



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

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REPORT #: CDS-25-188 **COMMITTEE DATE:** 2025-12-03
REPORT TO: Municipal Heritage Committee **DUE IN COUNCIL:** 2025-12-09
SUBJECT: Queen-Picton (Old Town) Heritage Conservation District Plan Status Update

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 The Municipal Heritage Committee endorse the findings and recommendations of the Queen-Picton (Old Town) Heritage Conservation District Plan;
- 1.2 The Municipal Heritage Committee support bringing the report forward to Council for consideration and direction to implement the Plan phase of the project.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District (“HCD”) was established in 1986 to protect the heritage character of the commercial core of Niagara-on-the Lake’s Old Town area (“Old Town”).
- Updating the HCD Plan and considering an expansion of the HCD was identified as a priority through the Town’s Planning for Progress initiative (2021) and Council’s Strategic Plan.
- The Town awarded the contract for the Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District Study (“HCD Study”) to Cultural Spaces, an Ottawa-based heritage consultancy firm.
- The Town provided Cultural Spaces with the findings of the surveys conducted by the HCD Study Working Group (“Working Group”).
- During the week of November 18, 2024, the Cultural Spaces team visited Niagara-on-the-Lake (“NOTL”) to conduct fieldwork in support of the HCD Study.
- On November 18, 2024, the Cultural Spaces team also met in-person with Town Staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Municipal Heritage Committee (“MHC”), the Town Historian, and board members from the Niagara Foundation and Niagara-on-the-Lake Conservancy to obtain local perspectives.
- Section 40 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* provides that the Council of a municipality may undertake a study of any area of the municipality for the purpose of designating a heritage conservation district and may pass a by-law establishing an HCD study area for a period of one year.
- Based on their initial research, Cultural Spaces recommended a geographical boundary to define the Study Area, and in February 2025, Council passed a by-law placing restrictions on alterations to property within the HCD study area for the period of one year.

- At a public open house held on April 1, 2025, a recommended boundary for an expanded HCD was presented, together with information on the analysis of the contributing and non-contributing properties, and age of construction tied to the statement of significance for the 1814 to 1914 development of the Old Town.
- Cultural Spaces presented the Phase 1 report to MHC on May 7, 2025 followed by Council receipt and endorsement of the Study Report on June 25, 2025. Council provided direction to proceed to Phase 2 of the project, which is the Plan Phase.
- Cultural Spaces has now completed the draft Phase 2 report for the HCD and is looking for comments and inputs from MHC members as well as endorsement, in principle, to proceed to the implementation stage.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Phase 2 HCD Plan Report to the MHC and seek the endorsement of MHC on the findings and conclusions of the Report, including the district boundary and resources, policies and guidelines for contributing and non-contributing properties, policies and guidelines for parks and public realm and the implementation of the Plan.

4. BACKGROUND

The scope of the second phase of a heritage conservation district plan is outlined in Section 41.1 (5) of the OHA:

The plan must include:

- a statement of objectives to be achieved in designating the area as a district;
- a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the district;
- a description of the heritage attributes of the district and of properties within it;
- policy statements, guidelines, and procedures for achieving the objectives and managing change; and
- a description of alterations that may be carried out without a heritage permit

The consultant, in consultation with Heritage Planning staff, has completed a draft HCD Plan report as part of the Plan Phase of the HCD Study, in accordance with the requirements of the OHA. The draft report is attached as **Appendix I**. The report is organized into the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Legislative and Policy Framework
3. District Significance
4. Statement of Objectives
5. District Boundary and Resources
6. Policies and Guidelines for Contributing Properties
7. Policies and Guidelines for Non-Contributing Properties
8. Policies and Guidelines for Parks and Public Realm
9. Implementation
10. Recommendations

5. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

5.1 Rationale for expanded HCD boundary

The Study Phase recommended an expanded HCD including areas surrounding the current HCD centred on the Queen and Picton Streets commercial core, including the Queen Street Summer Homes character area, and the residential areas surrounding the existing HCD. The map showing the recommended HCD boundary is shown on Figure 1 of the draft Plan Report.

The recommended expanded HCD represents the complete sequence of periods from the rebuilding of the town after the War of 1812 to World War I:

- Rebuilding (1814-1829)
- Growth (1830-1859)
- Prosperity (1860-1914)

The expanded HCD is divided into character areas: Residential Area; Commercial Core; Queen Street Summer Homes, and Institutional Core.

5.2 Contributing and Non-contributing Properties and HCD Plan Objectives

An analysis of all properties within the study area, has identified 259 of 528 (over 48 percent) properties in the recommended HCD boundary as contributing to the area's heritage value. Contributing properties; a) were constructed during the district's period of significance from 1814 to 1914; b) are an example of a prevailing architectural style such as Georgian, Neoclassical, Regency, Classic Revival, Picturesque, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne Revival, Edwardian, and the Ontario Cottage, and c) maintain their integrity and/or have contextual value as part of an ensemble of historic buildings.

The draft report outlines policies and guidelines to conserve, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage value of the contributing and non-contributing properties within the new HCD. The other objectives of the Plan include, conserve, support and enhance the social, cultural and community values of the district, ensure that alterations and additions to contributing properties are compatible and do not remove heritage attributes and also ensure that alterations within the Commercial, Institutional, Residential, and Queen Street Summer Homes areas are compatible with the character of the contributing properties in that area, including design, setbacks, and materials.

5.3 Report Recommendations

The draft report contains several recommendations that require a decision of Council, in consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee:

1. **HCD Designation** – it is recommended that a portion of the Study Area be designated as an HCD under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, as it meets OHA regulations, with at least 25% of properties contributing to its heritage value.
2. **Proposed HCD Boundary** – it is recommended that the proposed HCD boundary, which includes 259 contributing properties, be approved, to reflect and manage the area's heritage values.
3. **HCD Plan** – it is recommended that the HCD Plan be adopted to guide conservation efforts and manage future change within the designated district.
4. **Statement of Significance** – it is recommended that the provided Statement of Significance be adopted to define the heritage values, attributes, and justification for the proposed HCD designation.

5. **Municipal Policy Alignment** – it is recommended that the Town review and update municipal policies, including the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and existing HCD Plan and By-law (to be replaced by a new HCD Plan and By-law), to align with the objectives of the expanded HCD.

5.4 Next Steps

After consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee, the Town in partnership with Cultural Spaces, is also hosting a Public Information Centre (“PIC”) on December 4, to facilitate public engagement for the draft Plan. Once input is received from the public and MHC, Cultural Spaces and staff will consider relevant updates to the Plan.

As per the requirements of the OHA section 41.1 (6-10) a public meeting will be held at the Town Hall at the Committee of the Whole-Planning (“COTW-P”) meeting. During the meeting, the revised draft HCD Plan Report will be brought to COTW-P and Council for consideration, endorsement and direction to proceed to the Implementation Phase of the project. The implementation phase will include the Council’s endorsement and consent of a new HCD By-law.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN

The content of this report supports the following Strategic Plan initiatives:

Pillar

1. Vibrant & Complete Community

Priority

- 1.1 Planning for Progress

Action

- 1.1 b) Planning for Progress Initiatives

7. OPTIONS

- 7.1 Option 1: The Municipal Heritage Committee endorses the findings and recommendations of the Draft Queen-Picton (Old Town) Heritage Conservation District Plan; and supports bringing the report forward to Council for consideration and direction to commence the Implementation Phase of the project.
(Recommended)
- 7.2 Option 2: The Municipal Heritage Committee does not endorse the recommendations of the Draft Queen-Picton (Old Town) Heritage Conservation District Plan *(Not Recommended)*

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The HCD Plan is a funded project.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

A project webpage was created on the Town's website to provide the public with information and updates on the HCD Plan. LINK: Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District Study | Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (<https://www.notl.com/heritage-planning/queen-picton-heritage-conservation-district-study>)

A significant component of this HCD Study is the emphasis on engagement with local heritage experts, advocates, researchers, and the public. Staff have been maintaining a circulation list consisting of various community members and heritage related organizations to provide them updates related to the project. News release and information regarding the upcoming engagement opportunities have been communicated with these groups.

11. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report is to present the draft HCD Plan Report to the MHC and seek the endorsement of the MHC of the findings and conclusions of the Report.

12. PREVIOUS REPORTS

- CDS-24-190: Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District Study – Phase 1 Update
- CDS-24-164: Heritage Conservation District Study Volunteer Group – Summary of Findings and Next Steps
- CDS-25-043: Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District Study – Revised Study Area By-law
- CDS-25-083: Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District Study – Phase 1 Study Report

13. APPENDICES

- **Appendix I** –HCD Phase 2: Plan Report (Draft)

Respectfully submitted:

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