub at a former industrial brick works, a 16.4 hectare site in Toronto’s Don River Valley. In 2003, the social enterprise Evergreen won an RFP for site’s adaptive reuse, proposing a Community Environmental Centre.

Today, the site is a vibrant hub for locals and tourists. It includes flexible market space, a natural playground, a trail system, children’s programs, incubators and businesses including a cafe and a bike shop, a winter skating rink and summer garden centre, and conference and event spaces, the revenue from which is used to facilitate the site’s programming.



A complex of historic and contemporary buildings, activated with commercial and community uses, at Evergreen Brick Works (DTAH).

CULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON FARMSTEADS IN THE GREENBELT

Cambium Farms, Caledon is a family farmstead converted into a wedding and event centre. The adaptive reuse includes two event spaces in the barn, one in the carriage house, and use of the farmhouse for event preparation. In addition to weddings, Cambium Farms partners with local businesses to offer community uses including yoga classes, pop-up dinners with local chefs, beer festivals, concerts, and more.

GoodLot Farmstead Brewing Co., Caledon was established as a hops farm in 2011, but in 2017 expanded its economic offering by opening a brewery on site. The taproom, converted from an agricultural outbuilding, helps drive tourists to the site and broader region.

Earth to Table Farm, Flamborough is a 97 ac. farm that includes an orchard, produce fields, and a butchery. Bought in 2010 by Pearle Hospitality Group to grow produce for its venues and restaurants, it was later rezoned to permit a wedding venue and farm education centre on site. The farm education centre, currently in progress, has received a \$97,500 grant from Ontario's Rural Economic Development Program. In the interim, the farm leases ~50 ac. to FarmStart, where program participants can learn and practice sustainable farming on small plots.



Barn and contemporary kitchen and washroom addition to facilitate event use (Nathan Cyprys Photography).



Outdoor gathering space and hops fields (GoodLot Farmstead Brewing Co.)



Barn wedding venue at Earth to Table Farm (Pearle Weddings).

Recommendation 5.4.5.3: Develop municipal Heritage Interpretation Plans for significant Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors.

The Halton Hills heritage program should undertake strategic initiatives to develop Heritage Interpretation Plans for certain Character Areas, Nodes or Corridors that have been identified as significant cultural heritage landscapes.

Heritage Interpretation Plans outline strategies for the communication information and engagement of the public in understanding and interpreting a place's history, and themes of its cultural heritage value.

Following the development of local HCSs, the Town may choose to develop a Heritage Interpretation Plan for a Character Area, Node or Corridor within its inventory, based on a series of factors, for example:

- Whether the existing built environment requires additional support to communicate a coherent story, e.g. are the buildings and structures too spread out to do so in their own right;
- Whether the place's cultural heritage value is largely intangible (e.g. notably associated with key people or cultural practices), and/or whether many of its landmark buildings have been lost;
- Whether there is an opportunity to help catalyze a cultural economy in that place by using interpretive strategies in the public realm to connect or link a few burgeoning cultural economic drivers;
- Whether there is an opportunity to communicate elements of Indigenous cultural heritage, in collaboration with rights-holder communities.

A Heritage Interpretation Strategy could take the form of a strategic planning document that outlines (a) the themes of the place's cultural heritage value; (b) the recommended interpretation strategies and media; (c) strategic locations for interpretive media installations; and (d)

WHAT IS INTERPRETIVE MEDIA?

Successful interpretation engages audiences so that they may experience and feed back into the interpretation process. While the most common example of an interpretive medium is a plaque, the Town should embrace creative and diverse forms of interpretive media. Examples might include:

- Apps
- Artifact displays
- Audio / video clips
- Books / films / podcasts
- Community history projects
- Conservation of physical elements
- Images / photographs
- Interpretive design of buildings or landscapes
- Place naming (e.g. streets, parks)
- Public programming like walking tours
- Plaques / panels
- Public art
- Public events like festivals, programs, Doors Open
- Signage and wayfinding
- Websites

This list includes both on-site and off-site forms of interpretation. Both are valuable; on-site interpretation can shape the way visitors experience a place, while off-site interpretation can reach a wider audience.

directions for implementation, which may involve partnerships with other municipal departments.

Heritage Interpretation Plans for Character Areas, Nodes or Corridors are recommended to provide direction on storytelling about the place's historic evolution, intangible heritage and cultural practices through municipal initiatives including:

- Signage and wayfinding;
- Street naming (e.g. resurrection of earlier names);
- Innovative public art commissions;
- Innovative interpretive installations that may use, but also go beyond, plaques and panels;
- Programming that continues and expands on historic economic traditions and practices, e.g. through walking tours, events and festivals, open houses, etc.



Underground, a three-stanza poem by Katherine Govier embedded in the Canmore, AB sidewalk, evokes the town's coal-mining heritage (ERA, 2021).

L. M. MONTGOMERY AS A CULTURAL ECONOMIC DRIVER

Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942) is a renowned Canadian author responsible for 22 works of fiction, including the *Anne of Green Gables* series. In 1926, she moved to Norval when her husband (Reverend Ewen Macdonald) was assigned the Presbyterian parishes at Norval and Glen Williams.

Montgomery, her husband and their two sons lived in the Presbyterian church manse at 402 Draper Street in Norval from 1926-1935. During this period, Montgomery kept journals reflecting her daily life, including time spent along the Credit River, and published six of her novels.

Montgomery's association with Norval can be used as **an example to explore how an intangible association with a significant person, event, or organization can be leveraged as a cultural economic driver**. The following actions (some of which are already in place) provide just a few examples of how this would work under the process laid out in this Strategy:

- **Norval's Historic Context Statement:** When it comes time to develop an HCS for Norval, the significant association with Montgomery could be described as a key theme that has shaped the history of the hamlet.
- **Heritage Designation:** The Norval Presbyterian Manse and Caretaker's Cottage have been designated under Part IV of the OHA. Additional buildings with strong associations with Montgomery could also be designated.
- **Adaptive Reuse / Program:** The same buildings could be explored or incentivized for adaptive reuse that would draw visitors (e.g. the manse as potential museum or interpretive centre).
- **Norval's Heritage Interpretation Plan:** If an Interpretation Plan is developed for Norval following its HCS, proposed interventions could communicate Montgomery's association with Norval (e.g. a walking trail marked by stylized quotes from her journals, or annual events/festivals/tours).

5.5 Heritage Halton Hills Committee

The Heritage Halton Hills committee (“HHH”) is a statutory component of Halton Hills heritage program, established under Section 28 of the OHA. The committee currently consists of 10 members plus the Chair, who is a member of Council, and functions in an advisory role to Council on all matters related to cultural heritage resource conservation.

In practice, HHH provides an advisory opinion on heritage-related questions, including municipal staff recommendations on designations and on development proposals involving heritage properties.

Recommendation 5.5.1: Identify 3-4 positions on Heritage Halton Hills to be reserved for specific demographic representatives.

A key objective established in Section 4 of this Cultural Heritage Strategy is to ensure that the Halton Hills heritage program reflects the diversity of voices and experiences of people living in Halton Hills today. One of the ways to ensure that the heritage program reflects diverse communities is to ensure that there is diverse representation at HHH.

Contemporary understandings of what constitutes “heritage” (e.g. tangible *and* intangible, 19th-century *and* modern and post-modern, dominant settler-colonial histories *and* histories of other communities) should incorporate the perspectives of people who would not traditionally consider themselves to be “heritage” stakeholders or advocates.

To expand the diversity of representation in the heritage program, the Town should identify min. 3-4 communities that comprise significant demographic groups in Halton Hills today, and establish positions within the 10-member committee to be filled by members of those groups. As an

example, demographic groups might include youth (e.g. ages 17-30), specific ethnocultural communities including urban Indigenous communities, and/or LGBTQ+ communities.

Recommendation 5.5.2: Develop a strategy to reach new audiences in publicizing and seeking applications for vacant Heritage Halton Hills positions.

The Town should refine its process in seeking applicants for vacant HHH positions. This might include a fresh description of the committee’s roles and responsibilities, and the strategic distribution of notices to community organizations in fields including arts, culture and economic development.

Recommendation 5.5.3: Review and revise the Heritage Halton Hills webpage for clarity and accuracy.

As a statutory committee under the OHA with advisory responsibilities to Council, HHH is not a civil society heritage advocacy organization. The existing HHH webpage should be revised to:

- Clearly establish the committee’s role and responsibilities;
- Remove extraneous information about the broader Halton Hills heritage program operations, e.g. grant program details;
- Reduce advocacy around the “preservation” of built heritage resources, e.g. descriptions of the benefits of designation;
- Broaden the mandate to not only built heritage, but cultural heritage;
- Ensure that all information is accurate, e.g. whether or not interior attributes may be identified on designated properties.

5.6 Municipal Heritage Planning Webpage

The municipal heritage planning webpage is the go-to resource for any stakeholder who needs to engage with the Halton Hills heritage program, including individual property owners, property developers and their consultant teams, interested members of the public, and more. The following strategies are recommended to provide the greatest clarity and transparency possible for interested stakeholders.

Recommendation 5.6.1: Ensure that the Heritage Register is kept publicly available and up to date on the Heritage Planning webpage, and that it includes a link to the interactive, searchable map application for the Heritage Register.

As of January 2023, the OHA mandates that all municipalities keep an up-to-date version of their Heritage Register publicly available on the municipal webpage. The Town should continue to maintain its existing publicly-available Register on the Heritage Planning webpage.

While the Town's interactive mapping system currently includes a Heritage Register map, the searchable map application should also be made immediately available as a central resource on the Heritage Planning webpage.

Town staff should ensure that the map is current and up-to-date at all times, or alternatively that it includes a clear "current to" date and an update schedule. They should consider including information not only about properties on the Heritage Register (i.e. listed and designated properties), but about properties on the Inventory of Built Heritage Resources and proposed Inventory of Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors.

The Town should also ensure that clear definitions about the heritage status types on the map are immediately accessible to map users, i.e. implications of listing vs. designation. If the Town chooses to include inventoried properties with no legal heritage status on the map, their status must be made explicitly clear; consider implementing a toggle system, where inventoried properties may be toggled on, but the default shows only properties with legal heritage status.

Recommendation 5.6.1: Consider publicizing the Inventories of Prospective Cultural Heritage Resources and Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors to the Heritage Planning webpage.

Official Plan policies F5.2.1 and F5.2.2 direct that the Town may develop inventories of Built Heritage Resources and Cultural Heritage Landscapes. According to these policies, the Built Heritage Inventory is intended for properties that may be considered for designation, while the Cultural Heritage Landscape Inventory is considered for defined geographical areas of heritage significance that have been modified by human activities.

This Cultural Heritage Strategy recommends instead that the Town develop an Inventory of Prospective Cultural Heritage Resources ("IPCHR"), and an Inventory of Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors ("ICANC"). These are distinct; the IPCHR is an interim measure designed to flag properties that have not yet been sufficiently evaluated to be listed or designated, while the ICANC is for geographical areas that have already been recognized as significant, but where various tools (including but not limited to designation) will be used to conserve them.

The Heritage Planning webpage already includes the Heritage Register (including listed and designated properties), while the Inventories are currently used solely as internal municipal resources. Reasons the Town might consider publicizing the two Inventories on the Heritage Planning webpage include:

- A publicly-available IPHCR provides the transparency for property owners, developers and those considering purchasing property to understand that there is prospective heritage interest in those properties. It also provides transparency and legitimacy if the Town chooses to request further heritage study in response to a prospective development application, per Recommendation 5.2.2.
- A publicly-available ICANC allows the Town to acknowledge, for the public's benefit, that there is cultural heritage value inherent in certain broader areas, and to identify the combination of tools in use to conserve them. Designation as an HCD is not always the most appropriate way to conserve these larger areas, and it should not be the only way for the Town to acknowledge zones of heritage value.

Prior to publicizing either Inventory, municipal heritage staff should develop an approach for responding to public inquiries regarding properties or zones on either Inventory.

5.7 Municipal Heritage Planning Policy

This Strategy will be implemented through planning policy in Halton Hills, including the Halton Hills Official Plan. The following recommended updates to the Official Plan will ensure that the heritage program is transparent, defensible, and consistent with heritage planning best practice.

Recommendation 5.7.1: Adopt the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* as a benchmark for the conservation of properties designated under the OHA.

While the Standards and Guidelines have been endorsed by Council, they should be formally adopted by Council, and the Town should implement a policy that requires properties on the Heritage Register to be conserved consistent with the Standards and Guidelines.

Although the Standards and Guidelines function as a best-practice guidance document published by Parks Canada, their adoption in the Official Plan gives them the weight of policy. It would allow municipal heritage staff to publicize and utilize the Standards and Guidelines as a consistent standard by which to evaluate proposed works on designated heritage properties.

It is important to note that the Standards and Guidelines function solely with respect to tangible heritage resources. Originally developed as a guidance document to support a federal heritage building grant program, the three conservation treatment types identified (preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation) are specific to the conservation of built heritage features. The Standards and Guidelines do not address the conservation of intangible heritage, e.g. through interpretation, but this does not mean that such strategies are invalid methods of cultural heritage conservation or communication.

Recommendation 5.7.2: Revise heritage-related definitions in the Official Plan to be consistent with the highest-order provincial policy definitions available.

Within the Ontario planning framework, in the event of a planning appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal, conflicts are resolved on the basis of adherence to the highest-order provincial policies.

In this context, it is critically important that municipal heritage policies do not conflict with provincial policies, e.g. those within the Provincial Policy Statement and, below it, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, but it is also important that the interpretive tools provided for municipal planning policy are consistent with those at the provincial level.

The Town should review the heritage-related definitions in its Official Plan, and revise any definitions that are inconsistent with the highest-order provincial policy definitions for the same terms. See, for example, the definitions for “conserved”, “heritage attribute”, and “significant” in the Official Plan against those in the PPS.

Further, the Town should ensure that no heritage-related defined terms are used in the Official Plan that are phrased differently than a parallel term at the provincial level, e.g. Built Heritage (Official Plan) vs. Built Heritage Resource (PPS).

While the Town may be inclined to clarify some higher-order provincial definitions with different or additional wording, it is recommended that any clarification be provided in the Official Plan policies themselves, or within a sidebar, to limit the potential for varied interpretation.

6 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

General Recommendations

5.1.1 Develop a strategic program of rolling Historic Context Statements for settlement areas in Halton Hills.

5.2.1 Maintain the Halton Hills Inventory of Prospective Heritage Resources as an official, permanent record of prospective heritage properties, and undertake rolling evaluations of the inventoried properties for designation, guided by a prioritization framework.

5.2.2 Establish an official process for heritage evaluation of properties on the Halton Hills Heritage Inventory when they are proposed for redevelopment.

5.2.3 Engage a research intern to collect archival information on priority listed / inventoried properties in service of municipal cultural heritage value assessments.

5.3.1 Use Historic Context Statements to develop an inventory of character areas of significance, of varying types and scales.

5.3.2 Study Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors of significance to identify the degree to which the properties within them contribute in defining or supporting their character, and prioritize the highest-contributing resources for conservation.

5.3.3 Develop a process for the conservation of Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors that includes consideration of the range of tools available within and outside the OHA, and selection of the most appropriate tool or set of tools for each specific area.

Strategic Program Area Recommendations

5.4.1.1 The Town of Halton Hills should undertake outreach to develop meaningful long-term relationships with Indigenous rights-holder communities outside the context of any project.

5.4.1.2 Establish a 'capacity fund' for Indigenous rights holders to be engaged on municipal projects.

5.4.1.3 Explore opportunities and mechanisms to jointly recognize, conserve, steward and celebrate the Credit River as a Character Corridor of significance in Halton Hills.

5.4.2.1 Establish farmstead-specific criteria to identify which farmsteads are candidates for protection under the OHA.

5.4.2.2 When designating a farmstead under Part IV of the OHA, identify attributes that reflect both the built and landscape features of the site; but acknowledge that some of these attributes may be conserved only through interpretation.

5.4.2.3 Develop an incentive program for redevelopments that retain non-designated farmhouses, and/or outbuildings with or without heritage status.

5.4.2.3 Develop a set of urban design guidelines for farmstead redevelopment.

5.4.3.1 Establish a grant for climate change resiliency-related retrofits on designated heritage properties, to facilitate upgrades compatible with cultural heritage value.

5.4.3.2 Collaborate with Climate Change & Asset Management staff to establish incentives to manage flood risk for properties in the floodplain, in order to conserve Glen Williams, Norval and other historic settlements as cultural landscapes.

5.4.3.3 Coordinate across municipal departments to pursue landscape-based flood-management strategies for historic settlements in the floodplain.

5.4.3.4 In the long term, undertake a Cultural Resource Vulnerability Assessment and Strategy, which might recommend flood adaptation strategies based on building typology and/or materials.

5.4.4.1 Designate the full roster of rural schoolhouses, providing they retain the integrity to convey their value as representative examples of their type.

5.4.4.2 For historic community institutions up for redevelopment, build on existing incentives to encourage adaptive reuse that incorporates public or community uses.

5.4.4.3 Develop a set of criteria for the designation of historic church properties in Halton Hills.

5.4.4.4 Provide congregations with the support required to maintain their designated church properties and remain active on site in the long term.

5.4.5.1 Contribute to cultural economic development by using Historic Context Statements to identify local heritage landmarks and protect them through designation.

5.4.5.2 Build on an inter-departmental incentive structure for the adaptive reuse of large-scale historic economic resources (e.g. mills, farms) with cultural drivers and public-facing uses

5.4.5.3 Develop municipal Heritage Interpretation Plans for significant Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors.

Additional Heritage Program Recommendations

5.5.1 Identify 3-4 positions on Heritage Halton Hills to be reserved for specific demographic representatives.

5.5.2 Develop a strategy to reach new audiences in publicizing and seeking applications for vacant Heritage Halton Hills positions.

5.5.3 Review and revise the Heritage Halton Hills webpage for clarity and accuracy.

5.6.1 Consider publicizing the Inventories of Prospective Cultural Heritage Resources and Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors to the Heritage Planning webpage.

5.6.2 Link the interactive, searchable map application for the Heritage Register to the Heritage Planning webpage.

5.7.1 Adopt the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* as a benchmark for the conservation of properties designated under the OHA.

5.7.2 Revise heritage-related definitions in the Official Plan to be consistent with the highest-order provincial policy definitions available.

7 IMPLEMENTATION

This Cultural Heritage Strategy sets out a vision, objectives, and 30 recommendations for the conservation of cultural heritage in Halton Hills. The Strategy is intended to address both current and future cultural heritage resource management challenges and opportunities, and has been designed to be applicable even as the Town grows and evolves over the coming decades.

In the immediate term, once this Cultural Heritage Strategy is adopted, Council should update the cultural heritage policies in its Official Plan to ensure consistency with the recommendations and language in the Strategy.

Following any applicable Official Plan updates, Council should pursue the recommendations in Sections 5.1 - 5.3 of this Cultural Heritage Strategy. These seven recommendations are foundational to the proposed Halton Hills heritage program.

All subsequent recommendations are specific to certain strategic program areas, and/or to the HHH committee and the Heritage Planning webpage. Many of these 25 recommendations will require collaboration with other municipal departments at the Town. They should be pursued where time and resources permit over the coming years, subject to Council direction and available funding.

In the coming years and decades, some of the policy and legislative context referenced in this Cultural Heritage Strategy may be updated, which may render some of the specific direction in this Strategy obsolete. Best practices in cultural heritage resource management may also evolve, e.g. around the use of HCSs as heritage planning tools. In such cases, the Town should consider the broad intent in the vision and objectives in

Section 4, and use the vision and objectives as guidance in revising any approaches to the heritage program as necessary.

