



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

From: Erik Hanson, Heritage Resources Coordinator

Meeting Date: June 23, 2022

Subject: Heritage Conservation District Study, Report PACAC22-020

Purpose

A report to recommend the endorsement of the Downtown Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study.

Recommendations

That the PACAC approve the recommendations outlined in Report PACAC22-020 dated June 23, 2022, of the Heritage Resources Coordinator, as follows:

- a) That the PACAC receive the Heritage Conservation District Study for the Downtown under Part V, Section 40 (1) of the Ontario Heritage Act (R.S.O. 2005, c. 6. S. 29.), and;
- b) That the PACAC endorse the HCD Study for the Downtown, and;
- c) That the PACAC's endorsement of the HCD Study be forwarded to Council.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no budget or financial implications associated with this report.

Background

Introduction and Planning Justification

An HCD is a defined area of a municipality where the heritage features of the buildings and landscape are protected through designation under the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). HCD designation enables the Council of a municipality to manage and guide future change in the district through policies and guidelines for the conservation, protection and enhancement of the area's special character. Long term studies of Heritage Conservation Districts have identified numerous community benefits including:

- Conservation and enhancement of a place's unique character
- Increased tourism
- Attraction and retention of stable businesses
- Property value resiliency during economic downturns

Strategic Direction 3 of the Council endorsed Municipal Cultural Plan - Strengthen Heritage - calls on the City to make built heritage conservation of the downtown a corporate priority, recognizing that the historic landscape of the City's core is an important economic asset for the community. A stated objective of the updated Official Plan (OP) is that "the cultural heritage resources within the City be identified, conserved, promoted and enhanced and that development should occur in a manner which protects and complements the City's heritage". It notes that cultural heritage resources foster community identity across the City but particularly in the Central Area and other Strategic Growth Areas.

The OP identifies HCDs as a specific tool for evaluating cultural heritage resources to identify properties where heritage conservation will be prioritized, where sensitive renovation should occur, and properties where well designed redevelopment is appropriate. The goal of this objective is to protect cultural heritage resources while providing a level of certainty to the development community. This objective is in keeping with Section 2.6.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement that "Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved".

In the 2022 budget Council identified the need for an HCD in the downtown through a capital allocation for the completion of a Heritage Conservation District Study, the first step in the creation of an HCD.

There are two distinct parts in the creation of an HCD, the Study phase and the Plan phase. The HCD Study phase does not result in the designation of a Heritage Conservation District. The Study phase simply evaluates the Study Area and, if merited, proposes that an HCD plan be prepared for Council's consideration.

In the summer of 2021, staff initiated a competitive bidding process and selected EVOQ Strategies to facilitate the completion of the Heritage Conservation District Study. The consultants were charged with fulfilling several key objectives mandated by Part 5 of the OHA:

Assessing the heritage characteristics of the Study Area through analysis of buildings, structures, landscapes and other property features, and the completion of comprehensive research on the history of the study area;

Recommending the geographic boundaries of the area to be designated;

Providing recommendations as to the objectives of the designation and the content of the heritage conservation district plan, and;

Reviewing the Peterborough Official Plan for potential conflicts in planning process.

A Technical Advisory Committee comprised of staff from the Arts, Culture and Heritage and Planning Divisions met monthly with the consulting team to review progress and discuss any issues arising.

Study Area

Staff initially set a study area bounded on the north by Murray Street, to the south by Dalhousie Street, to the west by Rubidge Street and on the east by the river. After initial review on site, preliminary research and discussion with staff the consulting team scoped the boundaries to focus on the commercial core as defined by the spine of George and Water Streets, and two adjacent areas, each of which was identified as a Character Area within the proposed HCD Study boundaries.

Study Process

The consultant team began by conducting site visits to photograph and complete a survey sheet for each building in the study area. They then undertook archival and online research to complete an inventory database entry recording the history, architecture, and current condition of each individual property. Data collected included date of construction, building height, stylistic influences, building material components, and storefront types. These records were compiled to create a Built Form and Landscape Survey for the HCD Study area.

Once the survey was completed the consultants undertook a Character Analysis of the downtown's built form beginning with mapping the properties using GIS to create a set of maps that visually present the development of the downtown over time by building date, building materials, design, height and architectural style.

The Downtown HCD study recognizes the geography of the area as a critical factor for the occupation of the site where Peterborough now sits by both Indigenous and Settler communities. Nestled within a drumlin field and in the valleys formed by the Otonabee

and Jackson Creek, Nogojiwanong the 'place at the end of the rapids', formed a natural area for Indigenous encampments and the first European settlement – the Adam Scott mill. From here the Study outlines five major periods of occupation and development of the study area:

Nogojiwanong: Pre 1825;

Early Settlement and an Emerging Town: C. 1825 – 50;

The Coming of Age of a Town: C. 1850 – 1884;

The Heart of an Industrial City: C. 1884 -1930;

Economic Shifts and Modernism: 1930 – 1975, and;

Valuing Downtown Differently: 1975 - Present

The history and significance of each period is outlined in the Study, recognizing the changes to the core area of the growing town that each brought with it. The major elements associated with each period are outlined in these narratives as well.

This phase also included analysis of road patterns and a review of the historic development of the infrastructure of the core area. The work also included analysis of accessibility of properties within the study area and found that roughly 50% of the properties were inaccessible to persons with mobility issues having one or more steps at the store entrance.

In addition to the analysis of individual properties the Study also reviews public spaces including parks and Jackson Creek; the latter noted in particular for its potential to be daylighted in parts of the downtown. Views and vistas of landmark buildings and streetscapes are also identified for their contribution to the heritage character of downtown.

From the Character Analysis the consultants chose to divide the study area into three Character Areas:

The Commercial Heart – comprised of the properties along George and Water Streets and the cross streets from Brock to King Streets.

The Civic Core – comprised of the major civic buildings to the north of the commercial area which frame the two greenspaces in the study area, Confederation Square and Victoria Park, and include such landmark buildings as the Courthouse, City Hall, PCVS, the Armoury and the old YMCA along with several churches.

Industrial Lands – comprised of the stretch of land along the waterfront that includes the QTG Pepsico (Quaker Oats) plant and Millennium Park.

Each of these areas would be contained within the HCD but could have different guidelines in the HCD Plan specific to the preservation of the dominant building types in each area. The Study provides a detailed analysis of the downtown's overall heritage character and the common features that define it including such things as the representative architectural styles, the commercial street character, lot coverage, the rhythm of window and door opening, the predominate two to three storey building heights, ornamentation, materials and other character defining elements.

An area suitable for designation as an HCD must have a level of integrity or completeness that is supported by a landscape that is coherent and authentic. The study reviews the research findings against the criteria for determining cultural heritage significance outlined in Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act. These criteria focus on:

Design and Physical Value – Looking at materials, design, rarity and styles of the buildings, degree of craftsmanship, etc. in the study area.

Historical or Associative Value – Looking at associations with themes, events, people, activities, etc. that are connected to the properties in the study area, buildings which add to the understanding of the community, or buildings associated with architects, builders or designers significant to the community.

Contextual Value – Looking at the way in which heritage resources help define the character of the area, places that are physically, visually or historically linked to each other or are defining landmarks in the area.

For an area to be designated it must meet any one of the criteria outlined in the OHA. The Study finds that the Study Area meets the criteria in all categories.

The Research and analysis section of the Study concludes with a comprehensive review of the current planning context for the downtown. The consultants reviewed the Official Plan, the Zoning By-Law and several supporting plans including the Central Area Master Plan and the Little Lake Master Plan. The consultants also reviewed relevant provincial planning legislation including the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the current Provincial Policy Statements to determine if there were conflicts in direction given by those documents and the proposed HCD objectives.

Consultation Process

Because the Study phase does not lead to the designation of an area as an HCD under the OHA, no public consultation process is required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The only consultation required is with the municipal heritage committee (PACAC). The City's RFP, however, recognized that input from the community is critical to the success of an HCD, so a comprehensive consultation process was undertaken. The objectives of the consultation were:

- to inform the community about the scope of the study;

- gather input on the history and significance of the district;
- seek feedback on the values associated with the study area;
- present the outcomes of the heritage analysis, results, and recommendations, including the proposed boundary, and;
- document community feedback for incorporation into the Study.

The consultation program included:

- two meetings for the general public held on April 6 and May 17, 2022 (the first of these was virtual and the second in-person);
- presentations to the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee and the Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee;
- a series of small group forums with business owners, property owners and organizations whose work touches on the downtown or provides services for people in the core area, and;
- one on one conversations with property developers that work in the downtown area.

Overall, these meetings were sparsely attended with one of the small group forums being cancelled and some participants attending alternate forums. Notwithstanding the turnout, valuable input was provided through healthy dialogue with the public and stakeholders.

Local First Nations were invited to be part of the consultation process but in the end did not provide input. Staff feel it is vital to engage with First Nations as much as they wish during the Plan phase to capture their traditional histories of Nogojiwanong to ensure protection of Indigenous cultural resources in the Study Area.

A recurring message in the public meetings was that the downtown needs strong revitalization efforts to make it the flourishing and desirable destination that it once was. The question was asked as to what value an HCD has in bringing about that revitalization. While it is true that the creation of an HCD cannot directly repair the damage done by the COVID-19 pandemic, or meet the needs of those suffering personal challenges, HCDs have been shown to provide a framework of consistency and stability to areas in transition. They provide clear expectations to the development industry; they create a backdrop for the community to both reflect upon and celebrate its past, and they are key to developing the amenities that draw tourism to the independent businesses that anchor the downtown.

Summary

The Downtown Heritage Conservation District Study concludes that the scoped study area merits designation as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act based on an analysis of its history, character, appearance and integrity. It recommends that a Heritage Conservation District Plan be prepared for the area to manage change within the neighbourhood to conserve its cultural heritage values.

The Downtown's cultural heritage value lies in its high concentration of buildings of mid-19th to mid-20th century architectural styles and types. Downtown's heritage attributes reflect its historical and associative values related to Peterborough's dynamic growth and development over the last century and a half. The area also has contextual value as the historic heart of the City of Peterborough.

Submitted by,

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