

Parliament Street* On the Cusp

Discussion on Identifying Heritage Properties

Meeting with the Cabbagetown BIA
February 19, 2025



* All properties mentioned in this document are on Parliament Street between Gerrard and Wellesley streets.

“At its best, the real estate industry works in concert with the built environment of a place, designing buildings that emerge naturally from the fabric of pre-existing urbanism. At its worst, the real estate industry does great violence to heritage and thus the essential nature of a place.”

–Global Heritage Fund

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Executive Summary

- This document was prepared by the Cabbagetown Preservation Association (CPA) and the Cabbagetown Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee (CHCDAC).
- Toronto is changing. For the last 25 years, it has undergone major changes with cranes and condo towers popping up everywhere. Toronto's population is increasing rapidly and the City is facing a housing crisis, especially when it comes to affordable housing. Still, Cabbagetown and its main street - Parliament Street - are unique in Toronto's urban fabric.
- So far, Toronto's boom ignored Cabbagetown's main street: Parliament Street between Gerrard and Wellesley. But there are strong signs that this is about to change as the City started to receive requests to amend the zoning by-law in order to allow 1) for the redevelopment (that would include demolition) of unprotected heritage buildings and 2) increasing building heights beyond the current zoning by-law.
- There is urgency to take action in order to protect Cabbagetown's main street character and manage the rejuvenation of the street.
- Designating Parliament Street as a heritage conservation district (HCD), under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act (OHA)* would normally be the best option as it would level the playing field for all involved. However, this type of designation would take time (at least 8-10 years in the current context) and need resources that are unavailable.
- Designations (individual properties) under Part IV of the *OHA* might be more achievable, especially in the context of Bill 23 (see below).
- There is much work to be done (e.g. working with property owners, businesses, decision-makers, etc.) but we believe that the approach outlined in this document is reasonable and implementable.
- Because of the deadline of January 2027 imposed by the Province with the amended *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23), an overstretched City of Toronto Heritage Planning staff is scrambling to establish a process by which it will designate hundreds of *listed* properties throughout the city by the deadline.
- This document offers the City of Toronto Planning (Heritage Planning) a way to deal with urgent designations of Parliament Street properties between Gerrard and Wellesley streets.
- The CPA and the CHCDAC recommend that the City Planning Division designate under Part IV of the *OHA* the Priority 1 properties in this document.

Current Heritage Protection on Parliament Street

- Note that the properties surrounding Parliament Street are protected as they are included in heritage conservation districts (Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*). Parliament Street is NOT included in any of Cabbagetown's HCDs.
- Only two Parliament Street properties are currently protected as they are designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*:
 - the Winchester Hotel/Hall at Parliament and Winchester streets, and
 - the theatre/dance school at 509 Parliament Street (however, designation currently under appeal).
- A handful of properties are currently listed by the municipality:
 - 562, 564, 566, 568, 570, 572, 574, 576, 578, 580, 582 Parliament (Darling and Chamberlain terraces, north of Prospect Street, west side)
 - 583 Parliament (north of Amelia, east side - site of L'Avenue restaurant), and 2, 4, 8 Amelia
 - 502, 504, 506, 508 Parliament (row under renovation just south of the LCBO).
- Municipalities have until January 2027 to designate their *listed* properties.
- We feel that many of the *listed* properties on Parliament Street are not threatened while several non-listed heritage properties are threatened.
- We recommend that the City designate the Priority 1 properties in this document rather than just the listed properties.

Designated: The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to designate properties of cultural heritage value or interest through a by-law. A designated property gives protection from demolition or unsympathetic alteration.

Listed: those that are not designated, but are believed to be of cultural heritage value or interest. Being listed on the Heritage Register is not the same thing as being a designated heritage property. Being listed means further evaluation of the property will take place if there is an intent to have it demolished. Having properties listed is an important first step in ensuring we can preserve our heritage, but it does not prevent growth. Not everything listed will be formally designated as a heritage property. And for those that are, we know that conservation of full buildings or heritage attributes helps shape change, not prevent it.

Background 1

- All the Cabbagetown city blocks adjacent to properties along Parliament Street are designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* as heritage conservation districts (HCDs). Note: The plan for the Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District will come into effect as soon as a single appeal is resolved (likely in before the end of 2024).
- HCD designation and the plans that accompany the designation are the best way to protect the historic character of entire areas and to allow for sympathetic additions and new construction that preserve and enhance that historic character.
- Parliament Street does not belong to any HCD and the properties along this street are without any permanent protection except for the two designated properties mentioned above.
- Designating Parliament Street as an HCD is not really an option since it can take up to 10 years to be achieved.
- The City has already received a request to amend the zoning by-law to permit the redevelopment of a property on Parliament Street. This shows that actions to ensure that the character of Parliament Street is protected are urgently needed.



Background 2

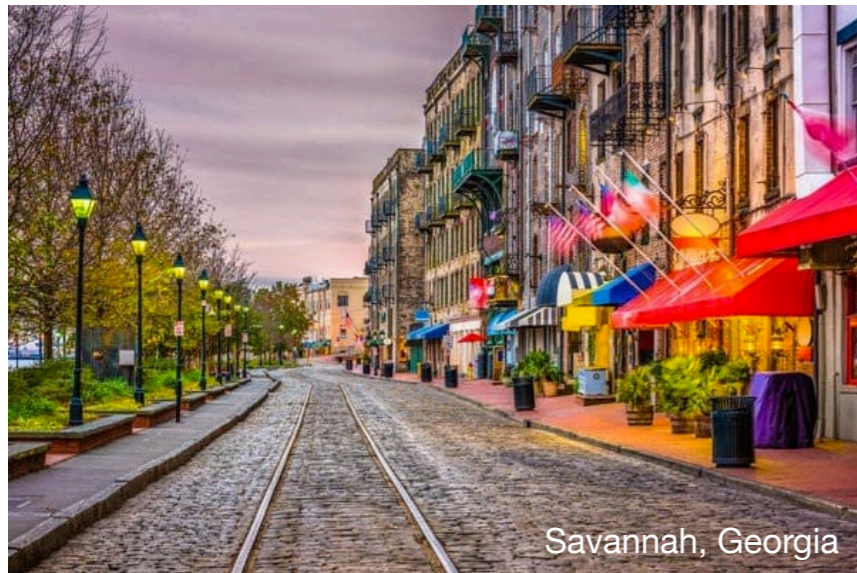
- The City's process for designating HCDs takes many years and it is expected that more redevelopment proposals along Parliament Street will be submitted in the near future.
- Parliament Street today retains the scale and street rhythm of a Victorian main street. Its future as a viable main street for the residents of the surrounding HCDs and as a destination for Torontonians and visitors to the city depends on maintaining its character and enhancing it with sympathetic infill and public realm improvements to the street.
- The heritage designation of individual properties along Parliament Street would complement the further development and implementation of the conceptual plan for improving the public realm. These designations should not be limited to the currently *listed* properties.
- Protecting a number of heritage buildings on Parliament Street is part of a broader vision for the future of our main street. To this should be added the formulation of urban design guidelines for new sympathetic infill on sites that are not heritage-designated and also zoning provisions for a managed density increase.
- Therefore, the Cabbagetown Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee and the Cabbagetown Preservation Association offer here an approach for identifying Parliament Street properties that merit individual heritage designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.



Why Protect Main Street Heritage Properties?

- Many cities have discovered and used the heritage qualities of their main/shopping streets to their advantage.
- Featuring the heritage aspect of the rejuvenation of an area/street not only enhances its appeal to local residents, it also makes the area/street a destination for residents of other areas of the city and tourists.

Examples of Protected Commercial Streets



Savannah, Georgia



Stratford, Ontario



Walton Street, Port Hope



Niagara-on-the-Lake



Old Québec City



Queen Street West, Toronto

How does Heritage Designation Affect Property Value?

- The majority of individually designated properties, approximately 74%, performed better than average or average in their value history trend when compared to the average property value trend in their communities.
- It was found that the rate of sales among individually designated properties was equal to or greater than the general rate of sales of properties within their communities.
- The rate of sales among designated properties did not appear to be affected by how many properties in a given community were designated.
- Designated properties tended to resist down-turns in the ambient market.

Report on Research Concerning Trends in Property Values of Designated Heritage Properties in Several Ontario Communities.
Completed for The Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation by
The School of Planning, University of Waterloo. Robert Shipley PhD,
MCIP, RPP (Principal investigator) and Shannon Bernstein (Research
Assistant). December 1998

Properties Already Designated

It is assumed that these designated properties are protected.

531-537 Parliament

- Already designated (Part IV, 1975).
- Originally Lakeview Hotel now called the Winchester Hotel (although no longer a hotel).
- Local landmark built in 1880 (Hall) and 1888 (Hotel).
- Beautifully restored in 2020.



509 Parliament

- 509 Parliament, a former theatre and CBC studio (now a dance school/theatre), was designated by the City in early 2024.
- Designation is under appeal by developer who wants to put a condo tower on the site.



Designating Heritage Properties

- The following offers a list of heritage properties recommended for designation under the *OHA* and explains the process by which we developed the list.
- Properties are listed from south to north.

Selection and Grouping of Properties

Both the CPA and the CHCDAC reviewed properties on Parliament Street between Wellesley and Gerrard streets.

Properties have been grouped in “sets” rather than being listed individually.

Ontario Regulation 9/06 lists the criteria for determining cultural heritage value of interest under *the Ontario Heritage Act* (see next slide). An individual property may be designated if it meets two out of the nine criteria in Ontario Regulation 9/06 (see slide 18).

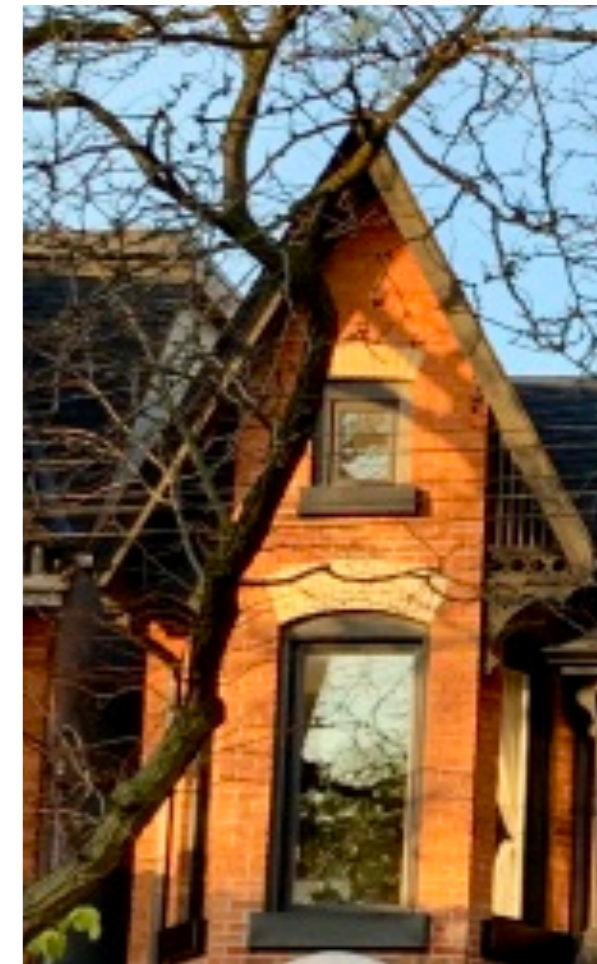
Each set of properties was assigned the criteria it appears to meet. All properties reviewed meet more than two criteria. These ratings were educated guesses and further study may be necessary to ascertain that properties actually meet the said criteria.

Sets of properties have been divided into three priority groupings. Priority groupings suggest the order of priority by which properties should be designated.

We ask that the properties in the **Priority 1** grouping be **designated** under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as soon as possible.

In the current context, properties in Priority 2 groupings (Priorities 2 and 3 listed here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/10NG7sSC18srP_u5fvie_-f1U3Z-3bQ2m/view?usp=sharing) cannot be prioritized but do have heritage value.

Properties not listed in Priority 1, 2, or 3 are either recent additions or aren't deemed worthy of heritage protection.



ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06: CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

Priority One Properties

Recommended for Designation

- Buildings strongly satisfy several (more than two) designation criteria.
 - They are properties with high heritage value.
 - Many are iconic/landmark Cabbagetown properties.
 - We ask that they be designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 411-415 Parliament
 - 433-443 Parliament
 - 473-491 Parliament
 - 502-508 Parliament
 - 542-552 Parliament
 - 549-563 Parliament
 - 450-460 Parliament
 - 583-585 Parliament
 - 562-588 Parliament

411-415 Parliament

- Designation criteria: 1, 7, 8, 9.
- 3 units. Romanesque Revival, 1892.
- Ground level in relatively poor condition.
- Most original windows have been altered.
- In a high visibility location destined to face redevelopment in near future.
- Architecturally and contextually interesting.
- Characteristic of a local commercial and residential building of the late 19th century.



433-443 Parliament

- Designation Criteria: 1, 7, 8, 9.
- Leppers Block. 6 units.
- Italianate, 1887-1888 (stone marker says 1885).
- Has representative and historical value.
- Original owner Edward Lake, original occupancy 1888.
- Corner building was early supermarket run by Cabbagetown-born Frank Darrigo who eventually built a chain of 10 food stores in Toronto.



450-460 Parliament

- Designation Criteria: 1, 7, 8, 9.
- 1888-1889. Bay & Gable.
- Two triple buildings with matching architecture.
- Mostly intact (except for 558-560 that sustained a fire a few years ago).
- 450 greatly altered by front store addition.
- Includes local landmark (House on Parliament).



473-491 Parliament

- Designation Criteria: 1, 7, 8, 9.
- 6 units.
- 473: Edwardian, 1910.
- 475: Edwardian, 1909.
- 479: Edwardian, 1910.
- 485: Second Empire, 1884.
- 489-491: Romanesque Revival, 1890-1892.
- Eclectic row of buildings that constitute the iconic “gateway” to Cabbagetown (featured on many brochures, etc.) as vista coming east on Carlton.



502-508 Parliament

- Designation Criteria: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9.
- Bowden Block.
- Second Empire, 1882.
- Currently being fully restored by Dixon Hall.
- Currently listed.
- City-owned. Not likely to be threatened by development.
- Architecturally significant, contextually and socially important.



542-552 Parliament

- Designation Criteria: 1, 2, 7, 8.
- Bay & Gable, 1888-1890.
- Architecturally identifiable as Cabbagetown style (B&G) and contextually significant.
- In 1890, #544 was built as residential but served as office of Corporate Specialty Services.
- Original owner was Edward Stephenson and tenant James Saultner was an insurance inspector.
- Still intact with original residential appearance but now mostly commercial.



549-563 Parliament

- Designation Criteria: 1, 2, 7, 8.
- 8 connected units. Bay & Gable, 1876-1878
- South buildings location of former Menagerie Pet Shop.
- Restoration imminent of 549-553.
- 549-563, 559, 561 almost intact.
- 555, 557, 563 have retail additions at the front.
- All with original brick except 563 (angel bricks).
- Architecturally and contextually significant as a rare whole block of mostly intact Bay & Gable style properties.



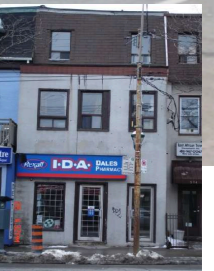
583-585 Parliament

- Designation Criteria: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9.
- 2 units. Queen Anne (1891).
- Currently listed (as well as adjacent buildings on Amelia).
- L'Avenue Restaurant and restaurant next door.
- Recently restored and winner of Peggy Kurtin Award.
- Not likely to be threatened by development immediately.



562-588 Parliament

- Designation Criteria: 1, 2, 7, 8.
- Second Empire.
- Includes Darling Terrace (1877) and Chamberlain Terrace (1876).
- Currently listed.
- 572 is not conforming but listed.
- Architectural, contextual and historical significance.
- Built by William Darling.
- Original tenant of #562 was William Blackstock, a minister.



572

What Happens If We Don't Designate?



Questions from the BIA

1. How would a designation protect a property?

- Properties may be designated individually, collectively (Heritage Conservation District); or both
- Designation protects a property(s) , by bylaw, ensuring that approval is required by The City should changes be proposed to the property(s).

2. How would it affect the ability of the property owner to make alterations?

- Designation manages change to conserve the heritage values of a place, rather than precluding change.

3. What would be the process to make those alterations?

4. Does it only protect the façade or the whole building (e.g.interior)

- Designation identifies which features and portions of the property must be conserved (heritage attributes). The attributes are typically exterior attributes. Interior attributes are included on a case-by-case basis, or with agreement by owner.
- Designated properties require the application of a heritage permit for interventions affecting the identified heritage attributes of a property. Heritage permits are typically not required for minor interventions which include maintenance work and work that affects non-attributes.



Heritage Tax Rebate Program

The Heritage Tax Rebate Program provides a rebate of 50% of the cost of eligible work up to 40% of annual taxes paid to commercial and industrial heritage properties.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/heritage-preservation/tax-rebates-grants/heritage-tax-rebate/>

Conclusion

- Cabbagetown's main street is about to undergo a major facelift. Properties will be bought to be redeveloped and density will increase.
- This could happen in various ways:
 1. Developers are left to do what they want and Cabbagetown's main street becomes a dense nondescript artery, or
 2. Actions are taken so that this downtown jewel keeps its "village" feel by protecting its main street's many heritage buildings and setting up controls around its growth.
- The upcoming rejuvenation of Parliament Street should be an opportunity to improve it to the benefit of its residents and visitors.



Comments/Questions?

