



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Laura Loney, Manager of Heritage Planning

DATE: June 18, 2025

REPORT NO.: PD-2025-031

SUBJECT: Intention to Designate under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act – Prospect Park and Fairy Lake

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2025-031, dated June 18, 2025, and titled “Intention to Designate under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act – Prospect Park and Fairy Lake” be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council state its intention to designate the property at Prospect Park and Fairy Lake, legally described within Appendix B of this report, under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act as recommended by Heritage Halton Hills;

AND FURTHER THAT the Town Clerk proceed with serving a Notice of Intention to Designate as mandated by Section 29(3) of the Ontario Heritage Act;

AND FURTHER THAT once the 30-day objection period has expired, and if there are no objections, a designation by-law for the property including Prospect Park and Fairy Lake, be brought forward to Council for adoption.

KEY POINTS:

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

- Staff have undertaken a Research & Evaluation Report for the subject property in accordance with the Town’s Council-approved Heritage Register Prioritization Strategy to respond to changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* through *Bill 23, More Homes, Built Faster Act, 2022*, with further amendments made through *Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act*;

- The Research & Evaluation of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake was further prioritized through Report No. PD-2024-094 entitled “Heritage Halton Hills Recommendations for Prioritized Research and Evaluation” at the November 18, 2024 meeting of Town Council;
- The subject property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria for designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and has been identified as a significant cultural heritage landscape; and,
- Staff are recommending that Council state its intention to designate the property.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

Prospect Park is an approximately 25-acre parkland complex within the community of Acton in the Town of Halton Hills, situated on a 14-acre peninsula that extends into the approximately 69-acre Fairy Lake. Prospect Park and Fairy Lake have not previously been listed on the Town’s Heritage Register or designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. However, the entrance pillars to the Park were listed on the Town’s original Heritage Register and have long been identified as significant features of the Prospect Park landscape.

Prospect Park and Fairy Lake have been researched and evaluated by staff as part of the Town’s Council-approved Heritage Register prioritization strategy to respond to *Bill 23, More Homes, Built Faster Act, 2022*.¹ The property was further prioritized through Report No. PD-2024-094 entitled “Heritage Halton Hills Recommendations for Prioritized Research and Evaluation” at the November 18, 2024 meeting of Town Council.

Heritage Halton Hills first reviewed the Research & Evaluation Report for Prospect Park and Fairy Lake at its May 21, 2025 meeting, and at the June 18, 2025 meeting the following motion was carried:

Recommendation No. HHH-2025-0040

THAT Heritage Halton Hills recommend Council issue a Notice of Intention to Designate for the property at Prospect Park and Fairy Lake in Acton for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Staff have consulted with Recreation and Parks staff regarding the findings of the Research & Evaluation Report, who have not identified any concerns with the proposed designation as it will allow continued use and maintenance of the park.

¹ Bill 23 stipulates that municipalities have a two-year window to determine whether properties on the Heritage Register warrant designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. If not so designated after two years, properties must be removed from the Heritage Register. On June 6, 2024, Bill 200 (the Homeowner Protection Act) received Royal Assent, extending the 2-year timeline prescribed by Bill 23, giving municipalities, including the Town of Halton Hills, until January 1, 2027, to either issue a NOID for a listed property or to remove it from the Heritage Register.

Staff also met with representatives from the Acton Agricultural Society, along with Councillor Somerville and Councillor Albano, on June 4, 2025, to provide additional information regarding the proposed designation.

Prospect Park and Fairy Lake have been identified as a significant cultural heritage landscape in the community of Acton, representing a landscape that has both been designed and evolved in response to community needs, and that has significant associative and historical significance and value for the community. This cultural heritage landscape has also been identified as contextually significant.

As described in the Research & Evaluation Report, the identified heritage attributes of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake that contribute to its physical and design value include:

- The central location of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake within the community of Acton;
- The existing built features, including:
 - The 1926 bandstand at the Prospect Park entrance, including:
 - The setback, location, and orientation of the 1926 octagonal Fachwerk Revival structure;
 - Its scale, form, and massing;
 - The materials, including local pine and decorative half-timbered framing;
 - The upper open-air platform;
 - The ornamental Gothic Revival brackets;
 - The wooden balustrade;
 - The octagonal roof;
 - The 1926 Prospect Park entrance pillars, including:
 - The setback, location, and orientation of the two remaining posts in their original location since 1926;
 - Their scale, form, and massing;
 - The materials, including local flagstone and lime mortar;
 - The 1867 Acton Drill Shed (currently known as the Thompson Agricultural Drill Shed), including:
 - The setback, location, and orientation of the existing building, in its current location since 1929;
 - The scale, form, and massing of the 1867 frame building;
 - The materials, including the structure's original pine plank walls and exposed nineteenth century posts and beams on the interior;
 - The 1934 Prospect Park Pioneer Cemetery Cairn, including:
 - Its original markers and monuments, with their surviving inscriptions;
 - The variety of styles, materials and symbolism represented in the markers and monuments;

- The scale, symmetry, and design of the c.1930s cement cairn and monument;
 - Its location, orientation and dimensions;
 - Its c.1930s boundary posts and mature trees;
- Natural and human-made features within the landscape, including:
 - Fairy Lake and the extant dam;
 - The half-mile former drive track;
 - The mature deciduous trees along the former drive track; and,
 - The mature coniferous trees in the former location of the Acton Grandstand.

The identified heritage attributes that contribute to the historical and associative value of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake include:

- The legibility of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake as an evolved nineteenth-century recreational and community space within Acton and the greater community of Halton Hills.

The identified heritage attributes that contribute to the contextual value of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake include:

- The legibility of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake as an evolved nineteenth-century recreational and community space within Acton and the greater community of Halton Hills;
- The central location of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake within the community of Acton;
- The existing built features, including:
 - The 1926 bandstand at the Prospect Park entrance;
 - The 1926 Prospect Park entrance pillars;
 - The 1867 Acton Drill Shed;
 - The 1934 Prospect Park Pioneer Cemetery Cairn; and,
 - Natural and human-made features within the landscape, including:
 - Fairy Lake and the extant dam;
 - The half-mile former drive track;
 - The mature deciduous trees along the former drive track; and,
 - The mature coniferous trees in the former location of the Acton Grandstand.

As Prospect Park and Fairy Lake represent a significant cultural heritage landscape within the community of Acton in the Town of Halton Hills, and as it meets 8/9 of the Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest, staff are recommending designation of the site under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Staff would like to formally acknowledge and thank Austin Foster, who worked on contract for the Town as a Cultural Heritage Assistant between May 2024 and April 2025, for his significant efforts on the Research & Evaluation Report for the property.

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:

Staff and members of Council have communicated with the Acton Agricultural Society regarding the proposed designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

There are significant opportunities to highlight the history and significance of Prospect Park and Fairy Lake as part of ongoing and future Town projects which include a public consultation component.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Heritage Halton Hills and staff from Community Services have been 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,

Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer