

3. MANDATE

3.1 The Ontario Heritage Act

There are several mechanisms enabling a municipality to designate a heritage conservation district. One such mechanism is found in Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act which specifically discusses District Designation. Section 40(1) in Part V states:

“The Council of a municipality may by by-law define the municipality or one or more areas thereof as an area to be examined for future designation as a heritage conservation district and the Council may, after such examination is completed, prepare Official Plan provisions with respect to such designation.”

3.2 Town of Oakville Official Plan

Another instrument enabling designation is the Official Plan. Part C, Section 8.2 states:

“Areas may be considered for designation as heritage conservation districts pursuant to the provisions of The Ontario Heritage Act.”

Furthermore, as stated in Section 8.3:

“The character of an individual historic building or district shall be maintained or enhanced through careful consideration of plans for alteration or construction of new structures.”

3.3. Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC)

The Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee was established in the Town of Oakville by By-law 1976-186 (Appendix B) in November, 1986 with a mandate to advise Council on heritage related matters. It studies, evaluates and recommends properties or areas worthy of heritage designation.

4. HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT CRITERIA

Heritage Districts are characterized as a collection of buildings, structures, and space that have at least one of the following criteria; location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling and association. The important elements of these criteria are detailed below.

Location

Areas with buildings, structures, and spaces where the majority continue to exist on their original location or site.

Design

Areas that show cohesiveness through similar or dissimilar elements of detail (architectural). This is based on the quality of the following items: scale, height, proportion, materials, colours, textures, rhythm, and siting.

Setting

Areas that are definable by man-made or natural boundaries and/or contain at least one major focal point.

Materials

Areas showing a sense of cohesiveness through similar or dissimilar use of materials traditionally used in the area.

Workmanship

Areas which show homogeneity through the periods represented by the majority of the units composing the District.

Feeling and Association

Areas that give an association of time or sense of place.

5. HERITAGE PRESERVATION CRITERIA

Again, the Ministry of Culture and Communications recommend the use of the following criteria. These criteria address three areas considered when a structure merits designation as defined by the current heritage preservation philosophy. These are architectural, historical and contextual.

Architectural Criteria

A structure considered of architectural merit meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. it is the work of or reflects the work of a major architect or designer
2. it is an excellent example of architectural style or period
3. it is an example of a method of construction
4. it is an example of a particular period or land use category such as residential, commercial, institutional, etc.
5. it is the only example or one of the few remaining examples of its period.

Historical Criteria

Rather than defining historic as an association with past events, fame or age, heritage conservation philosophy defines a structure as historical when it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. it is associated with an event or movement of local, provincial, national or international importance.
2. it is associated with a person or group of persons of local, provincial, national or international importance.
3. it is associated with the history of development of an area even if now surrounded by urban development.
4. it is associated with the social history of the area and is especially important where the continuity of activities can be demonstrated.
5. it is known or thought to be the location of archeological remains of pre-history or history of an area.

Contextual Criteria

Heritage structures are an integral part of a streetscape and often stand among other buildings and public open spaces, such as streets and parks. A structure merits contextual consideration when it meets one of the following criteria:

1. it forms an essential part of a group of two or more related structures located on the same side of the street, on opposite sides of the street, or on two or more corners of an intersection.
2. it defines or terminates a vista.
3. it is a significant landmark or architectural curiosity.
4. it is an important element of an area which was laid out according to the planning principles of its period.

5. it forms an essential part of a distinctive skyline view.
6. it is located where demolition or poorly considered construction would adversely affect an important complex of structures or damage an important view or vista.

6. DELINEATION

Physical Boundaries

The District area is bounded by Allan Street on the west, Lakeshore Road East on the north, the rear lot line of properties on the east side of Second Street on the east, and Lake Ontario to the south.

Drawing 1 shows the area in municipal context, while Drawing 2 relates to the area adjacent to the Old Oakville Downtown Residential Area Heritage Conservation District to the west and the immediate neighbourhood.

Role and Character Boundaries

The District area does not exhibit one particular architectural style nor is it associated with any particular historical event. However, the area does display an historic and architectural quality which traces back 130 years. When William Francis Romain and Thompson Smith initially surveyed the area, it was in response to the Town's promising growth and development. As time passed, the area went through several phases of growth, yet always maintaining its residential character.

As noted in the preceding section (4.0 Heritage Conservation District Criteria) several criteria relate to the role and character of the area. This area retains much of its building stock in its original location. The area is demarcated by man-made boundaries created by the Romain and Smith surveys (see Drawing 3). Within the area, there exist several identifiable focal points. These focal points include the Romain House (40-42 First Street), the Haganan House (72 First Street), the Thompson Smith House (410 Lakeshore Road East), and the William Robertson House (31 First Street). These buildings are featured in Appendix C.

7 History

The area is a unique neighbourhood having survived and maintained its historical character within a rapidly growing region.

In 1827, Colonel William Chisholm purchased 960 acres of land at the mouth of the Sixteen Mile Creek. Chisholm, a loyalist's son, moved from Nova Scotia and settled later on a farm near Dundas Street in Nelson Township. These 960 acres became the site for a lakeport with an abundant backwood supplying it with white pine and grain. By 1833, many frame and brick buildings replaced the wilderness while roads were constructed connecting the backwood settlements with Oakville.

In 1834, William Chisholm received part of the Prince Regent's Land Bounty, Lot 12, 4th Concession, for his volunteer services in the war of 1812. The District Area is part of this original land grant. The area remained undeveloped until the 1850s.

During the expansion years, 1828-1860, Lakeshore Road was constructed and the promising development of the railway spurred the population growth. With the expansion of business and the promising development of the railway, two new residential surveys were developed. One of these surveys was developed by William Francis Romain, a prominent grain merchant. Romain purchased from G.K. Chisholm in 1855, a strip of land bordering Allan Street, the Lakefront and Colborne Street (Lakeshore). Maintaining the two lots adjacent to the Lake for himself, Romain surveyed the remaining parcels into residential lots. This was the first survey of its kind in the Town of Oakville (see Drawing 3).

A second survey was established by Thompson Smith, a wealthy lumber merchant. Thompson Smith moved into the house which stands at the corner of Second Street and Colborne Street (410 Lakeshore Road) believed to have been built by George Griggs. Smith surveyed the area bounded by First Street and Second Street. Union Street connected the two surveys.

High land costs in the Town of Oakville led to the new CNR railway being constructed north of the Town. This occurrence led to a slow period of growth in the Town's history. The Romain-Smith areas also experienced a slow growth period. The next wave of residential growth in the District area did not occur until the 1900 to 1930 period. During the early part of the 20th Century, an increased number of Toronto residents established summer cottages in the Town of Oakville. Some decided to permanently reside in the Town.