

Property Owner's Guide to Heritage Designation



Mill Street at Queen Street, Tottenham c.1920s

A Guide to Heritage Designation in the Town of New Tecumseth

Understanding Heritage Designation:

The *Ontario Heritage Act* requires that municipalities identify and conserve their community's cultural heritage assets. There are two main processes that support this mandate: registration and designation. Each provides a different level of protection for heritage resources.

Registration:

In the Town of New Tecumseth, the Heritage Advisory Committee can recommend buildings of cultural or historical significance for addition to the Register of Significant Properties. The Register is an important planning and conservation tool that helps the Town identify its heritage resources and plan future research and designation priorities.

When a recommended addition to the Register of Significant Properties is approved by Council, the building is formally added to the Register, which is updated and made available online on the Heritage New Tecumseth webpage:

<http://newtecumseth.ca/visitors/heritage/>

Buildings added to the Register of Significant Properties do not fall under the same level of legal protection as buildings that are designated. There are no restrictions on demolition or alteration of buildings listed on the Register of Significant Properties.

The *Ontario Heritage Act* does require that owners of Registered properties give the municipality 60 days' notice when applying for a demolition permit. In the Town of New Tecumseth, completing and submitting the standard Application for a Permit to Construct or Demolish serves as the owner's written notice to the municipality; there is no additional paperwork.



**'The Gables', Wilson St. in Tottenham,
Register of Significant Properties**



**Simpson House, Main St. East in Beeton,
Register of Significant Properties**

Designation:

Heritage resources in the Town of New Tecumseth are evaluated on an ongoing basis to identify and protect buildings of architectural, cultural and historical significance. Community members, staff, or the Heritage Advisory Committee can recommend a building for heritage designation.

Before a property can be designated, a research report detailing its history and itemizing its architecturally significant features is drafted. This research provides the 'Reasons for Designation' that forms the basis of the designation by-law. Notices of Intent to Designate are sent to the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust, and published in the local newspaper so that anyone who opposes the designation has an opportunity to voice their concerns.

Once these steps are complete, Council can pass a by-law designating the property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The designation by-law lists the specific attributes that are protected (the 'Reasons for Designation'), and is registered on the property's title. A copy of the by-law is kept on file by the Ontario Heritage Trust. These steps ensure that even if the property is sold, the new owners will be aware of its designated status.

Alteration or demolition of designated properties is not prohibited, but proposed changes must be approved by Council, which solicits recommendations from the Heritage Advisory Committee. This process ensures that any approved alterations take the property's heritage status into account by conserving the attributes itemized in the designation by-law.

Under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, alteration or demolition of a designated building without municipal approval can result in heavy fines (up to \$1 million for illegal demolition).



Williams-Kitney House, Line 7 in Beeton (Designated 1986)

Heritage Conservation Districts:

When a defined area (like a street or neighbourhood) has a unique and locally significant character, a by-law can be passed after an in-depth formal study and public consultation process to create a Heritage Conservation District (HCD). There are more than 100 Heritage Conservation Districts in Ontario, in the largest cities, smallest towns, and everywhere in between. HCDs have been found to boost tourism, attract and retain stable and vibrant businesses, and positively impact property values. Nearby examples of successful HCDs include Cookstown, Orangeville and Collingwood.

HCDs are designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, which gives Council the tools to manage future change through the creation of policies that conserve and enhance the area's significant attributes while allowing for economic growth.



Hammell House, Main St. East in Beeton

Frequently Asked Questions:

What are the benefits of designation for homeowners?

Designation prevents unsympathetic alteration of heritage properties. As a homeowner who has taken pride in maintaining a unique piece of community history, designation gives you the peace of mind that comes with knowing that your investment will be protected and appreciated by future generations.

The Heritage Advisory Committee provides bronze building plaques for designated properties as a public recognition of both the building's special protected status, and its owner's contribution to the preservation of our community's history.

Property owners can also receive their own copy of the detailed property research conducted by staff in support of the designation process. The final research file could include information about past occupants, copies of historical photographs or archival documents, historical land or tax records, and an analysis of the building's architectural features and historical significance.

What are the obligations that come with designation?

Owners are required to apply to the Town for approval when they wish to alter or demolish a designated structure. This does not include routine maintenance such as painting, and usually does not apply to interior changes unless interior elements are specifically identified in the designation by-law. Only about 2% of designated buildings in Ontario have by-laws that mention interior elements; nearly all designations are limited to exterior (usually façade) features.

Is there a cost to homeowners for designation?

No. Costs associated with designating a property (obtaining records from the Land Registry Office and advertising the Intent to Designate) are the Town's responsibility.

Can I appeal the decision to designate my property?

Yes. The *Ontario Heritage Act* provides a mechanism for property owners to appeal a pending designation. If a formal objection is received in response to the Intent to Designate, Council refers the matter to the provincial Conservation Review Board, which holds a hearing and makes a recommendation back to Council on the issue.

Will Heritage Designation negatively impact the value of my property?

No. Recent studies by the University of Waterloo and the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario found that the values of designated properties rise more consistently than non-designated properties and retain more of their value during economic downturns. They have been proven to sell at least as fast as non-designated properties.

Will Heritage Designation impact my insurance premiums?

No. Insurance companies may charge more for older buildings, due to factors such as outdated wiring or heating systems, but there is no additional cost associated with insuring a designated building. An owner of a non-designated structure of the same age and condition would pay the same premiums. Contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada Consumer Information Centre at 1-800-387-2880 for more information.

Will maintaining a designated building cost more?

Designation does not impose expenses beyond those expected of any property owner to maintain their property. Studies have shown that the rehabilitation of older structures consumes 23% less energy than new construction, reduces strain on landfill sites, and costs much less than new construction.



'The Castle', Victoria St. E. in Alliston (Demolished 1968)

Debunking Myths about Designation:

- It does not prevent alteration of a property; it ensures that changes are sympathetic to the property's historically significant features
- It does not require owners to open their property to members of the public
- It does not restrict routine maintenance work like painting
- It does not impose expenses beyond those expected of any property owner
- It does not increase insurance premiums
- It does not restrict the use or zoning of the property
- It does not require owners to restore the property to a certain time period
- It does not negatively impact property values

Looking for advice or recommendations on restoring a heritage property (even a non-designated one)?

Questions about Heritage Designation or property research?

Contact Heritage New Tecumseth at Museum on the Boyne for more information!