

Heritage Conservation Districts

Frequently Asked Questions

The City of Kawartha Lakes designates areas as Heritage Conservation Districts under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. This fact sheet is designed to provide information about heritage conservation districts and the process to designate them.

What is a Heritage Conservation District?

Heritage Conservation Districts are areas which are protected by a by-law passed under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. Heritage Conservation Districts are areas which include groups of buildings or structures, such as neighbourhoods which have a unique historic character. District designations are put in place to conserve and enhance historic areas throughout Kawartha Lakes.

How are Heritage Conservation Districts created?

Heritage Conservation Districts are designated by a by-law passed by Council. In order to do so, there is a process the municipality must follow which is outlined in the Ontario Heritage Act. First, a study of the area must be undertaken to determine its heritage significance, to identify its important features, and to establish its boundaries. A plan is then created, including detailed design guidelines, which provides the policy and development framework for the district. The plan forms part of the designation by-law. Public consultation is a necessary part of the process.

Why and how are Heritage Conservation District studies initiated?

Provincial planning policy and the City's Official Plan require areas with significant cultural heritage value to be identified and conserved. Heritage Conservation District studies are initiated by Council and areas for study can be identified by members of the public, the municipal heritage committee or staff. Prior to the designation of an area as a Heritage Conservation District, a study is undertaken to evaluate whether the area warrants designation, to identify its important features and to make recommendation to Council.

What are the advantages of being part of a Heritage Conservation District?

Being part of a Heritage Conservation District will ensure that changes to your neighbourhood or local area are guided by defined planning processes and design guidelines which help maintain the character that makes them attractive and enjoyable to live and work in. Property owners within Heritage Conservation Districts may also be able to apply for financial incentive programs offered by the municipality through its Community Improvement Plan aimed at assisting heritage property owners with restoration projects.

How will being in a district affect my ability to make changes to my property?

Heritage Conservation Districts are intended to promote and guide positive change within a district as opposed to preventing it. Property owners are required to apply for a heritage permit prior to additions, alterations or demolitions on their property. Changes to the interior of the property and routine maintenance, such as painting, do not require a heritage permit.



Is there a cost for a heritage permit and how long will it take?

There is no cost for a heritage permit application. If you also require a building permit, depending on the scope of your project, the regular building permit fee schedule will apply. Most heritage permits take approximately three to five business days to process. The review process may be longer if you are proposing a large project, such as the construction of an addition.

Will being in a heritage conservation district affect the use of my property?

District designation does not affect the use of their property. You may be required to apply for a heritage permit if the changes of use results in physical changes to the exterior of the property. If you are changing the use of the property, you may be require a zoning change in which case the City's regular planning processes will apply.

Will I have to make changes to my property if the neighbourhood is designated?

No, you are not required to make changes to or restore your property to its historic appearance if your neighbourhood is designated as a Heritage Conservation District. If you do wish to make changes, you will be required to apply for a heritage permit to ensure that the changes you would like to make are compatible with the design guidelines for the district.

Will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect my property value?

Property values are determined by many factors, but being part of a Heritage Conservation District in itself will not decrease the value of your property. Recent studies have shown that property values for properties within a heritage conservation district are generally similar to or higher than comparable properties which are not part of a district. Your MPAC assessment does not take designation in account.

Will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect my insurance premiums?

The provincial Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries and the Insurance Bureau of Canada have confirmed that your insurance premiums should not go up as a result of heritage designation. You are encouraged to shop around for insurance and an insurance provider that fits your needs. You or your insurer can contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada with questions regarding heritage designation and insurance.

How can I participate in the Heritage Conservation District study and plan processes?

You are encouraged to participate in the process and community involvement helps build a study and plan that fully reflects the character and importance of the neighbourhood. You can participate in the Heritage Conservation District development process by attending community meetings, participating in online surveys, and providing input on the content and drafts of the study and plans. You can also sign up to be a member of the HCD Advisory Group for the area which meets throughout the study and plan process to discuss and provide more detailed feedback and input on the development of the district.



If you would like more information about heritage conservation districts, contact:
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