

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments

1. Purpose of a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment

Heritage conservation involves identifying, protecting and promoting buildings, structures or other elements that have been deemed to have local, provincial or national significance. A Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA) is the study that assesses, reviews and confirms the potential heritage significance of the resource; considers the impact of any proposed site development or alteration on the identified resource; and recommends an overall approach that best conserves the cultural heritage resource.

The CHIA forms an integral part of the municipal planning and building framework. Its rationale emerges from a range of provincial and municipal policies, namely:

- *Provincial Policy Statement, 2005* Section 2.6.3
- *Ontario Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990* Part 1, 2(d)
- *Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O., 1990* Part IV, Sections 29 and 34
- *Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan* Section 6.4
- *Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Built Heritage Inventory*

2. Town Objectives Arising from the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment

Town Council, in consultation with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Heritage Advisory Committee, may review all CHIA documents.

It is the objective of the Town to identify, protect, and where possible, enhance built heritage and other cultural heritage resources of the Municipality. It is the stated preference of the Town that the built heritage and other resources be incorporated into the emerging development fabric (if a plan of subdivision, site plan or similar matter) or as an integral component of site development (either as a stand-alone structure or as part of a larger building addition). Generally, the Town prefers the retention of heritage structures *in situ* and considers this as a first priority before consideration is given to relocation or dismantling for rebuilding. The documentation and salvage of heritage features is considered as a last option.

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If as a result of the CHIA the owner can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Town and the Heritage Advisory Committee that the building or heritage resource cannot be retained or incorporated into the development or redevelopment proposal, then the Town may consider next steps such as partial retention, relocation, sale, or documentation and salvage. The sale of the building may allow for the structure to be moved to another location on the development property, or, off-site to another property. The objective of the sale of the building to a third party would be to preserve the structure and ensure that it is restored.

The final option is that if the owner can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Town and the Heritage Advisory Committee, through the CHIA, that the building is in a state of disrepair or has been significantly altered such that the cultural heritage value of the building has been diminished, and as such it is beyond the ability to renovate, then the Town may agree to the issuance of a Demolition Permit under the authority of the *Ontario Building Code*. As a companion component of the Demolition Permit, the Town requires the ability of the Heritage Planner to be able to enter onto the property and premise to catalogue/photograph the building. The owner, if a Demolition Permit is issued, will be requested to preserve as many of the key architectural elements of the building as practically feasible with the objective to make them available to purchasers for inclusion in other restoration/renovation projects.

3. When is a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Required?

A CHIA shall be completed by the Owner, at their own expense, when the property is included on the *Built Heritage Inventory* or when the property is located in the Heritage Area, and when one or more of the following applications is submitted:

- Demolition Permit;
- Site Plan Control, Consent, or Minor Variance
- Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law Amendment;
- Plan of Subdivision or Condominium;

4. Who Can Prepare a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment?

All CHIAs shall be prepared by a qualified heritage professional such as a heritage planner, heritage architect, or qualified researcher with demonstrated knowledge of accepted heritage conservation standards, and who has undertaken historical research and identification/ evaluation of cultural heritage value. Town staff prefer that the qualified heritage professional be an accredited member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP).

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Where potential archeological resources have been identified, under provincial law only a licensed professional archeologist may carry out an Archeological Assessment using specific provincial standards and guidelines.

5. What Elements should be contained in the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Study

The CHIA will include, but is not limited to the following information:

A. Introduction to the Development Site

- A Location Plan indicating the subject property;
- A concise written and visual description of the property identifying significant features, buildings, landscape and vistas;
- A concise written and visual description of the cultural heritage resource(s) contained within the development site identifying significant features, buildings, landscape, vistas and any heritage recognition of the property;
- A concise written and visual description of the surrounding context of adjacent properties, their landscapes and any potential undesignated or designated cultural heritage resource(s); and,
- Present owner contact information.

B. Background Research and Analysis

- Comprehensive written and visual research and analysis related to all potential cultural heritage value or interest of the site (both identified and unidentified) including an evaluation under *Ont. Reg. 9/06* examining: physical or design, historical or associative, and contextual value;
- A development history of the site including original construction, additions and alterations with substantiated dates of construction; and
- Research material to include relevant historic maps and atlases, drawings, photographs, sketches/renderings, permit records, land records, assessment rolls, directories, etc.

C. Statement of Significance

- A statement of significance identifying the cultural heritage value and heritage attributes of the cultural heritage resource(s). This statement will

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be informed by current research and analysis of the site as well as pre-existing heritage descriptions. This statement is to follow the provincial guidelines set out in the Ontario Heritage Took Kit;

- The statement of significance will be written in a way that does not respond to or anticipate any current or proposed interventions. The Town may, at its discretion and upon review, reject or use the statement of significance, in whole or in part, in crafting its own statement of significance (Reasons for Listing or Designation) for the subject property; and
- Professional quality record photographs, including measurements, of the cultural heritage resource in its present state.

D. Assessment of the Existing Condition

- A comprehensive written description accompanied with high quality colour photographic documentation of the cultural heritage resource(s) in its current condition and physical context (location, streetscape, etc.)

DI. Description of the Proposed Development or Site Alteration

- A written and visual description of the proposed development or site alteration.

DII. Impact of Development or Site Alteration

- An assessment identifying any impacts the proposed development or site alteration may have on the cultural heritage resource(s). Impacts on a cultural heritage resource(s) as stated in the Ontario Heritage Took Kit and Burra Charter include, but are not limited to:
 - Removal of any, or part of any, significant heritage attributes or features;
 - Alteration that impact on the historic fabric and appearance;
 - Shadow impacts that alter the appearance and/or setting of a heritage attribute, or change the viability of an associated natural feature or plantings, such as a garden;
 - Isolation of a heritage attribute from its surrounding environment, context or a significant relationship;

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- Direct or indirect obstruction of significant views or vistas within, from, or of built and natural features;
- A change in land use (such as rezoning a church to a multi-unit residence) where the change in use negates the property's cultural heritage value;
- Land disturbances such as a change in grade that alters soils, and drainage patterns that adversely affect a cultural heritage resource, including archaeological resources; and
- Relocation (to be considered under the conditions described in Article 9 of the Burra Charter).

G. Considered Alternatives and Mitigation Strategies

- An assessment or alternative options, mitigation measures, and conservation methods that may be considered in order to avoid or limit the negative impact on the cultural heritage resource(s). Methods of minimizing or avoiding a negative impact on a cultural heritage resource as stated in the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit may include, but are not limited to:
 - Reversible alterations;
 - Allowing only compatible infill and additions;
 - Alternative development and approaches;
 - Isolating development and site alteration from significant built and natural features and vistas;
 - Visual screening of adjacent development from heritage resources;
 - Design that harmonizes massing, setbacks, and materials;
 - Limiting height and density; and,
 - Relocation (to be considered under the conditions describe in Article 9 of the Burra Charter).

H. Recommended Conservation Strategy

- The preferred strategy based on best-practice conservation principles that protect and enhance the cultural heritage value and heritage attributes of the cultural heritage resource(s) including, but not limited to:
 - A mitigation strategy including the proposed methods;
 - A conservation scope of work including the proposed methods;

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- An implementation and monitoring plan;
- Recommendations for additional studies/plans related to, but not limited to: conservation, interpretation and/or commemoration.
- If removal of the cultural heritage resource was recommended, the CHIA should provide site-specific guidelines to address: lighting, signage, landscaping, site stabilization, salvaging, and/or photographic documentation prior to demolition.
- Referenced conservation principles and precedents

6. How Many Copies of a CHIA are to be provided to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville?

Please provide the following to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Planning & Building Services Department:

- Three (3) bound hard copies;
- One (1) digital copy in PDF format

Contact Information

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