

Bill No. 158
2012

By-law No. C.P.-1284(sd)-

A by-law to amend Section 13 (Heritage Resources) and Section 19 (Implementation) of the Official Plan for the City of London, 1989 to add the Downtown Heritage Conservation District.

The Municipal Council of The Corporation of the City of London enacts as follows:

1. Amendment No. 524 to the Official Plan for the City of London Planning Area – 1989, as contained in the text and on “Figure 13-5” attached hereto and forming part of this by-law, is adopted.
2. This by-law shall come into effect in accordance with subsection 17(38) of *The Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13*.

PASSED in Open Council on April 10, 2012

Joe Fontana
Mayor

Catharine Saunders
City Clerk

First Reading – April 10, 2012
Second Reading – April 10, 2012
Third Reading – April 10, 2012

AMENDMENT NO. 524

to the

OFFICIAL PLAN FOR THE CITY OF LONDON

A. PURPOSE OF THIS AMENDMENT

The purpose of this Amendment is to recognize and add the Downtown Heritage Conservation District to Sections 13.3.5, 13.3.8 and 19.2.2 of the Official Plan for the City of London.

B. LOCATION OF THIS AMENDMENT

1. This Amendment applies to lands located within the Downtown Heritage Conservation District which is shown on the attached "Figure 13-5" in the City of London.

C. BASIS OF THE AMENDMENT

Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act (2005) enables Municipal Councils to create, by by-law, in consultation with the London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH), one or more areas of a municipality for designation as heritage conservation districts. Such a designation enables the municipality to protect groups of properties that, collectively, represent a certain aspect of the development of the municipality considered worthy of preservation. The creation of such districts allows municipalities to manage change and development within the area so as to protect and enhance the heritage character there. Section 13.3 of the City of London Official Plan provides for the designation of heritage conservation districts in London under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and provides some detail relating to the process that is to be followed for such designation. Downtown will be the first primarily commercial heritage conservation district in the City of London.

The City's Guideline document, *Heritage Places*, identified three specific areas in Downtown as potential heritage conservation districts in 1993; the Richmond Streetscape, the Ridout Street Restoration and the Dundas Street Corridor. In September 1996 a report entitled "The Creation of Heritage Conservation Districts in the Downtown Core" was prepared by LACH and reviewed by Planning Committee which presented various options for reviewing heritage resources in the Downtown; from individual designation to the creation of one heritage conservation district. Planning and heritage staff have always maintained that the heritage resources of Downtown should be reviewed as an entity, not as individual groupings or clusters of buildings.

By Council resolution dated November 21, 2007 Council directed that a Downtown Heritage Conservation District process begin. A consultant was hired to complete both the Background Study and Plan. A Downtown Heritage Conservation District Steering Committee was formed and consultations were held with the London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH), landowners, agencies and other City departments and the public. The review process included seven (7) meetings with LACH, five (5) meetings with the Steering Committee, three (3) meetings with Planning Committee/BNEC/PEC, five (5) Living in the City notices and two (2) individual letters sent to approximately 1400 landowners in the Downtown.

Throughout the process the LACH expressed its support for the establishment of a Downtown Heritage Conservation District.

The Purpose and Importance of the Heritage Conservation District Plan

The Downtown Heritage Conservation District Background Study and Plan are two of the five components of the Downtown Master Plan; the Downtown Master Plan Background Study, Downtown Master Plan and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines being the others. The Downtown Master Plan, Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines will serve as the guide for Downtown development over the next 20 years. The Heritage Conservation District Plan, along with any heritage conservation guidelines, needs to be completed first so we know what is important from a heritage standpoint and worthy of retention. Once that is established, the remainder of the Downtown Master Plan can be completed.

The Heritage Character of Downtown

The City of London, through its Official Plan, has provided Council with the means to designate Heritage Conservation Districts pursuant to the criteria established in the Ontario Heritage Act. The policies, as outlined within the Official Plan (Section 13.3.1.ii), include:

- 1) *the association of the area with a particular historical event or era that is unique to the community;*
- 2) *the presence of properties which are considered significant to the community as a result of their location or setting;*
- 3) *the presence of properties representing a design or method of construction which is considered to be of cultural heritage value or interest to the community, region, province, or nation;*
- 4) *the presence of properties which collectively represent a certain aspect of the development of the City which is worthy of maintaining; and,*
- 5) *the presence of physical, environmental, or aesthetic elements which, individually, may not constitute sufficient grounds for the designation of a Heritage Conservation District, but which collectively are significant to the community.*

The Downtown London Heritage Conservation District Study completed as a precursor to this Plan, confirmed the presence and/or satisfaction of above criteria to justify and warrant the creation of the District.

The Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan provides a heritage, architectural and landscape character statement to justify the creation of the Downtown Heritage Conservation District. These include;

Heritage Character Statement

The buildings which comprise the Downtown London Heritage Conservation District relate to one of five stages through which the Downtown evolved from its founding to the recent past. In the 19th and early 20th centuries the Downtown was the region's commercial, industrial and service centre. Over time, the Downtown evolved into an office and retail centre, the latter of which has experienced significant decline since the 1980's. The buildings, dating from each of several periods of growth and transition beginning in the 1830s, also reflect a variety of building styles and materials. A number of the structures represent individuals who were instrumental in the growth of the community and responsible for its role as a regional centre. Several of these individuals have been commemorated through plaques and through references in Part IV Ontario Heritage Act building designations. Finally, many of the Downtown's buildings are the work of architects who were locally or nationally prominent in their day.

The structures that contribute to the significance of the HCD differ greatly in terms of scale and design because of the Downtown's long period of evolution. The significant building types that make up the district include public buildings, commercial structures, a small number of industrial survivors and a variety of financial service buildings. As well, the Downtown was a location for entertainment and public gatherings and was a nodal point for a number of roads and rail lines that linked London to other parts of the province and country. A smaller number of structures related to these themes survive.

Among the key public buildings still in existence are the 1920's former City Hall on Dundas Street and the London District Court House and administrative centre, which remains the home of the offices of the County of Middlesex. Public assembly points, such as the Duffield Block (213-215 Dundas Street) and the Mechanics' Institute (229-231 Dundas Street), relate to the Downtown's unique role as the centre of the city's political and social life for a number of decades. The Grand Theatre, Dominion Public Building (457 Richmond Street, and St. Paul's Cathedral are further examples of the concentration of key public buildings within the Downtown.

Commercial structures, largely concentrated on Richmond and Dundas Streets as well as Market Square, comprise a series of varied streetscapes through materials and design. Notable examples include: the Smallman and Ingram (149-151 Dundas Street) and Kingsmill Department stores; a series of three-storey blocks along Dundas and Richmond Streets from various periods in the evolution of the Downtown; and several unique stand-alone commercial structures such as the Scandrett Grocery (175-177 Dundas Street) and the Metropolitan Stores (140 Dundas Street) buildings which originally housed dry goods dealers. Industrial and wholesale structures developed in response to the road and rail systems running through the Downtown. Concentrated around York and Richmond, the former warehouse district, a prime example is the terra cotta McMahan-Granger building (174-186 York Street).

The commercial, industrial and administrative functions of the Downtown brought a concentration of financial services to the area. As one of the largest concentrations of similar-use buildings today, they too reflect the prolonged periods of development. Jeffery's London Life, Cronyn's Huron and Erie/Canada Trust, and Ivey's Northern Life all left buildings representative of their respective rise to national significance. In most cases the financial service sector drew their investment funds from the Downtown's industries and wholesalers including J. W. Little's dry goods empire, the Hobbs glass works and the Joseph Smith Southern Cigar Factory, all of which built significant structures in the Downtown.

Today the structures comprising the Downtown London Heritage Conservation District are a good representation of the buildings that contained a variety of services, industries, commercial and financial enterprises that brought London to prominence across the country.

Architectural Character Statement

For more than a century the Downtown was the centre of London's commercial, political, and industrial life. During that period, from about 1830 to 1930, immense changes occurred in building technology, transportation systems and in how products were made and distributed. Many of these changes are reflected in the Downtown's built form in such structures as elaborate warehouses, multi-storey office buildings and a variety of commercial structures. The transition through which a number of building types evolved during the 19th and 20th centuries can be followed using existing examples in the Downtown. The financial services industry, for example, can be followed from small Georgian-style banking houses, to a number of WWI-era bank branches, and on to a series of post-war office buildings and main branches. Key buildings from various periods in the evolution of other land uses are also part of the existing building stock. Hotels, wholesale warehouses and offices, and retail blocks are well represented. Industrial structures which once covered over a quarter of the Downtown are represented with examples from several periods. There are even a small number of residential structures still present.

The concentration of a variety of building types and their evolution over a long period of time have given rise to what are now some of the best examples of certain period styles in London. These include Georgian and Italianate commercial blocks, Art Deco office towers, and Beaux-arts and Post-modern office buildings. These landmark buildings are the work, over time, of a number of London's leading architects whose offices were often located in Downtown buildings. One of London's leading firms (c. 1870-1930) represented at different times by William Robinson, Thomas Tracey, George Durand and John Moore is well-represented in the Downtown. The John Watt and Victor Blackwell firm (1911-1945) and their subsequent partnerships were also quite active in the Downtown. Architects from Toronto and elsewhere have also contributed buildings to the Downtown such as John Ewart's courthouse and William Thomas's St. Paul's Cathedral.

The number of Downtown land uses and building types has created a variety in terms of style, materials, detailing and scale within each block. Surviving details from various periods including upper story windows, storefronts, and materials such as terrazzo pavements, stone and brick all contribute to unique streetscapes throughout the Downtown.

Landscape Character Statement

The heritage of Downtown London's landscape character is highly diverse and although it does not display a single dominant characteristic, its patterns are linked by common ideas and elements. The distinction of the landscape is the combined effect of traditional land patterns, streetscapes, gardens, parks, and open spaces which create a heritage character as well as "sense of place". In general, the landscape heritage is defined by a traditional street and vegetative pattern rather than singular elements. The landscape is characterized by the continuity of relative scale, material, texture, proportion of elements in relationship to those adjoining.

The Downtown London Heritage Conservation District lies predominantly within the area surveyed for the town site in 1826. The survey boundaries were Carling Street (which extended to the river) and Queens Avenue on the north (where it met a pre-existing farm lot), Wellington Street on the east and the Thames River on the west. The Richmond Street alignment north of Fullarton Street as it moves in an easterly direction reflects the boundary of the original farm lot. This deflection is reflected and parallels that of Wharncliffe Road

which followed the western limits of the lot. An area east of Wellington and north of Queens was added to the village of London in 1840 when it was first incorporated. The new survey provided for wider streets along Dundas and King Streets.

Successive civic improvements in the width of traffic lanes, the width of sidewalks, the introduction of services (sewer, electrical, steam, gas, cable) as well as curb, gutter and parking have moderately altered some of the road profiles but have not significantly impacted the overall street character. Within the district there are three predominant landscape spatial patterns with distinct landscape elements and architecture. These are related directly to historical residential, commercial and industrial/warehouse land uses.

As befits the city, the public open spaces in Downtown are some of the oldest in London. Court House Square and Covent Garden Market have both had public uses from early in the 19th century. The St. Paul's Cathedral lands were open in 1844 and still retain a portion of the original graveyard and headstones. The open space along the river surrounding the Forks of the Thames began to be assembled in the 1960s and was added to the Eldon House park land given to the City in 1960.

Several historic views have been recorded in this district from specific vantage points in historic photos, postcards and publications. Mostly these have been views of landmark buildings and their settings. In Downtown London these views would include, the Armouries Building seen from the north-west corner of Waterloo and Dundas Street, the Middlesex County Courthouse seen from the intersection of Dundas and Ridout Street, the London Life Building from Victoria Park, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the view from Eldon House to St. Paul's bell tower.

These heritage, architectural and landscape character statements provide the basis for the establishment of the Downtown Heritage Conservation District.

D. THE AMENDMENT

The Official Plan for the City of London is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section 13.3.5 to the Official Plan is amended by adding an "s" to the word "Figure" in the first sentence, deleting "and" after "13-2", deleting "Figure" after 13-3" and adding the phrase "and 13-5" after the phrase "13-4" and before the word "Council" in the second sentence.
2. Section 13 of the Official Plan for the City of London is amended by adding the attached Figure 13-5 Downtown Heritage Conservation District after Figure 13-4.
3. Section 13.3.8 to the Official Plan is amended by adding a new section as follows;

"13.3.8.5 Downtown"

The Downtown Heritage Conservation District, identified on Figure 13-5, encompasses a portion of the Downtown as defined by the Official Plan in Figure 4-1. The Downtown Heritage Conservation District Background Study assessed the heritage resources within the Downtown boundaries and determined that the greatest concentration of important buildings was contained within the area defined in Figure 13-5.

The Downtown is the administrative, cultural and commercial centre of the City of London and has been since London was founded. It contains the greatest collection and variety of heritage buildings in the City. Entire streetscapes, especially along Richmond Street and portions of Dundas Street, are still present.

The Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan identifies and prioritizes all the heritage buildings within the boundary and, for each, identifies the heritage features that should be retained and enhanced. It also provides guidelines on methods to do this.

It is the intent of Council to maintain, protect and conserve the Downtown Heritage Conservation District. Council shall have regard to Official Plan policies as they apply to heritage conservation districts in Section 13.3 and in accordance with Official Plan policies and the Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan.

4. Section 19.2.2 (ii) of the Official Plan for the City of London is amended by adding the following subsection;
 - a) Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan

FIGURE 13.5
DOWNTOWN HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

