

Introduction

What is a Heritage Conservation District?

A Heritage Conservation District (HCD) is a defined area within a municipality that holds cultural, historical, or architectural significance and is legally protected under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA). These districts are designated to conserve the unique character and heritage values of areas such as residential or commercial neighborhoods, main streets, rural landscapes, institutional campuses, or natural spaces.

HCDs often include a combination of heritage buildings, streetscapes, landscapes, and features like trees, open spaces, and historical development patterns. They convey a cohesive sense of time and place through characteristics like building scale, materials, and proportions. Each HCD is distinct and reflects its specific cultural heritage resources.

Once designated, an HCD is governed by a by-law and an HCD Plan, which provides policies and guidelines to manage change, ensuring conservation and allowing for contextually appropriate growth. Recent updates to the *Ontario Heritage Act* introduce new requirements for HCDs, with criteria for determining cultural heritage value outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.4, *Criteria for Determination of Cultural Heritage Value*. The HCD plan helps protect the district from incompatible development while fostering renewal through cultural and economic vitality. By safeguarding their unique identity, HCDs contribute to the sustainability, livability, and appeal of communities across Ontario.

Purpose of the HCD Study

The purpose of a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study under the *Ontario Heritage Act* is to evaluate an area within a municipality to determine whether or not it warrants designation as a heritage conservation district. This process aims to safeguard and manage the area's cultural heritage value while balancing development and planning objectives. Key goals of the study include:

1. **Assessing Heritage Character:** The Study examines the area's character, including buildings, structures, and other features, to determine its cultural heritage significance and need for preservation.
2. **Defining Boundaries:** The Study identifies and recommends clear geographic boundaries for the proposed district based on heritage attributes.
3. **Establishing Objectives and Guidelines:** The Study outlines objectives for the designation and maps out the content for the required HCD plan, providing clear guidance for conservation and management.
4. **Aligning with Municipal Policies:** The Study recommends updates to the municipality's Official Plan and Zoning By-law to align with the objectives of the district designation.
5. **Consultation:** The process consults with the municipal heritage committee and town staff, ensuring the Study integrates local perspectives and expertise.

Existing HCD

The current Queen-Picton HCD, in effect since 1986, includes the eight square blocks between Gate Street and Wellington Street, and between Prideaux Street and Johnson/Platoff Streets and Simcoe Park. The HCD consists of the central business artery of Old Town and the contiguous residential area. It attests to the historical settlement pattern of the town and displays a concentration of classical British architectural

tradition before the 20th century. An expansion area was established in 1991 for examination as a potential expansion of the Queen-Picton HCD. For existing HCD, see below “HCD Study Area and existing heritage boundaries”.

Study Area Description

Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) is recognized for its historical and cultural importance in Canada. Established in the late 18th century, it served as the first capital of Upper Canada and was a key battleground during the War of 1812. Part of Old Town is designated as a National Historic Site of Canada overlapping with a town section protected under the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its well-preserved 19th-century streetscape and architectural heritage. At the municipal level, the town recognises various character areas as culturally significant in the area of Old-Town. These boundaries overlap each other but do not offer a tool for heritage protection and are all considered in this HCD study.

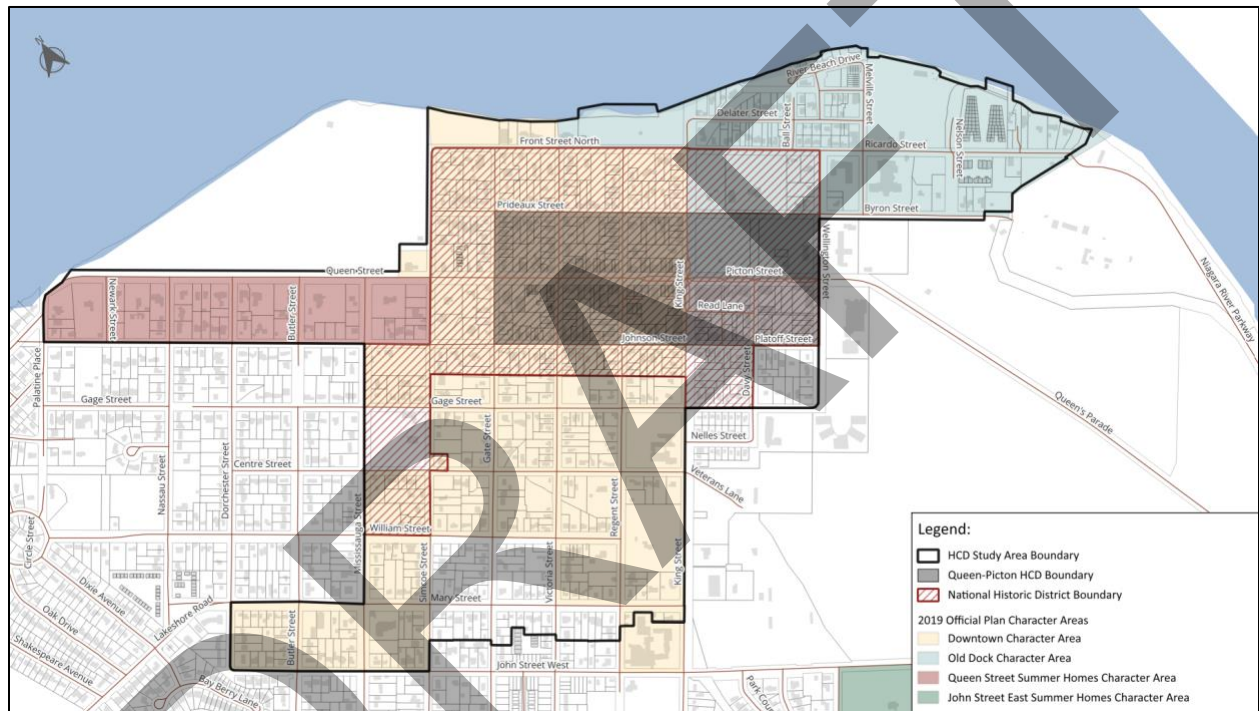


Figure : HCD Study Area and existing heritage boundaries.

The Study Area includes a significant concentration of buildings that are evidence to the historical development and evolution of Old Town until 1914. This area includes the National Historic District, the Downtown character areas, the Old Dock character area, the Queen Street Summer Homes character area, and the HCD Expansion area. The period before 1914 includes Old Town development patterns and architectural expressions which were inspired by British Classical and European styles, which give the distinct character to the Town.

Within the Study Area, the mandate is to identify whether an expansion of the existing Queen-Picton HCD is possible and coherent based on the defined cultural value that is already protected under the existing HCD.

Methodology and Approach

The study methodology followed a structured approach to evaluate the heritage significance of the proposed Study Area in relation to the current Queen-Picton HCD. The process began with an **initial review of documentation**, historical sources, and inventories provided by the town. The team analysed sources such as historical maps, archival photographs, municipal records, and secondary literature to establish a foundational understanding of the area's historical and cultural significance. There were four surveys that provided the foundational information for the study:

- *Inventory performed in 1986 by the Town and consultants in relation to the designation of the current HCD.* This inventory follows the direction of the OHA at the time and does not include a statement of significance nor does it identify contributing properties. Instead, it assesses properties based on four categories (A, B, C, and D), with A having the highest interest and C and D not having significance. There is no explicit mention of a period of significance.
- *Inventory performed in 1996 by the Town in relation to a potential expansion of the HCD.* This inventory applied the same four categories to the properties in the potential expansion area. The information only partially meets the current expectations of the OHA.
- *Draft report completed in 2016 for the Historic Old Town Heritage Conservation District Plan.* The draft report for Heritage Conservation District Plan examined a district expansion study for the Queen-Picton HCD. It included a review of local policies and of buildings and properties within the potential HCD expansion area. Analysis included a Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest, property surveys, and policies related to existing and future construction.
- *Inventory performed in 2004 by Parks Canada and the Town in relation to the designation of the district of national significance.* This inventory applied a different framework as it follows the direction for the designation of places of national significance by providing a statement of national significance and listing the properties that are character-defining. The emphasis is on the architectural qualities of the town up until 1900 which overlaps and is slightly different from the HCD.
- *Survey performed in 2024 by volunteers and the Town to identify potential heritage properties.* The objective of that survey is to identify properties of potential heritage interest. It only partially meets the current expectations of the OHA.

Additionally, the HCD study reviewed the properties that had an identified CHVI Statements, including those properties that were neither listed on the register nor designated, to consider their potential contribution to an expanded HCD.

The HCD study provides an overview of the historical context with a focus on identifying periods of significance, patterns of development, and identifying gaps in the available information.

The team conducted **fieldwork** in November 2024 to complement the community-initiated survey and collect comprehensive documentation of the Study Area. Each property within the Study Area, which excludes the current HCD, was assessed for its contribution to the district, and photographs were captured to provide a detailed record of the district's physical character. This fieldwork confirmed the accuracy of the preliminary inventory and filled in missing information, ensuring the integrity of the data used for the analysis. A cursory visit of the current HCD was also undertaken to assess whether significant changes may have occurred over time and to get a better understanding of the evidence that supports the stated significance.

The team reviewed the **current planning framework** to identify gaps and opportunities for improving heritage protections. The analysis included in chapter 4 is an overview of the regional and municipal official plans, the municipal Zoning By-law, the current HCD By-law and other relevant secondary plans or policies to determine their effectiveness in protecting heritage in the Study Area. Findings from this analysis informed the development of targeted recommendations to strengthen heritage conservation within the district.

A **heritage value assessment** was conducted based on previous steps. A Statement of Significance was prepared to articulate the area's historical, cultural, and architectural importance, including the identification of key periods of significance. Properties within the district were evaluated to determine their contribution to the integrity of the area and were mapped accordingly. Area boundaries were delineated to encompass the highest concentration of contributing elements while maintaining compliance with OHA requirements. It should be noted that the current HCD does not provide a statement of significance that meets today's requirements of the OHA. As such, the Statement of Significance is built on the argument that is expressed in the original 1986 HCD Plan for the significance of the current HCD. This provides a jumping off point for the new assessment, allowing the heritage value of the expansion area to be assessed based on similar reasoning to the reasoning which provided value to the current HCD.

The study concludes with a set of **recommendations** to guide the expansion and management of the Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District. This includes a proposed new boundary, the identification of potential contributing and non-contributing properties, recommendations for planning and objectives for a revised HCD plan.

Context and Setting

The strategic setting of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake was a key part of the area's settlement, particularly with its proximity to the Niagara River and to Niagara Falls, both of which attracted Indigenous peoples to the region for millennia. The presence of geological landforms like the Niagara Escarpment influenced the flow of water patterns and contributed to the creation of the landscape today.

The Niagara River acted as a transportation and trade route, as well as provided abundant natural resources. Once national borders were established, the Niagara River served as a boundary between Canada and the United States, playing an important role in the movement of trade and in conflict, especially during European Colonial settlement in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1832, the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company altered the river structure by draining the original wetland in what is now Niagara-on-the-Lake to create docks, harbour infrastructure, and shipping warehouses, which increased trade and transportation both into Lake Ontario and along the Niagara River.

The Niagara Peninsula's fertile soil, particularly along the banks of the Niagara River, supported agriculture and a variety of flora and fauna. The region's temperate climate, influenced by its location near the Great Lakes and the protection of the Niagara Escarpment, created a microclimate with moderate temperatures and longer growing seasons. Eventually the combination of rich soils and temperate climate made the area important for agriculture, particularly for fruit orchards and vineyards which developed from the 1800s onwards.

The area's natural beauty and temperate climate played an essential role in the Town becoming a tourism attraction. The Town's early inclusion of green spaces for recreational uses in its urban design, such as the town parks and the Niagara-on-the-Lake golf course, reflected its evolution from a trade hub to a leisure destination.

Key Historical Themes and Events

Pre-European Contact and Settlement

The area now known as Niagara-on-the-Lake was originally the traditional lands of the Attiquandarok or Ongiara, also called the Neutral Nation by early French missionaries. Evidence of their presence dates from 9,000 BC until the mid-17th century, when they were decimated by conflict with the Haudenosaunee and sickness. The Ojibway (ancestors to the current Mississauga people) moved to the region for hunting and gathering, as well as for the area's connection to Niagara Falls, which held cultural and spiritual significance for many groups in the region. The traditional territories and boundaries of local Indigenous groups, as well as the stories, oral traditions, and cultural values associated with the history and heritage of the Niagara region, require further information. This will be encouraged through ongoing relationship building with the Indigenous groups of Niagara as part of a process to build understanding and recognition for all heritage within the area.

Post-European Contact and Settlement

Europeans first arrived in the area in 1626, and in the following decades, it became significant for British and Indigenous relations and resource use, particularly in relation to the fur trade. A permanent European settlement was established in the 1780s by British Loyalists and their Indigenous allies fleeing the United States in the aftermath of the American Revolution to settle along the Niagara River. The establishment of the town located at the mouth of the Niagara River, then named Newark, made it strategically significant for military and trade purposes, and the construction of Fort George provided defense against American forces.

In 1764, the 'Treaty of Niagara' was signed following meetings between Sir William Johnson and representatives from 24 First Nations. The Treaty formalized British presence in the Great Lakes and provided one of the first significant land cessions along the Niagara River in exchange for trade goods and the return of prisoners. The Treaty was seen as foundational for the relationship between Indigenous groups and the British Crown and endured in times of conflict, including the American Revolution and the war of 1812.

The political and military importance of the Niagara Region was again highlighted in 1792 when Newark hosted the first provincial parliament and was designated as the capital of Upper Canada by Lieutenant-Governor John Simcoe. This period solidified Niagara-on-the-Lake's role as the nucleus of political and governance activity for the province, a position it maintained until 1796 when the capital was moved away from the American border to York (Toronto). Newark was renamed 'Niagara' in 1798.

Niagara played a critical role in the War of 1812, with the area being of strategic military importance for both American and British forces. American troops occupied the town and erected fortifications in 1813. However, as the British retook the town in 1813, the retreating American troops burned the area of what is now recognized as 'Old Town'. Little was left of the town after the American departure, but the residents quickly began to rebuild.

Agricultural development around Niagara-on-the-Lake began after the war in the early 1820s through a combination of field crops, orchards, and viticulture. The town's harbour and waterfront became more active in the 1830s, particularly with the establishment of the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company in 1832, leading to the construction of docks, mills, and shipping industries along the Niagara River. Increases in trade, shipping, and transport further boosted the economic success of the Niagara region, with Niagara-on-the-Lake at the forefront of these developments. The commercial hub of Queen Street and Picton Street expanded at this time, as did the surrounding residential areas.

Changes to railway lines and shipping practices in the mid- to late-1800s changed the economic focus of the town and surrounding area from trade to tourism, and the town became a well-known spot for visitors and summer residents, particularly from the United States. Leisure spaces and recreational activities grew in popularity, defining Niagara-on-the-Lake as a unique destination. This prosperity continued until WWI when tourism began to decline, and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake once again became the site of a military outpost and training centre. The Great Depression and the onset of WWII further reduced the number of tourists to the Niagara region.

Post-WWII, Niagara-on-the-Lake once again established itself as a tourism centre and leisure hub, gaining popularity through the internationally recognized Shaw Festival (launched in 1962). By the late 1980s, Niagara-on-the-Lake enhanced its tourism draw as part of the Niagara wine region, with vineyards and wineries becoming an important part of the local economy. Heritage preservation became an important part of Niagara-on-the-Lake's identity, with residents encouraging efforts to protect the 19th century architecture, historical landmarks, and the town's unique heritage.

Historical Development of the Area

Niagara-on-the-Lake was originally established as a strategic military region at the mouth of the Niagara River, with multiple fortifications in place to protect the interests of Upper Canada along the border. The surrounding residential area originated in the late 18th century, and supported the United Loyalists and their Indigenous allies who had settled in the area after fleeing the United States.

The settlement plan of Niagara-on-the-Lake follows a grid pattern which was originally laid out in 1794 and followed the Imperial model plan for British colonial and military towns. This consisted of a series of four-acre blocks which began at the banks of the Niagara River and expanded inland, following the watercourses and established military fortifications. Despite the destruction following the War of 1812, the original settlement pattern was maintained during the rebuilding of the Town and can still be seen in the town planning today. The wide, tree-lined streets of the downtown core continue to create harmonious streetscapes, linking the waterfront, residential neighbourhoods and commercial area together.

The establishment of the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company in 1832 dramatically influenced the area's development. The waterfront and harbour areas were expanded along the Niagara River for shipping and industrial uses, with trade and transport becoming important elements of the Town's burgeoning economic success. Residential areas developed around the docks, catering to the increased number of sailors, merchants, shipbuilders, and labourers who were involved with shipping. As the Town grew, institutional buildings, like churches and schools, became established parts of the Town's physical makeup. The development of the commercial district along Queen Street was based heavily on the increased economic activity, trade, and transportation services, as is reflected in the architecture and wide-open streets which make up the district. Subsequent expansion of the surrounding residential areas extended the physical fabric of the town both inland and along the available waterfront.

New hotels, leisure areas, parks, and summer residences emerged along with the area's reputation as a tourism hub which began in the early 1860s and extended into the early 1900s. The introduction of tourist accommodations, along with the establishment of parks and a golf course, signaled the Town's evolution into a cultural resort. This development was particularly prevalent in the northeast corner of the town, close to Fort Mississauga. The lands immediately surrounding the fort had been set aside for military use until the 1870s. These lands were then converted into a golf course in 1875, the oldest still in operation in Canada. South of the golf course, lands that had once been reserved for a hospital and religious communities were sold to wealthy families who built exceptional summer homes.

Inventory and Analysis of Heritage Value and Resources

Designation within Study Area

The Study Area includes a number of properties with various levels of heritage recognition. These include **Part IV designated properties, listed properties**, and those with **cultural heritage value or interest (CHVI)**. As a first step in the inventory and analysis process, it is important to identify and categorize the types of heritage recognition within the Study Area to evaluate how properties contribute to the district's character and determine the best course of action for their protection.

Part IV Designated Properties

Section 29 of the OHA protects individual properties that are considered important for their cultural heritage value or interest. These are buildings or sites that stand out because of their unique architecture, connection to historical events or figures, or their importance as landmarks. These properties cannot be altered, demolished, or removed without approval from the municipality, ensuring their key heritage features are preserved.

Listed Properties

Listed properties are included on the municipal heritage register, under Section 27(3) of the OHA, but are not formally designated as Part IV properties under Section 29. Listing provides some protection, requiring owners to notify the municipality 60 days before demolishing the property. These properties often serve as a starting point for potential future designation or inclusion in the HCD. The most recent OHA was updated in 2024.

Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (CHVI) Statements

Properties with CHVI Statements are identified based on specific criteria prescribed in Ontario Regulation 9/06, including, but not limited to, their design or architectural features, historical connections, or how they fit into the area's character. CHVI Statements are required to be prepared for Listed and Designated Properties on the municipal heritage register. Properties with identified CHVI Statements that have not been formally designated or listed under the OHA currently lack protection. As a result, any alterations or demolition can take place without requiring municipal review or approval.

In the Study Area, there are 48 properties designated Part IV and 77 listed properties. Most of those properties are concentrated around the existing HCD boundary.

Built Form and Landscape Analysis

Methodology

The character analysis of the HCD Study Area was conducted in three stages. The Town, with the help of volunteers, conducted the first step which consisted of the documentation and survey of the buildings in the Study Area. The Cultural Spaces team mapped and analysed the compiled data provided from municipal documentation and the data recorded by the Town. This data included date of construction, building material, building height, stylistic influences, and historical notes.

In the second phase, Cultural Spaces developed a Data Collection and Site Visit Strategy based on an initial understanding of the historical context and the significance of the current HCD. Considering the historical, architectural and contextual values of the existing Queen-Picton HCD, the work focused on the analysis of

properties of potential significance to the expanded District, namely those identified as category “A” or “B” buildings in the 1996 survey of the HCD expansion area and those built before 1940.

Dates of Construction

The date of construction analysed in the Study Area range between 1815 (the earliest recorded property) and 1914 (the cutoff years for analysis). Major periods of growth happened after the War of 1812 to reconstruct the community, and between 1860 and 1914 as the Town experienced a period of prosperity due in large part to an increase in tourism and economic growth.

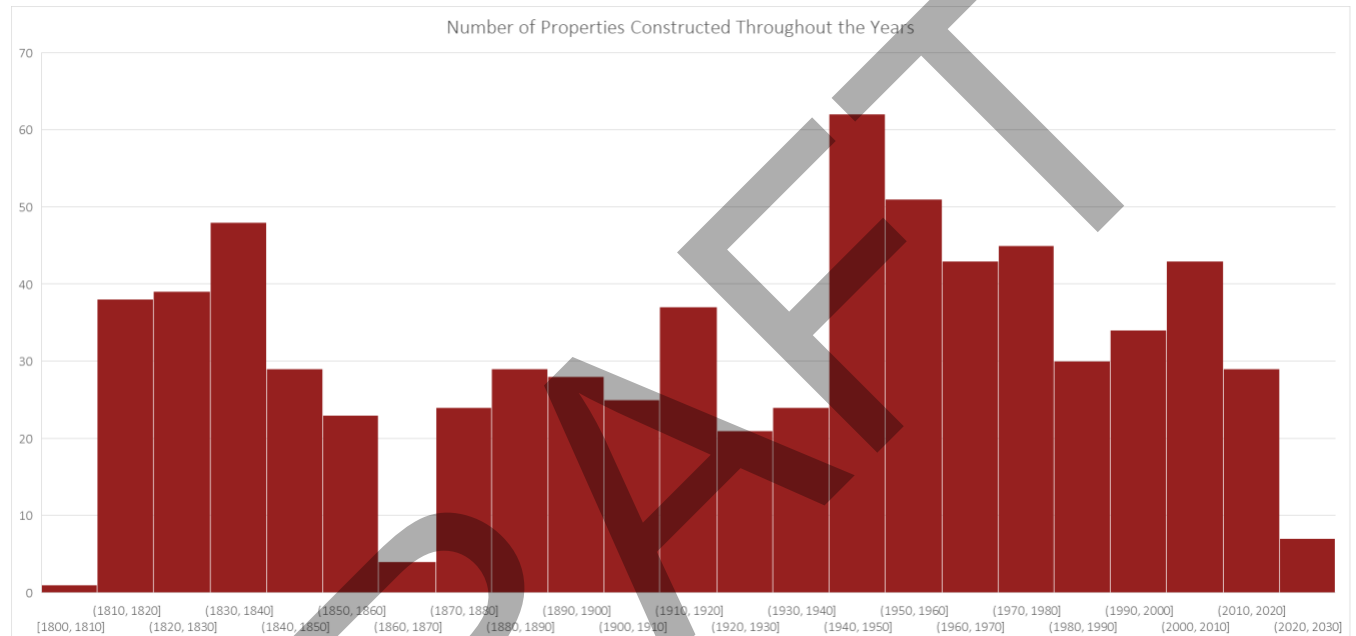


Figure : Number of Properties Constructed Throughout the Years

Periods of Significance

Rebuilding (c. 1814 – c. 1829)

From about 1814 to 1829, Niagara-on-the-Lake was being rebuilt following its destruction during the War of 1812. Indeed, in December 1813, American sympathizers and armed forces had captured the town and set fire to nearly all its buildings, including government structures and homes, to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. As a result, the town was left in ruins, with only a few buildings surviving.

Over the next several decades, the town was rebuilt, which gave shape to the first transformative period and impacted its design and architecture. The architecture during this period was heavily influenced by Georgian and Neoclassical styles, which were common in British colonial architecture. Georgian buildings were predominant in the town’s residential areas. Some elements of Regency styles also appeared in Niagara-on-the-Lake at this time.

St. Mark's Anglican Church, built in 1822, was one of the most notable structures from this time, reflecting the Georgian style. Several private homes also contributed to the Town's new architectural character.

By the late 1820s, Niagara-on-the-Lake was not only rebuilding its physical fabric, but also emerging as a cultural and agricultural hub, with its architecture playing a key role in shaping its identity.

Growth (c. 1830 – c. 1859)

As Niagara-on-the-Lake continued to recover from the impact of the War of 1812, key developments in infrastructure and tourism during the 1830s led to an increase in growth and economic importance for the area surrounding Niagara-on-the-Lake that lasted until the late 1850s.

The establishment of the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company played a crucial role in the town's economic revitalization by improving its waterfront infrastructure, enhancing shipbuilding practices, and placing Niagara-on-the-Lake at the forefront of trade and transportation in the region. The increased accessibility to shipping and goods attracted new businesses and commercial opportunities to the dock area, including shipbuilding, a tannery, basket factories, and canning operations. These economic advancements promoted a shift of business towards the downtown core, with the establishment of the Queen-Picton Street commercial area centered around Queen Street, Picton Street, King Street, and Regent Street, which became the heart of the town's governmental, commercial, and institutional activities. The consistency of settlement pattern along with the diversity of building types and styles are illustrative of the shaping of this commercial district in the Queen-Picton Street area and serves as evidence of the Town's newfound prosperity and growth during the 19th century. Residential areas continued to expand between the dock area and the commercial district, extending further west along the waterfront and south towards agricultural areas.

As the town experienced an economic boom, residential architecture began to reflect more elaborate styles with additional decorative features. Regency and early Victorian styles began to appear in the late 1830s, introducing softer, more asymmetrical designs, rounded windows, and ornamental details.

By the late 1840s and early 1850s, the construction of the Welland Canal, the disappearance of the Dock and Harbour Company, and the decline of the shipping industry led to the disuse of the shipping and dock area. During this time, Niagara-on-the-Lake was also part of the Underground Railroad network of routes and safehouses which assisted enslaved people seeking freedom in Canada. The Town became an area for previously enslaved people to settle and put down roots in the Niagara region.

During the 1850s, Niagara-on-the-Lake shifted its focus as a trade hub to becoming a tourist destination, capitalizing on its natural beauty and historical significance. The establishment of the railroad from Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1854 once again boosted the town's tourism sector, making it easier for visitors to access. This development, combined with the increasing prominence of the orchards and viticultural industries and the town's appeal as a summer retreat, contributed to Niagara-on-the-Lake's economic boom in the mid-19th century.

During the late 1850s, wealthy families, drawn to the area by tourism and commerce, built homes with Gothic Revival and Italianate structures which often featured pointed arches, steep pitched roofs, ornamental cornices, and balconies.

This period of growth and economic improvement allowed for the expansion of religious institutions around Niagara-on-the-Lake, with the construction of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (1859) and renovations to St. Mark's Anglican Church. The economic influx supported a revitalized cultural life, with a rise in artistic and theatrical activities, mainly supported by the steady increase in tourism.

Prosperity (c. 1860 – c. 1914)

From 1860 to 1914, Niagara-on-the-Lake experienced significant prosperity, transitioning to a cultural and architectural hub, particularly as a major tourist destination. By the late 1860s and 1870s, the town saw an influx of wealthy visitors, particularly from the United States, drawn to its lakeside setting, cultural attractions, and historical sites. During this time, tourism infrastructure expanded with an increase in hotels, guesthouses, and boarding houses, to support the growing tourism industry. Public buildings, like the Court House and the Public Library, along with several entertainment and theatrical venues, were also completed.

Wealthy visitors and locals expanded both the size and elaborateness of their residences, with larger homes and plots, particularly along the waterfront, reflecting the town's growing status as a resort community. New architectural styles included Late Victorian and Edwardian influences, such as the Queen Anne Revival. This style was used in some hotels and residences which was characterized by asymmetry, decorative woodwork, turrets, decorative trim, and vibrant colours. Second Empire elements also gained popularity, with dormer windows and mansard roofs, and were typically used in larger public buildings.

Statement of Significance

Niagara-on-the-Lake's **design and physical value** is established through its rich architectural landscape, which includes residential, institutional, commercial, economic, and religious buildings, primarily dating from between 1814 to 1914. These buildings reflect the Town's historical development through a diverse catalog of architectural styles including Georgian, Neoclassical, Regency, Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne Revival, Second Empire, and Colonial Revival. These examples of early architectural styles in Ontario provide an exceptional collection of architecture covering the 19th and early 20th century, highlighting the town's evolving character from a Loyalist settlement to an economic, commercial, and tourism hub.

The wide, tree-lined roads of Niagara-on-the-Lake's downtown complement the town's original grid pattern which was laid out in 1794 and was a key characteristic of the Imperial model plan for British military and colonial settlements. Despite the town's destruction of 1813, this original settlement pattern was maintained during the rebuilding of the town's physical fabric. In addition to the built environment, Niagara-on-the-Lake maintains several green spaces, including parks (such as Simcoe Park and the Queen's Royal Park), recreational areas (such as the Niagara-on-the-Lake golf course, established 1875), and open spaces along the waterfront. These open spaces are closely connected to the town's past as a leisure and tourist destination. Most notable are the parks and promenades along the lake front which offer a link to its 19th-century development as a cultural resort.

The town of Niagara-on-the-Lake maintains **contextual value** by being visually and historically linked to the evolution and physical value of the area. Following the destruction of the War of 1812, the Town developed along the harbour and waterfront, establishing Niagara-on-the-Lake as a regional hub for shipping, industry, and tourism.

The area's visual relationship is linked by consistent architectural details and materials, as well as the layout of the wide, tree-lined streets, creating a harmonious streetscape linking the harbour area, commercial streets and residential neighbourhoods together. The original grid settlement pattern maintains a connection between the Town and the waterfront, ensuring easy accessibility between the various areas, while also preserving the initial importance of Lake Ontario and the Niagara River to the town's history and identity.

The historic contextual value of the area is reflected in the relationship between the commercial, residential, and tourism sectors, highlighting the evolution of Niagara-on-the-Lake's development from 1814-1914.

The commercial Queen-Picton streetscape contains tightly built commercial structures with similar setbacks and a variety of facades, ages, styles, and sizes, which together emphasize a visual evolution of the Town's commercial district. The buildings reflect the area's importance as a commercial centre, highlighting the growth and prosperity of the town during the 19th century through a consistency of Georgian, Regency, and Victorian architectural features.

The surrounding residential streetscapes are defined by one- to two-storey buildings, set close to the road or slightly set back, detached, and often surrounded by gardens and trees. These residences were once inhabited by merchants, military officers, and trade professionals, and now create a transitional space between the town's waterfront and harbour areas and the Queen-Picton commercial area and surrounding residential spaces.

Hotels, guesthouses, and summer residences began to reflect the Town's emerging identity as a leisure and recreational destination from the 1860s to early 1900s. These tourist accommodations, and the establishment of several parks and a golf course marked the beginning of its transformation into a cultural resort.

The town's **historical and associative value** is related to Ontario's military, political and social history. The town was originally established in the late 18th century by Loyalist refugees and Indigenous allies fleeing war in the United States, who chose the location for its strategic defensive position. The town's importance was further solidified through its designation as the first capital of Upper Canada. During the War of 1812, the town's role as a political and military centre made it a target for conflicts between the British and American forces, and resulted in its burning in 1813. Post-war architecture related to the town's political and military history can still be seen, underscoring its historic significance as a key area in Canadian history. Additionally, Niagara-on-the-Lake has historical value for its role in the Underground Railroad, as a refuge for escaped enslaved people seeking freedom in Canada. This connection further enriches the town's significance by highlighting its role in broader social movements related to Canadian freedom and human rights.

Proposed HCD Boundary

The results of the character analysis and evaluation of significance (Chapter 4) established that the heritage character of the HCD and its expansion area closely reflects the complete sequence of periods from the rebuilding of town after the 1812 War until WWI, namely the Rebuilding period (c. 1814- c. 1829), the Growth period (c. 1830 – c. 1859), and the Prosperity period (c. 1860 – c. 1914).

The proposed HCD boundary includes 528 properties and includes both contributing and non-contributing.

The boundary is divided into character-areas to better represent and manage the type of heritage they include:

The Residential character Area regroups the residential neighbourhoods that developed around the commercial, and institutional cores.

The Commercial Area character area includes the historic core of Niagara-on-the-Lake, featuring 19th and 20th century commercial buildings that reflect the town's economic evolution, while supporting ongoing commercial activity.

The Queen Street Summer Homes character area include those properties built along Queen Street and the Golf course built in the same period and still operating today.

The Institutional Core character area includes a concentration of religious and institutional establishment in the Town.

Potentially Contributing and Non-Contributing Properties

Properties within the proposed expansion of the current HCD were individually evaluated to determine whether they contribute to the area's heritage value. The buildings that best exemplify the overall themes and periods of significance in the Study Area were mapped and reviewed. These buildings illustrate the history, evolution, physical character, and significant typologies and uses of the district.

Buildings that have been identified as contributing to the heritage character of the Study Area include those that:

- were constructed during the area periods of significance, including rebuilding (c. 1814 – c. 1829), Growth (c. 1830 – c. 1859), Prosperity (c. 1860 – c. 1914); and
- are an example of a prevailing architectural style such as Georgian, Neoclassical, Regency, Classic Revival, Gothic Revival, Picturesque, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne Revival, Edwardian, and the Ontario Cottage;
- maintain their integrity and/or has contextual value as part of an ensemble of historic buildings

Two categories of properties were identified:

1. Contributing properties that add to the overall cultural heritage values, character, and integrity of the district, and also possess architectural merit and design value in themselves; and
2. Non-Contributing properties that do not add to the overall cultural heritage values, character, and integrity of the district. Their demolition (in part or in whole) would not negatively impact the cultural heritage value of the district.

Following this sorting, the contributing properties were reviewed again to determine whether they retained enough architectural integrity to effectively contribute to the heritage character of the district. Properties that were determined not to have architectural integrity were classified as non-contributing properties.

In addition to the built form of the district, the street grid, streetscapes, and landscape features have also been identified as a contributing feature to its cultural heritage value. The Golf Course evidences the development and evolution of the Study Area – and as such, it is considered to be an important character-defining feature of the district.

While non-contributing properties do not contribute to the heritage character of the district, their proximity to and evolution alongside contributing properties gives them the potential to significantly impact the heritage character of neighbouring properties and the district as a whole. Both contributing and non-contributing properties within the Study Area are listed in Appendix X.

The number of potential contributing properties within the proposed boundary is 259 out of 528.