

2005 Annual Report

Introduction

Heritage Oshawa (LACAC), the Municipal Heritage Committee, was established in July 1995 to advise and assist Council on matters of cultural heritage value and interest. The committee has completed its **tenth** year of operation and is pleased to provide the following report of its activities for 2005.

The committee currently consists of eleven voting members. One is a member of City Council and the remainder are residents or property owners in the City of Oshawa. Two non-voting staff members are appointed from the Department of Development Services; a planner and support a staff who acts as Secretary Treasurer. Monthly committee meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month supplemented by various sub-committee and task group meetings as required.

Heritage Oshawa has three active sub-committees that carry out the key activities of the committee. The designation sub-committee is responsible for activities related to heritage property designation proposals, the inventory sub-committee is responsible for the development of the heritage property inventory system, and the communications sub-committee is responsible for activities related to public awareness initiatives.

The following is an overview of the achievements of the committee in these three areas:

Property Designation Proposals

After recommendations from the Conservation Review Board, the designation report for the Genosha, 70 King Street East, was rewritten and the designation By-Law passed in 2005. This brought the total number of designated properties to ten.

The designation proposal for Rundle House, 364 Simcoe Street North, was forwarded to Council as plans were in progress for its demolition. Although the designation proposal was defeated a motion was passed to initiate a heritage conservation district study for Simcoe Street North.

Heritage Oshawa had been assured for years that the Rundle House would be retained for use as a Cancer Lodge. The decision by the Oshawa Hospital Foundation to demolish and build new came as a surprise. Members of the committee have met with the Foundation on several occasions to discuss the property but the Foundation appears firm in its plans. The issue seems to be the higher cost of retaining and renovating the existing building. Heritage Oshawa and the City of Oshawa have offered community help and financial incentives to overcome the costing gap, but the Foundation has not responded to the offers.

The committee would like to reiterate, once again, that it is not, and has never been, opposed to a Cancer Lodge, but we do feel (as do many Oshawa residents) that the existing 1916 building can be used to accommodate the lodge. The Rundle House is a valuable heritage resource that should not be needlessly destroyed.

In regards to the Heritage Conservation District Study, Heritage Oshawa continues to maintain its support as this area of Oshawa is a highly visible and cohesive heritage resource. We recognize that the proposed Heritage Conservation District Study is a positive step in our long term plan in preserving our City's historical integrity and cultural assets.

The designation process for the 420 Wing No 10 Building (and possibly a Heritage Conservation District), the Trevail House 1090 Townline Road North and Kedron Church 540 Conlin Road East are all still at various uncompleted stages.

Heritage Property Inventory

(Update March 2006, attached)

Since its inception in 1995, Heritage Oshawa has photographed, catalogued and classified approximately 1,000 properties and this is an on-going process. The inventory is readily accessible to city staff and flagged in the OLI system. It is to be consulted when responding to general enquiries, review of development applications as well as demolition and building permit applications. A computer-generated map of the City further identifies the heritage inventory.

In 2004 the format of the *Inventory of Heritage Properties* changed in response to the increasing numbers of properties. The decision was made to only include those properties that had been evaluated and classified as “A” – having a high or the most potential for designation because of architectural, historical and contextual significance and “B” – having a good potential for designation. The properties that have been classified as “C” – having little or no potential for designation have been removed from the Inventory. However they are flagged in the OLI system and Heritage Oshawa is notified if a demolition or development application is received that affects them.

In 2005 a new category of Heritage Conservation District Study Area was added to identify the individual properties affected by the Simcoe Street study.

The *Inventory of Heritage Properties* for 2005 is presented in the following order:

- Designated Properties
 - The A List, denoting properties with the highest architectural, historical, contextual and cultural significance
 - The B List, denoting properties with good architectural, historical, contextual and cultural significance
- Heritage Conservation District Study Area
- Heritage Lost heritage buildings that have been demolished since Heritage Oshawa’s inception in 1995

In addition to responding to requests for heritage designation and evaluating specific sites in the City for future designation consideration, Heritage Oshawa also photographs and documents properties at risk or those scheduled for demolition.

In 2005 six more sites with a high potential for designation were identified to be researched by a heritage professional. As our researcher was appointed to the Conservation Review Board an extensive search brought us to a highly qualified local individual. The total number of researched sites is now over sixty. Research reports are used as the basis to evaluate a property’s potential for designation and as part of a designation report.

We have expanded our inventory not only to include buildings, but also to include areas of heritage cultural interest as the scope of heritage has been expanded under new provincial legislation.

Heritage Oshawa is also embarking on a “heritage pride program” that will recognize heritage sites (other than those already designated) by a bronze plaque. Criteria for this program were developed in 2005 and pending funding could be launched in 2006.

Over 100 properties with architectural, historical and cultural value were added to the Inventory in 2005. In addition, Heritage Oshawa put forward the names of several of our inventoried properties as candidates for a Benjamin Moore Historic Paint Grant and responded to many inquiries from the general public regarding their heritage properties.

Public Awareness Initiatives

Heritage Oshawa prepared displays, made presentations and participated in a number of heritage and community events throughout the year. We participated in “Communities in Bloom”, the annual “Heritage Festival” hosted by Oshawa Public Library, “McLaughlin Day” at Parkwood and the Chair was invited to and attended the Community Strategic Planning Sessions.

Heritage Oshawa members attended many seminars and workshops over the last year amounting to 36 hours of professional development. The committee also hosted the regional meeting of Durham’s Municipal Heritage Committees with Mike Marcolongo from the Ministry of Culture as the guest speaker.

The committee’s greatest public awareness success is the annual presentation of Doors Open Oshawa that takes place each September. In 2005 nineteen heritage sites were opened to the public, free of charge. Guided tours of sites, walking tours of downtown and special events including concerts and lunches resulted in an amazing 2,218 site visits bringing the two year total to almost 5,000. In 2006 Doors Open Oshawa will take place September 23 and 24.

Our latest, most exciting accomplishment was the launch, during Heritage Week February 2006, of the Heritage Oshawa Web Site at www.heritageoshawa.ca . Filled with information, photographs and maps, the site presents heritage updates, a searchable inventory, practical resources, links to other heritage sites, local community heritage events, a Lost Forever photo gallery as well as information on designations, heritage conservation districts, legislation, alternatives to demolition and Doors Open. It is an interactive site providing visitors with opportunities to share historical information, ask questions and to volunteer.

Over the course of 2005, members of Heritage Oshawa met with or presented to the following:

- Mayor John Gray - the first mayor in our ten years of existence to attend a meeting of Heritage Oshawa. He listened to our concerns and made suggestions for improvement
- Representatives from the City of Oshawa and Giffels allowed Heritage Oshawa to tour the expropriated homes on Athol and Charles Streets, to photo document and to salvage portable items that are now incorporated into our heritage displays
- Ken Ridge presented a proposal for two Provincial Plaques in Oshawa

- The Oshawa Hospital Foundation (on several occasions) to discuss the fate of Rundle House
- The Chair presented to Development Services regarding the need to retain and reuse Rundle House as a Cancer Lodge
- Homeowners from the Simcoe Street Heritage Conservation District Study area
- The Chair presented “Methods of Dating a Building” to the Oshawa Senior Citizens Centres history class.

Committee of the Whole

In addition to addressing on-going heritage issues the committee joined heritage supporters across the province in lobbying for changes to the Ontario Heritage Act. Those changes (after 25 years) affected the committee in several ways. The format of designation reports was changed and a new template is now being used. The By-Law establishing the committee was reviewed (By-Law 29-2006 replaced By-Law 59-95). The moniker Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee was changed to Municipal Heritage Committee and cultural heritage values were incorporated into the wording. The committee continues to reflect in their operations the changes to the Ontario Heritage Act as the Ministry of Culture provides more guidelines and interpretations.

After many years of consultation, the demolition procedures (internal) were finalized and a Heritage Permit Application produced. The latter document will be used by owners of designated properties or those in the Simcoe Street Heritage Conservation District Study Area to request alterations to their properties.

In addition, our Operating Procedures were amended to reflect a change from thirteen members to eleven.

Heritage Oshawa was one of ten community partners in the successful Communities in Action Grant application. The lead applicant was the Oshawa Senior Citizens Centres and the outcome will be 1500 older adults (55+) will become more active. The grant will allow for introductory fitness classes and three themed walking tour brochures covering Heritage, Horticulture and Natural Areas.

Community Strategic Plan

The following are excerpts from the plan that relate to heritage issues facing Oshawa:

Goal A: A Vibrant, Strong, Progressive Community

One aspect of this goal is a “stronger awareness of Oshawa’s assets – its strategic, economic advantages and its **unique heritage** and ‘hidden treasures’. Heritage Oshawa’s new web site and Doors Open are two high profile approaches to attaining this goal.

Other strategies to achieve this include encouraging visual (aesthetic) improvements as part of the residential and commercial development and redevelopment which Heritage Oshawa sees as an

opportunity to enhance our historical architecture by emphasizing its uniqueness, and not by demolishing or covering it up.

The plan cites support for the renovation of the designated Regent Theatre, as well as the development of grant programs for arts, culture and heritage organizations and a call to “encourage more events like Doors Open”. These community strategies all indicate that heritage issues are important to the well-being of the community.

Goal B: A Green and Sustainable Community

One important strategy to achieve this goal is to “**protect heritage buildings**, natural features and agricultural land” by encouraging “**the re-use and protection of heritage buildings, establishing limits to urban development and encouraging development that takes into account natural features.**” The Simcoe Street Heritage Conservation District Study is an excellent example of all three of the above points.

Heritage Oshawa promotes the retention of green space and has completed research reports on Alexandra Park, Lakeview Park, Memorial Park, a preliminary report on Camp Samac and has included Second Marsh and the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens as Doors Open sites. Residents are proud of their green space and “want to see Oshawa’s special green and environmentally sensitive areas sustained for future generations.”

A balance between rural and urban is requested and Heritage Oshawa supports the need to manage growth and use land wisely. In particular the threat to Oshawa’s rural properties, many with farmhouses dating from the 1860 to 1900, are being monitored by the committee.

In the urban areas, Heritage Oshawa has been involved in the brownfield redevelopments by signing off on the demolition permit for the ACSYS site and participating in the public discussions of the Fittings Site. Bricks from the older buildings and the smoke stacks on the ACSYS site are being retained for use as a gateway or cairn by future developers.

Heritage Oshawa supports the vision put forth in the Oshawa Community Strategic Plan and looks forward to working with the community, City staff and Council on its implementation.

Planned Activities for 2006

In addition to our regular tasks (see attached 2006 Operational Plan), Heritage Oshawa anticipates tackling the following:

- “Doors Open Oshawa”, as part of a province-wide heritage initiative, the event, in its third year, will be held on Saturday, September 23rd and Sunday September 24th. The change to a two day event with more sites and activities will bring further attention to Oshawa’s heritage for residents and visitors alike
- Implement a plaquing program to identify heritage resources in Oshawa, thereby raising public awareness and pride in our built history
- The launch of the vastly expanded, updated and interactive Heritage Oshawa web site
- Participation in the Simcoe Street Heritage Conservation District Study

- Investigate new opportunities such as the Historic Places Initiative, a local heritage awards program and educational programs at the primary and secondary level
- Prepare the Strategic Plan for 2006- 2010
- Continue to monitor and implement changes to the Ontario Heritage Act (Bill 60)
- Increase use of displays and number of presentations as well as update and reprint Heritage Oshawa brochures to increase public awareness of Oshawa's heritage properties
- Work with the public, city staff and council to strike a balance in heritage preservation

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Mary Mason
Chair, Heritage Oshawa