

1.0 Introduction to the Study

In January of 2005, following several public meetings, the Council of the Town of Arnprior passed a by-law allowing for the study of the downtown as a heritage conservation district. Following the passage of this by-law, the Municipal Heritage Committee and the Arnprior and McNab/Braeside Archives began work on the historical research and architectural analysis of the buildings within the downtown required for the completion of this study.

Conservation of the architectural character of the downtown recognizes the importance of the downtown to the economic and cultural health of the Town of Arnprior.

Homeowners, entrepreneurs, local government and property developers all appreciate the benefits of culturally vibrant and established urban and rural communities. District designation contributes to the development of a rich physical and cultural environment and the promise of continuity and stability into the future.¹

A heritage conservation district, an area designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, is a grouping of buildings that has an architectural character and historical associations that distinguish it from its surroundings. Designation of a heritage conservation district allows a community to recognize and commemorate its cultural heritage resources, and provides a policy framework for sustaining these elements into the future. Downtown Arnprior displays an architecturally and historically cohesive streetscape, and possesses a distinctive heritage character and identifiable geographical boundaries.

1.1 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the historical overview, the building inventory and input from the public, the recommendations of this report are that:

1. The study area be designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*;
2. The Heritage Conservation District Plan, contained in Chapter 3, be adopted by by-law as a means to manage the area.

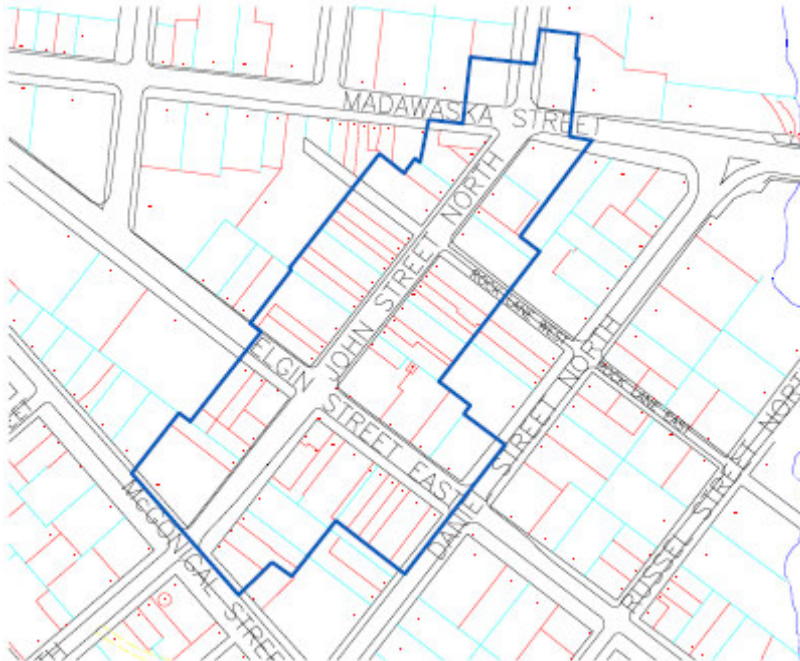
1.2 Objectives

The objective of this study is to provide an overview of downtown Arnprior's history and architectural character. The study is intended to support the proposed designation of downtown Arnprior as a heritage conservation district under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The heritage conservation district plan contained in Chapter 3 of the study will provide the means to manage development in the study area if it is designated. The Town Council makes the final decision regarding the designation of the study area under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

¹ Ministry of Culture 2006. *Ontario Heritage Toolkit. Heritage Conservation Districts- A guide to district designation under the Ontario Heritage Act*. p.8.

1.3 Study area

The area identified to be studied includes the buildings on John Street between McGonigal Street and Madawaska Street and the buildings on Elgin Street between Daniel Street and John Street. Please refer to the map for the exact boundaries of the study area.



1.4 Study Team

This study was completed through the volunteer efforts of the Municipal Heritage Committee and the Arnprior and District Archives. The Municipal Heritage Committee is an advisory committee to Town Council, created by Council in 2002 under provisions of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The role of the Heritage Committee is to advise Council regarding the conservation and enhancement of the town's heritage resources.

Students from the Carleton University School of architecture prepared a preliminary building inventory in 2004. A summer student employed under the Ontario Government Summer Experience Employment Program prepared a preliminary history of Arnprior. Over the course of two years, volunteers at the Arnprior and McNab/Braeside Archives prepared a detailed history of each of the buildings in the study area. Members of the Municipal Heritage Committee completed the architectural and contextual sections of the heritage survey forms, evaluated the buildings and prepared the heritage conservation district plan.

1.5 Study process and contents

The study was prepared in three phases; historical and architectural analysis (Phase 1); heritage survey and evaluation forms (Phase 2); and the Heritage Conservation District Management Plan (Phase 3); as outlined below.

Phase 1

The early history of downtown Arnprior was examined in order to aid in the understanding of the forces that influenced the architectural evolution of the area. The history of the area is described in Chapter 2 of this study.

Phase 2

The history and architectural character of each building within the study area was evaluated according to the former City of Ottawa, "Handbook for Evaluating Heritage Buildings and Areas" in order to establish the contribution of each building to the study area. A heritage survey form was prepared for each building within the study area. The heritage survey forms are appended to this study.

Phase 3

A heritage conservation district plan, Chapter 3 of the study, was prepared to manage change in the study area in the event it is designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The contents of the plan are based on the findings of the Phases 1 and 2 of the study. The plan includes the recommended boundaries for the heritage conservation district and the rationale for it; the heritage character statement; and policy statements, procedures and design guidelines for managing change in the district.

1.6 Building evaluation methodology

The buildings within the study area were evaluated according to the City of Ottawa, "Handbook for Evaluating Heritage Buildings and Areas," by the members of the Municipal Heritage Committee. Each building was assigned a Category, ranging from 1 to 4, based on its historical, architectural and contextual significance. Category 1 buildings are the most significant and Category 4 buildings the least significant. Category 1 buildings are significant heritage components of both the town at large and/or a heritage conservation district and are excellent candidates for individual designation. Category 2 buildings are integral heritage components of the district and collectively are responsible for the district's heritage character. Outside a heritage district, Category 2 buildings, though exhibiting heritage significance, are not as significant as Category 1 buildings and may not warrant individual designation. Category 3 buildings are important components of the district and contribute to the district's overall heritage identity. Outside a heritage district these buildings have limited significance. Category 4 buildings or properties are of limited heritage value but are located within the boundaries of a heritage conservation district.²

² *Handbook for Evaluating Heritage Buildings and Areas*. Planning and Development Department, Community Planning Branch, Heritage Section, City of Ottawa. 1989.

The score assigned to each building was based on an evaluation of the historical, architectural and contextual merits of the building. The City of Ottawa “Handbook for Evaluating Heritage Buildings and Areas” recommends that the weighting given to the historical, architectural and contextual categories be tailored to the particular character of the study area. Downtown Arnprior is an example of a commercial area that developed as a result of a boom in the lumber industry and the weighting of the categories was adjusted to reflect the particular factors that influenced its development. The following is a summary of how the scores for the buildings were calculated:

History: date of construction 35%, trends 35%, events 10%, persons 20%

The date of construction and trends were given equal weighting because each of the factors are equally significant to the development of the area. The downtown developed as a result of a historical trend that was important to the history of Arnprior, the development of the lumber industry. The persons category was given a slightly lower weighting; the study area is an example of a commercial main street and the typical building or business owner was often a relatively prominent member of the community. The events category was given the lowest rating as it was rare for a significant event to be associated with a particular building.

Architecture: design 35%, style 35%, designer/builder 10%, architectural integrity 20%

Design and style were given a relatively high weighting because the design and style of the buildings has a significant impact on the character of the streetscape. The majority of the buildings are modest and were not ‘architect’ designed. For this reason the designer/builder category was given a lower weighting. Architectural integrity, the degree to which a building has been altered, was given a weighting of 20% in recognition of the importance of the integrity of each building to the streetscape character.

Contextual: design compatibility 50%, landmark 25 % and community context 25%

Design compatibility was given a weighting of 50 % in recognition of the importance of the ‘fit’ of the building in the streetscape. Landmark and community context were given equal ratings in recognition of the significance of the uniformity of the streetscape and the equally important landmark value of some of the buildings in the downtown.

Overall score: history 30%, architecture 30%, contextual 40%

The history and architecture categories were given equal weightings because the history of the development of downtown Arnprior and the typical building form contribute equally to the streetscape character. The context category was given a rating of 40% in recognition of the importance of the building’s environmental relationship with the surrounding streetscape character. The strength of these relationships combine to create the identity of the district.

Category 1 buildings were those buildings receiving a score of 79 points or more. Category 2 buildings were those buildings receiving a score between 71 and 78. Category 3 buildings were those buildings receiving a score between 59 and 70. Category 4 buildings were those buildings receiving a score of 58 or less. The scores were calculated to one decimal point and rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

1.8 Public Participation

The idea of heritage conservation district designation was introduced at a public meeting held by the Municipal Heritage Committee on October 21, 2003. Every business and building owner within the downtown area was mailed an invitation to the meeting. At the meeting, students from the Carleton University School of Architecture provided an inventory of the approximately 50 buildings within the study area. Each building was photographed and some descriptive information was provided.

Further work completed by the Carleton University students was presented at a public meeting held on April 8, 2004. At that meeting, it was decided that draft design guidelines would be prepared by the Municipal Heritage Committee and presented at a meeting at a later date. On September 29, 2004 another public meeting was held and a draft heritage conservation district plan was presented to the building and business owners.

In December of 2004, a report to Council from the Municipal Heritage Committee recommended that a by-law to study the downtown as a potential heritage conservation district be passed. A by-law to study the downtown for designation under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* was passed in January 2005. Public meetings were held on September 11 and September 25, 2007, to consider the draft version of the study. This study is the result of the volunteer efforts of the Municipal Heritage Committee and the Arnprior and McNab/Braeside Archives.