

Scope of the Issue

The Town of Prescott has a rich history which is reflected in its cultural heritage assets. For example, some of these assets include historic buildings in the Downtown Core along King Street, Fort Wellington, and other designated heritage resources described below. There is also significant potential for archaeological resources within the Town, due to its location on the St. Lawrence River.

The Official Plan (OP) Review is an opportunity to ensure there are policies in place to adequately conserve and protect cultural heritage assets, which can contribute to local economic development and tourism, while also supporting adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and encouraging property owners to maintain the condition of privately-owned heritage properties.

Designated Heritage Properties

The Town maintains a Municipal Heritage Register of properties designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, as well as properties that are not designated but that the Town believes to be of cultural heritage value or interest, as determined in consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee. There are currently [33 properties](#) in the Town of Prescott that are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, and [25 properties of cultural heritage value or interest](#).



Designated Property: Church of St. Mark the Evangelist and Rectory, 160 Dibble Street West, Prescott
(Source: Google Streetview, 2020)

Federal Historic Buildings

Federal historic buildings in the Town include Prescott Barracks and the Former Grand Trunk Railway (CNR) Station, as well as individual buildings within Fort Wellington.

National Historic Sites of Canada

There are two National Historic Sites of Canada in the Town, including Fort Wellington and the Former Grand Trunk Railway (CNR) Station.



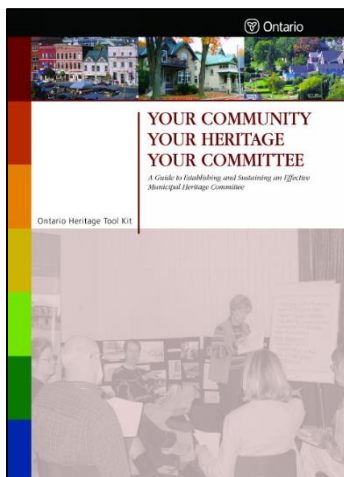
Fort Wellington
National Historic Site
of Canada, Prescott
(Source: Parks
Canada, 2019)

Provincial Policy Direction

Ontario Heritage Act

Under the Ontario Heritage Act, municipalities can pass by-laws to designate properties of cultural heritage value or interest. Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act have established new, mandatory standards for designation by-laws and new time limits for confirming complete alteration and demolition applications, as well as designation decisions. Municipal decisions on designations and alterations are subject to appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, whose decisions are binding.

Municipal Heritage Committees



Ontario Heritage Toolkit (2006)

Section 28 of the Ontario Heritage Act grants municipal councils the power to establish a Municipal Heritage Committee, which most municipalities do through a municipal procedural by-law. Members of Municipal Heritage Committees are appointed, and work in an advisory capacity to help inform with municipal Council decisions with respect to the conservation of cultural heritage resources. The Committees generally include citizen representatives from the community with a balanced selection of local interests and perspectives. Councils are required to consult with the Committee during the designation process for individual properties and districts, on applications to alter, demolish or remove designated properties, and to repeal designations. Further information on Municipal Heritage Committees can be found in the [Ontario Heritage Toolkit \(2006\)](#), and on the [Town's website](#).

Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990

The Planning Act contains matters of provincial interest that municipal councils “shall have regard to” when carrying out their responsibilities under the Act, including as part of the preparation and adoption of an official plan. These matters include the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest.

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

The following policies are the key directions regarding the protection of cultural heritage for Ontario municipalities in the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS):

- Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved (Policy 2.6.1);
- Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless significant archaeological resources have been conserved (Policy 2.6.2);
- Planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on adjacent lands to protected heritage property except where the proposed development and site alteration has



been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved (Policy 2.6.3);

- Planning authorities should consider and promote archaeological management plans and cultural plans in conserving cultural heritage and archaeological resources (Policy 2.6.4); and
- Planning authorities shall engage with Indigenous communities and consider their interests when identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources (Policy 2.6.5).

With respect to engagement with Indigenous communities, it must be noted that the Town of Prescott is subject to the Crawford Purchase or “Gunshot Treaty” of 1793, and the Town’s area comprises the Traditional Territories of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and St. Lawrence Iroquoians.

Existing Town Official Plan Policies

As part of the pre-consultation with the Provincial Ministries for the Official Plan Review, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Cultural Industries (MHSTCI) confirmed that the Town’s existing Official Plan (Approved 2006, Updated 2018) (“existing OP”) already contains strong cultural heritage policies, and recognizes the importance of preserving and celebrating its cultural heritage resources. As such, it is anticipated that only minor revisions will be required to the existing policies to ensure consistency with the Ontario Heritage Act and the PPS.

The existing OP recognizes that preservation of the Town’s identity and heritage is a crucial element to the future of the municipality, including local economic development, such as tourism. It contains robust policies to protect and conserve cultural heritage resources, including archaeological resources, built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. The OP policies support the preservation and adaptive re-use of existing heritage buildings (e.g. permitting limited and architecturally compatible building additions) in the Town, and specifically in the Downtown Core, including encouraging a mix of land uses and appropriate intensification.

Community Improvement Plan

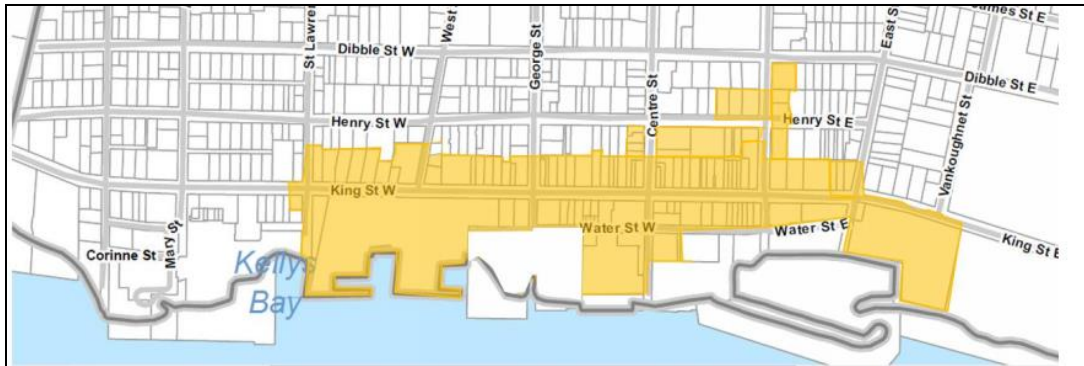
The existing OP policies designate the entire Town of Prescott as a Community Improvement Policy Area and enable the designation of Community Improvement Project Areas, for which a Community Improvement Plan can be prepared. One of the goals of community improvement is promoting the rehabilitation, renovation, and repair of older buildings.

The Town’s existing Community Improvement Plan (2018) (CIP) is one of the Town’s key economic development tools, and provides extensive opportunities to property owners to develop / redevelop their properties with the assistance of financial incentive programs in the form of grants, loans, and tax assistance. These programs are available within four (4) designated Community Improvement Project Areas, including but not limited to Area 1 – RiverWalk District and the Historical Downtown Core, and Area 3 – Heritage Buildings.

Cultural Heritage

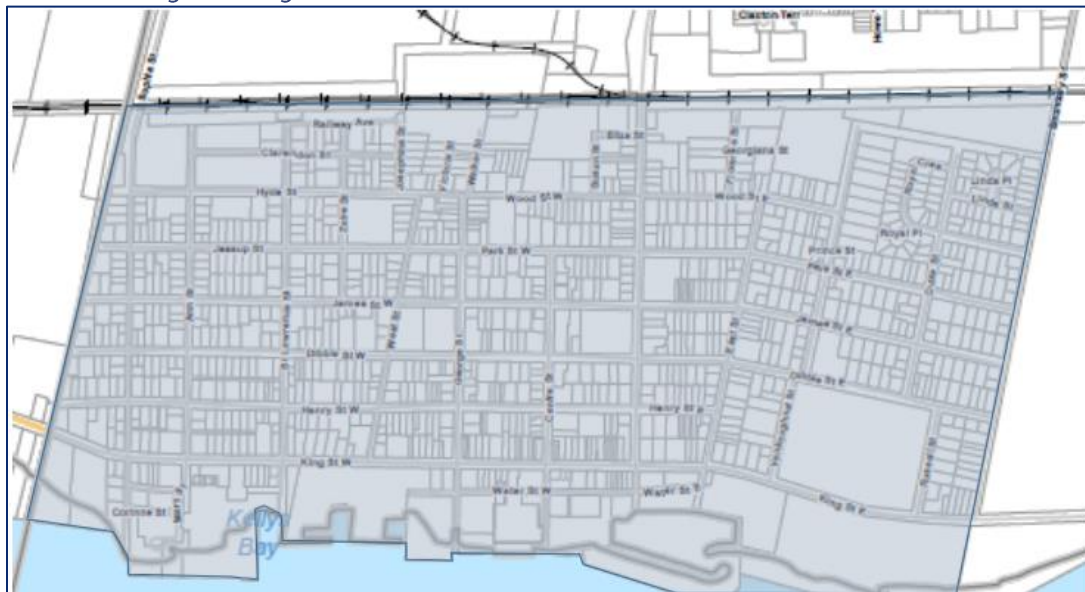
Discussion Paper – March 2021

Area 1 – RiverWalk District and the Historical Downtown Core



Available financial incentive programs in Area 1 are focused on supporting private property owners with redevelopment and revitalization projects in the Downtown Core, including for example, façade, signage, and interior improvements to historic buildings consistent with the Town’s Downtown Design and Urban Design Guidelines (2005).

Area 3 – Heritage Buildings



Available financial incentive programs in Area 3 specifically focus on supporting private property owners in undertaking conservation and preservation of designated heritage buildings, such as one-time grants to assist with the costs of improvements to facades, accessibility, and interiors, and associated engineering or architectural design fees.

Downtown Design and Urban Design Guidelines (December 2005)

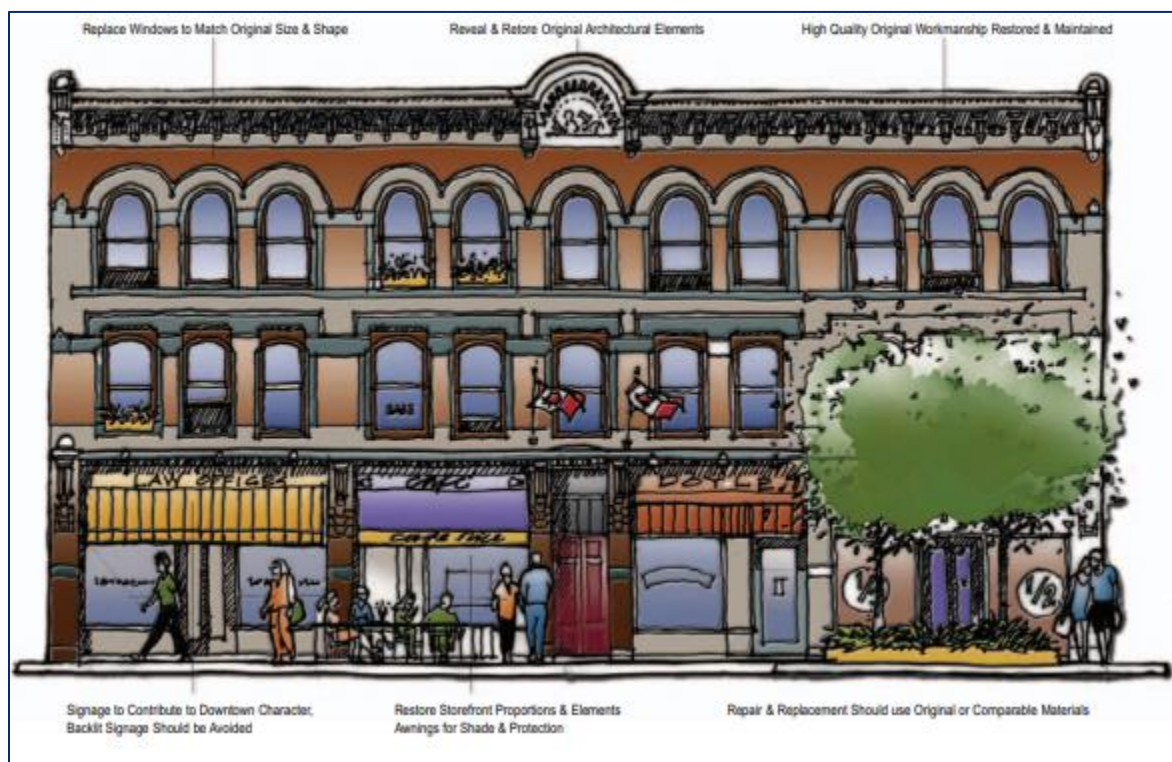
The existing OP contains specific policies to support the implementation of the Downtown Design and Urban Design Guidelines, which were developed in 2005 as a tool for the Town to guide and evaluate future development within the study boundary, which generally includes the Downtown

Cultural Heritage Discussion Paper – March 2021

Core (King Street and Water Street) and Waterfront. The Guidelines are intended to ensure that future development, whether by adaptive re-use or remodelling of historic buildings or new construction, adheres to the vision established by the community as part of the consultation undertaken.

The Guidelines provide detailed ideas and direction for rehabilitation of the existing buildings and the introduction of architectural consistency in the Downtown Core for infill development, streetscape improvements, street furniture and landscaping. For example, the document contains specific guidelines for façade improvements to 19th century heritage buildings on King Street.

King Street Project #1: Façade Improvement, Excerpt from Downtown Design and Urban Design Guidelines



Input from Community Survey

A Community Survey was held from October 9 to 30, 2020 to collect feedback from residents on policy issues to be addressed as part of the Town's OP Review. The survey received 159 responses.

Regarding cultural heritage, the survey asked how the Town can further encourage conservation and preservation of commercial and/or residential designated heritage buildings, beyond the existing financial incentive programs available in the Town's CIP. Responses included:

- Increase advertisement of available CIP programs to build property owner awareness (e.g. provide workshops or a YouTube video explaining the application process);
- Consider increasing the monetary value of existing CIP programs;



- Conduct municipal outreach (e.g. through Municipal Heritage Committee) to property owners every two (2) years to review building / property conditions, potential preservation priorities, and available assistance programs;
- Introduce tax reductions for property improvement projects;
- Publicize CIP grant and heritage preservation success stories;
- Connect property owners with local contractors who can assist in heritage preservation projects;
- Enforce architectural design standards, and avoid incompatible infill development that detracts from existing heritage buildings; and
- Encourage community pride in heritage buildings by developing a heritage walk program, and holding events on heritage properties.

Official Plan Review – Policy Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Maintain existing policies regarding cultural heritage and archaeological resources, including minor updates to be consistent with the terminology and definitions used in the Ontario Heritage Act and PPS.

Recommendation 2: To provide further financial incentives for private property owners to maintain and improve their historic or designated heritage properties, consider updates to the Town's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (outside of the OP Review process) to:

- Consider increasing the maximum value of existing grants in Areas 1 and 3, to encourage CIP applications;
- Permit multiple grants for the same designated heritage property (i.e. not one-time grants) within Area 3 – Heritage Buildings;
- Expand eligibility for grants to properties which have been deemed by the Town to be of cultural heritage value or interest, and not only for designated heritage properties; and
- As available in other designated Community Improvement Project Areas in the Town's CIP, introduce a Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program in Area 3 – Heritage Buildings to help offset municipal tax increases resulting from property assessments following the completion of improvements or redevelopment projects.

Recommendation 3: Consider establishing a Heritage Property Tax Relief program (outside of the OP Review process), in accordance with Section 365.2 of the Municipal Act, to provide tax reductions or refunds in respect of eligible heritage properties which are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, and which are subject to a voluntary heritage conservation agreement entered into by the municipality and property owner to protect the heritage attributes of a property and to encourage good stewardship of the property.