



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Laura Loney, Manager of Heritage Planning

DATE: October 11, 2024

REPORT NO.: PD-2024-081

SUBJECT: Heritage Strategy Update and Recommendations for Removal from the Heritage Register

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2024-081 dated October 11, 2024, and titled “Heritage Strategy Update and Recommendations for Removal from the Heritage Register” be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the listed properties identified in Appendix C of this report be removed from the Heritage Register;

AND FURTHER THAT staff continue to provide Council with updates regarding the Bill 23 – Heritage Strategy as appropriate.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* was introduced on October 25, 2022, requiring the removal of listed properties from the Town’s Heritage Register after a period of 2 years from their listing, or by January 1, 2025.
- In March 2023, Council adopted a Heritage Strategy through Report PD-2023-010 to prioritize the Town’s listed properties to be researched and evaluated for potential designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- Bill 200, the *Homeowner Protection Act*, received Royal Assent on June 4, 2024, and extended the timeline provided through Bill 23 to January 1, 2027.
- Staff continue to research and evaluate the Town’s listed properties in order of prioritization, and through additional review with Heritage Halton Hills identified 131 listed properties that are recommended for removal from the Heritage Register through this report.

- Following notification of the October 28, 2024, Council meeting, the Owner of 15 Queen Street, Georgetown has requested that the subject property not be removed from the Heritage Register at this time to allow for further investigation by staff for potential designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as such, the total number of properties recommended for removal is revised to 130.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

1. Heritage Register

The Town of Halton Hills' Heritage Register was developed in four Phases between 2007 and 2018 through an extensive, multi-phase process with significant public consultation occurring throughout. The Heritage Register represents countless hours of staff, consultant and volunteer efforts over decades to identify and conserve the Town's cultural heritage resources.

2. Bill 23 (*More Homes Built Faster Act*) & Heritage Strategy Adoption

Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* was introduced on October 25, 2022, bringing forward several legislative changes. A key impact to the Town through these legislative changes was the requirement for the removal of listed properties from the Heritage Register after a period of 2 years from their listing, or from January 1, 2023, with municipalities being prohibited from re-listing those removed properties for a period of five years.

On March 6, 2023, Council adopted staff recommendations within Report PD-2023-010 (Appendix A) to implement a Heritage Strategy in response to the proposed legislation, including the prioritization of the Town's listed properties on the Heritage Register and the research and evaluation of those properties for potential designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA).

3. Bill 200 (*The Homeowner Protection Act*)

On May 27, 2024, the Province introduced Bill 200, the *Homeowner Protection Act, 2024*. A posting on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) was also released specifically seeking feedback regarding the changes proposed to the *Ontario Heritage Act* through Schedule 2 of the proposed *Homeowner Protection Act, 2024*. A key impact to the Town through these legislative changes was the requirement for the removal of listed properties from the Heritage Register after a period of 2 years from their listing, or from January 1, 2023, with municipalities being prohibited from re-listing those removed properties for a period of five years. Bill 200 received Royal Assent on June 4, 2024.

On June 17, Council adopted staff recommendations within Report PD-2024-049 (Appendix B), including that staff's comments regarding Bill 200 be endorsed, and that staff be directed to provide further updates to Council regarding the Heritage Strategy.

4. Heritage Strategy Progress to Date

Significant progress has been made through the Town's Bill 23 – Heritage Strategy (the "Heritage Strategy") regarding the research and evaluation of the Town's listed properties.

As of the finalization of this report, an additional 24 properties have been fully designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* through the Heritage Strategy. 27 properties have been recommended for designation by Heritage Halton Hills and are currently in process but have not yet had by-laws registered on title. A further 13 properties are currently anticipated to be reviewed by Heritage Halton Hills (HHH) by the end of 2024. Staff are focusing on the finalization of those in-progress reports by the end of this year to balance related administrative requirements, however, several more research and evaluation processes are scheduled to begin in January 2025.

5. September 18 HHH Workshop and Recommendations

As noted, several listed properties have been recommended for designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Additional listed properties have been reviewed by HHH and then set aside by staff as part of this process where it was determined that designation may not be warranted at this time.

At the HHH meeting of September 18, 2024, staff provided an overview of those properties that have been set aside by the committee to date, as well as an index of listed cemeteries and Victory Housing properties on the Town's Register. The list of properties recommended by Heritage Halton Hills to be removed from the Register is included in Appendix C, and further information regarding the recommendations is provided below.

a) Cemeteries

Staff have identified current protections for cemeteries within the Province, namely the *Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002*, which is administered by the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO). Following discussion, HHH determined that designation of the existing listed cemeteries on the Town's Heritage Register is not required to ensure their long-term conservation. Staff will review all existing cemeteries to determine whether any significant attributes (i.e. entrance gates) should be identified and protected through legal mechanisms such as heritage easement agreements in future. Staff will continue to consider the conservation of significant cemetery features, and the interpretation and commemoration of those cemeteries, in consultation with the HHH.

b) Victory Housing

The existing listed properties within the Town's Victory Housing neighbourhoods are associated with the wartime effort and the postwar population and economic booms that necessitated quick, easily built, and affordable housing. The homes on these properties are pre-fabricated, modest frame buildings, and most have been altered over the years as housing needs have changed. The properties associated with these neighbourhoods were added to the Town's Heritage Register in 2010. Additionally, these developments

have been commemorated with the introduction of historic storyboards in each community.

Council has approved the removal of several listed properties within Victory Housing neighbourhoods in keeping with the recommendation of staff and the Heritage Halton Hills committee since 2013. Staff and the committee concur that there are few, if any, intact examples of this style of housing within these neighbourhoods including Normandy Boulevard, Charles Street and Churchill Crescent in Georgetown, and McDonald Boulevard and Mason Boulevard in Acton. While these neighbourhoods are part of the story of the development of the Town, most of the existing Victory homes have been significantly altered. It is also the opinion of staff and the Heritage Halton Hills committee that designation of any of the individual Victory Housing homes is not warranted at this time. As such, staff are recommending that all Victory Housing properties be removed from the Heritage Register.

c) Additional Properties

Since initiating the Town's Heritage Strategy in response to Bill 23, staff have consulted with HHH on an additional 21 listed properties. These properties were reviewed by staff in order of their prioritization, however, for several reasons were not recommended for further research and evaluation. HHH concurred with staff's comments and recommended that they be removed from the Heritage Register and therefore from consideration for designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* at this time.

Staff note that the property at 15 Queen Street was originally included in the list of properties recommended to be removed from the Heritage Register as a modified vernacular building. However, the Owner has contacted staff and requested that the property continue to be researched and evaluated for potential designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. As such, the property at 15 Queen Street, while included in Appendix C, is not recommended for removal from the Heritage Register at this time to allow for further staff investigation.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report identifies natural areas and heritage as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement was not needed as this report is administrative in nature.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Heritage Halton Hills was consulted in the preparation of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications.

Reviewed and approved by,

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer