



InfoSheet #5

Heritage Impact Assessments and Conservation Plans

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Preserved Goldie Mill Ruins located in the City of Guelph



(Leanne Piper)

Heritage impact assessments and conservation plans as conditions of development and site alteration

With regard to cultural heritage and *archaeological resources*, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 issued under the authority of the Planning Act defines “*conserved*” as “the identification, protection, use and/or management of cultural heritage and *archaeological resources* in such a way that their heritage values, attributes and integrity are retained. This may be addressed through a conservation plan or heritage impact assessment.”

To conserve a cultural heritage resource, a municipality or approval authority may require a heritage impact assessment and/or a conservation plan to guide the approval, modification, or denial of a proposed *development* or *site alteration* that affects a cultural heritage resource. To ensure implementation of a conservation plan, a municipality may require an owner to post a letter of credit, bond or certified cheque as part of the *development* approval process.

This applies to all properties or geographic areas containing cultural heritage resources that are *significant* or “valued for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people.” (PPS, 2005). Properties and geographic areas include: all listed, inventoried, mapped heritage properties by local, provincial or federal jurisdiction(s); *protected heritage property(s)*; newly identified cultural heritage sites which may need further evaluation; and areas that can be identified as having known archaeological sites or archaeological potential.

Using tools such as heritage impact assessments and conservation plans, municipalities and approval authorities can further enhance their own heritage preservation objectives.

PRINCIPLES IN THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Respect for Documentary Evidence

Do not base restoration on conjecture.

Respect for Original Location

Do not move buildings unless there is no other means to save them.

Respect for Historic Material

Repair/conservate rather than replace building materials and finishes, except where absolutely necessary.

Respect for Original Fabric

Repair with like materials.

Respect for the Building's History

Do not restore to one period at the expense of another period.

Reversibility

Alterations should allow a resource to return to its original conditions.

Legibility

New work to be distinguishable from old.

Maintenance

With continuous care, future restoration will not be necessary.

A **heritage impact assessment (or equivalent study)** is a study to determine if any cultural heritage resources (including those previously identified and those found as part of the site assessment) or in any *areas of archaeological potential*, are impacted by a specific proposed *development* or *site alteration*. It can also demonstrate how the cultural heritage resource will be *conserved* in the context of redevelopment or *site alteration*. Mitigative or avoidance measures or alternative *development* or *site alteration* approaches may be recommended. For archaeological assessments, fieldwork must be undertaken by licensed professional archaeologists in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act and its regulations. (refer to InfoSheet #3 entitled *Archaeological Resources and Areas of Archaeological Potential*).

A **conservation plan (or equivalent study)** is a document that details how a cultural heritage resource can be *conserved*. The conservation plan may be supplemental to a heritage impact assessment, but it is typically a separate document. The recommendations of the plan should include descriptions of repairs, stabilization and preservation activities as well as long term conservation, monitoring and maintenance measures.

What is the content of a heritage impact assessment?

A heritage impact assessment generally contains, but is not limited to the following information:

1. Historical Research, Site Analysis and Evaluation

If the available identification and description of the significance and *heritage attributes* of the cultural heritage resource are inadequate for the purposes of the heritage impact assessment, or the cultural heritage resource is newly identified, research, site survey and analysis, and evaluation are required. An explanation of the methodology used must accompany a clear statement of the conclusions regarding the significance and *heritage attributes* of the cultural heritage resource.

2. Identification of the Significance and Heritage Attributes of the Cultural Heritage Resource

This is usually a summary of the cultural heritage value or interest and the *heritage attributes* contained in a heritage property municipal designation bylaw, heritage conservation easement agreement, or other listings. This summary should clearly articulate the cultural heritage value or interest and *heritage attributes* of the heritage resource. If the property is not a *protected heritage property* but is listed or is newly identified and may possess heritage significance, statements of cultural heritage value or interest and the *heritage attributes* should still be developed.

3. Description of the Proposed Development or Site Alteration

This description details the rationale and purpose for the *development* or *site alteration*, the proposed works and graphical layout, and how the *development* or *site alteration* fits with the objectives of the municipality or approval authority.

4. Measurement of Development or Site Alteration Impact

Any impact (direct or indirect, physical or aesthetic) of the proposed *development* or *site alteration* on a cultural heritage resource must be identified. The effectiveness of any proposed conservation or mitigative or avoidance measures must be evaluated on the basis of established principles, standards and guidelines for heritage conservation.

5. Consideration of Alternatives, Mitigation and Conservation Methods

Where an impact on a cultural heritage resource is identified, and the proposed conservation or mitigative measures including avoidance, are considered ineffective, other conservation or mitigative measures, or alternative *development* or *site alteration* approaches must be recommended.

6. Implementation and Monitoring

This is a schedule and reporting structure for implementing the recommended conservation or mitigative or avoidance measures, and monitoring the cultural heritage resource as the *development* or *site alteration* progresses.

7. Summary Statement and Conservation Recommendations

This is a description of:

- the significance and *heritage attributes* of the cultural heritage resource;
- the identification of any impact that the proposed *development* will have on the cultural heritage resource;
- an explanation of what conservation or mitigative measures, or alternative *development* or *site alteration* approaches are recommended to minimize or avoid any impact on the cultural heritage resource;
- if applicable, clarification of why some conservation or mitigative measures, or alternative *development* or *site alteration* approaches are not appropriate.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Negative impact on a cultural heritage resource include, but are not limited to:

Destruction of any, or part of any, *significant heritage attributes* or features;

Alteration that is not sympathetic, or is incompatible, with the historic fabric and appearance;

Shadows created that alter the appearance of a *heritage attribute* or change the viability of a natural feature or plantings, such as a garden;

Isolation of a *heritage attribute* from its surrounding environment, context or a *significant* relationship;

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 battlefield from open space to residential use, allowing new *development* or *site alteration* to fill in the formerly open spaces;

Land disturbances such as a change in grade that alters soils, and drainage patterns that adversely affect an *archaeological resource*.

MITIGATION OR AVOIDANCE

Methods of minimizing or avoiding a negative impact on a cultural heritage resource include, but are not limited to:

- Alternative *development* approaches
- Isolating *development* and *site alteration* from *significant* built and natural features and vistas
- Design guidelines that harmonize mass, setback, setting, and materials
- Limiting height and density
- Allowing only compatible infill and additions
- Reversible alterations
- Buffer zones, site plan control, and other planning mechanisms

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Additional information on the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 is available on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing web page:
<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca>

What is the content of a conservation plan?

A Conservation Plan generally contains, but is not limited to the following information:

1. **Identification** of the conservation principles appropriate for the type of cultural heritage resource being *conserved*;
2. **Analysis** of the cultural heritage resource, including documentation of the resource, descriptions of cultural heritage value or interest, assessment of resource conditions and deficiencies, discussion of historical, current and proposed use;
3. **Recommendations** for conservation measures and interventions, short or long term maintenance programs, implementation, and the qualifications for anyone responsible for the conservation work;
4. **Schedule** for conservation work, inspection, maintenance, costing, and phases of rehabilitation or restoration work;
5. **Monitoring** of the cultural heritage resource and the *development* of a long term reporting structure.

Who is qualified to prepare a heritage impact assessment and conservation plan?

Heritage impact assessments and conservation plans for *built heritage resources* and *cultural heritage landscapes* must be prepared by qualified individuals, such as architectural and landscape consultants with knowledge of accepted standards of historical research, identification, evaluation, and methods of conservation and mitigation. For properties containing *archaeological resources* or *areas of archaeological potential*, only licensed professional archaeologists can carry out technical assessments and alter known archaeological sites.

Further information on heritage impact assessments and conservation plans will be available in future technical guides and manuals developed by the Ministry of Culture.

*Note: This InfoSheet was developed to assist participants in the land use planning process and to understand the PPS, 2005 policies related to the conservation planning of cultural heritage and *archaeological resources*. The information in the InfoSheet should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialized legal or professional advice in connection with any particular matter.

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