

# **HERITAGE GUELPH**

## **THE MUNICIPAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

### **A COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF GUELPH**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The need for Provincial architectural conservation was recognized in 1967 when the Ontario Heritage Foundation was established to encourage the protection of the cultural heritage of the Province. The Foundation was empowered to accept and maintain properties of architectural significance and of historical merit in trust for the people of Ontario.

Following this initial step, the Ontario Heritage Act was proclaimed in 1975. This expressly delegates to municipal governments the needed power and tools to plan and implement their own architectural conservation programs. The Act also expands the scope and operation of the Ontario Heritage Foundation. A very significant aspect of this legislation is that it empowers municipal councils to designate, protect and enhance properties of architectural and historic value.

To aid municipal councils with the administration of their heritage programs, the legislation suggests the appointment of a Municipal Heritage Committee. This committee acts as an advisory body with responsibility to recommend to its Council heritage properties deserving of designation under Part IV of the Act and Heritage Conservation Districts under Part V of the Act. By designating properties of local significance, municipal councils are able to help ensure the protection of such properties for the enjoyment and benefit of present generations and those of the future.

Heritage Guelph (formerly known as Guelph LACAC), the Municipal Heritage Committee, was authorized by City Council in August 1977 in compliance with the Ontario Heritage Act of 1974. The first meeting of the Committee was held on September 28, 1977. The Committee is made up of volunteers appointed by City Council for their knowledge of architecture, landscape architecture, construction, local history, law, real estate or first-hand experience with building restoration; and one member of City Council. The Heritage Co-ordinator, a member of City Planning Department staff, assists with the administrative needs of the Committee.

Property designation under the Ontario Heritage Act recognizes and reinforces the community value of heritage properties, provides protection against inappropriate changes to heritage properties and hinders their demolition, and also gives heritage property owners access to government programs of financial assistance.

Guelph is a City which offers outstanding heritage conservation opportunities. Preservation, restoration and re-use of Guelph's significant heritage buildings and structures continues to be a priority for the City of Guelph and its inhabitants. Co-operation between City Council, Heritage Guelph, heritage property owners and Planning and Building Services has resulted in the collection of designated properties presented in this publication.

Heritage Guelph's first brochure, published in 1981, featured fifteen designated properties. In the year 2004, over seventy examples of Guelph's heritage architecture have been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act by City Council.

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## TERMS OF REFERENCE

While the main purpose of the Municipal Heritage Committee is to advise and assist municipal councils on matters relating to the conservation of properties of historic or architectural value, in practice the work of a Municipal Heritage Committee involves a wide range of activities. In Guelph, the terms of reference and objectives of Heritage Guelph come under seven general headings which form the basis of the Committee's work:

1. To undertake, with review of existing inventories and resource data, suitable research preparatory to designation and conservation of worthy and significant Guelph properties and districts under the Ontario Heritage Act.
2. To consult with City Of Guelph staff and City Council and to make recommendations to City Council to designate selected properties and districts under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act and to consult with and make recommendations to City Council and civic departments regarding the adequate maintenance and conservation of designated properties and districts.
3. To consult with and advise property owners relative to designation or conservation projects as well as consulting with property owners regarding projects which may relate to the architectural, landscape, streetscape and neighbourhood character of the City.
4. To provide public information concerning projects and objectives of the Committee, to support civic interest in heritage conservation, and to encourage community organizations to undertake projects related to the interests and concerns of the Committee.
5. To develop a program for the adequate identification of significant and designated properties and districts, and where possible to co-ordinate similar projects sponsored by community organizations or government agencies.
6. To administer, on behalf of the City of Guelph, provincial and municipal grants to owners of designated properties.
7. To contribute to the City of Guelph planning processes through consultation in all planning matters where issues of heritage conservation may arise.