

# Corktown Heritage Study

## Final Report 2013





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# Chapter 1. Community Context





# 1.1 Introduction

This report investigates the heritage elements of the Corktown neighbourhood and the options available to the local community for preserving these elements into the future. The report was produced by a study group comprised of ten third-year Ryerson University students from the School of Urban and Regional Planning on behalf of the Corktown Residents & Business Association (CRBA). The main purpose of this report is to catalogue existing heritage elements (built and cultural among others) within the boundaries specified by the CRBA and to synthesize these findings into a coherent story representing the past, present and future of Corktown. In conjunction with the Heritage Study created at the interim, the final report will explore relevant municipal and provincial legislation regarding heritage preservation in an effort to provide the CRBA with a variety of options and strategies for preserving heritage elements that they deem most desirable. With the on-going redevelopment of the West Don Lands and the Distillery District, it is of the utmost importance that the remaining heritage in the neighbourhood be evaluated for its value to the people of Corktown. The development pressure on this portion of Toronto could cause buildings or streets with heritage value to be lost if a unified vision for their preservation is not established. Ideally, this study will provide direction and motivation to the community as they develop their strategy for the future development of their neighbourhood in concert with their heritage preservation planning.

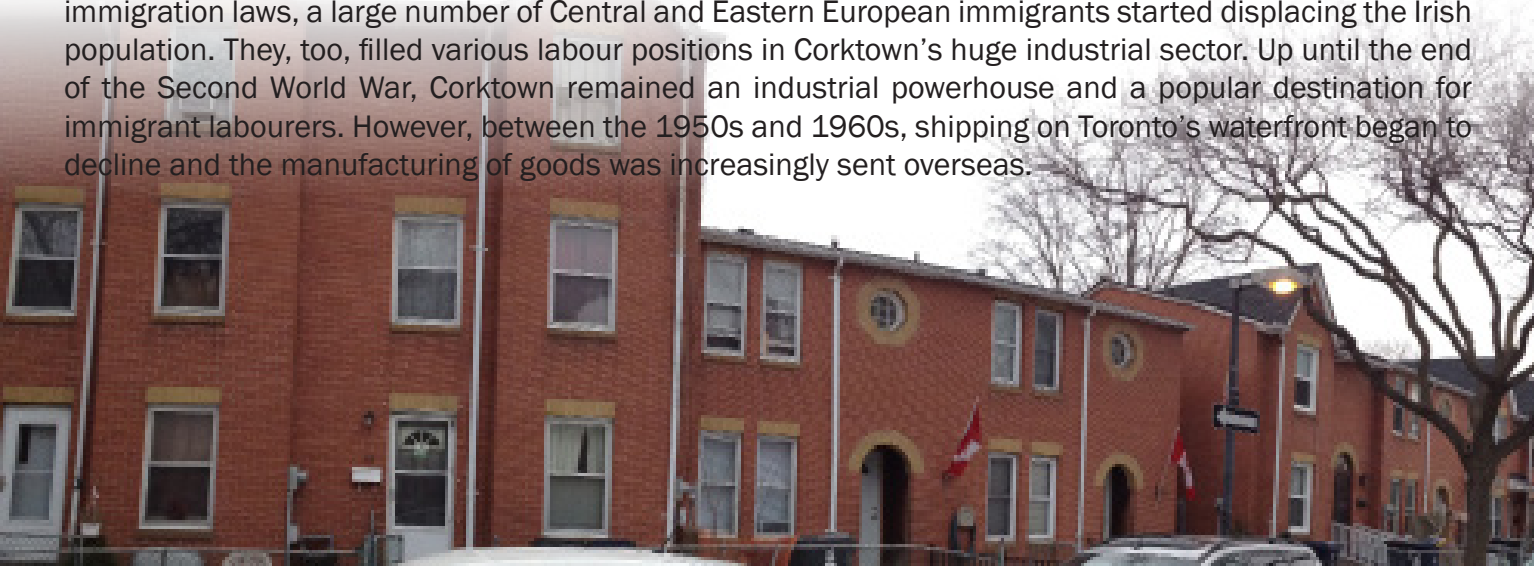
One of Toronto's oldest neighbourhoods, Corktown has a rich history of transition. Since the founding of the community a variety of different architectural styles, street patterns, and land uses have shaped the visual and cultural fabric of the neighbourhood over the past 200 years. In addition, the demographic composition of the neighbourhood has changed significantly and the area has experienced a variety of ups and downs in its lifetime.

The mid-19th century brought the first significant series of changes to Corktown in the form of immigration and industrialization. With its proximity to the waterfront, and the Don River, the area quickly became the major industrial area of the City of Toronto. Possibly the largest industry in the area, the Gooderham and Worts Distillery was established on the waterfront in the 1830s. It expanded greatly during the 19th century, and continued to operate until the early 1990s. It has been recently repurposed as the Distillery Historic District. With the coming of the railway in the 1850s, the neighbourhood grew further still. Consumers' Gas established its manufacturing and distribution facilities in Corktown, providing gas lighting for the downtown area.

This rapid expansion of industry and labour was a major lure for new immigrants. In the 1840s, an estimated 38,000 Irish immigrants chose to settle in the city, with a large number residing in the Corktown area. These former residents of the County Cork are one possible explanation for where the neighbourhood got its name. Irish immigrants faced very poor living conditions during this period, but continued to be drawn to the area by its booming industry.

The Enoch Turner Schoolhouse and Little Trinity Church exist today as early examples of the civic responsibility that Toronto's wealthier residents felt towards those who worked and lived in this environment. With most Corktown residents being unable to attend schools and churches in the city, members of Toronto's elite funded the construction of the school and church to ensure that education and religious services were available to the most marginalized citizens.

From the late 19th century onwards, a demographic shift began in Corktown. As a result of reformed immigration laws, a large number of Central and Eastern European immigrants started displacing the Irish population. They, too, filled various labour positions in Corktown's huge industrial sector. Up until the end of the Second World War, Corktown remained an industrial powerhouse and a popular destination for immigrant labourers. However, between the 1950s and 1960s, shipping on Toronto's waterfront began to decline and the manufacturing of goods was increasingly sent overseas.



## 1.2 The Story of Corktown

As the industrial focus of the area waned, Corktown became something of an afterthought for Toronto. Considered at the time to be an example of urban blight, city planners pursued objectives that did grievous damage to an already ailing community. In 1962, overpass ramps from Adelaide and Richmond Streets to the new Don Valley Parkway were built right through the heart of the neighbourhood. Hundreds of heritage properties were expropriated and demolished to allow a direct road connection from the Parkway to the downtown core. A number of streets in the area were either truncated or removed outright and an irreparable scar was created through Corktown.

Despite many urban renewal planning projects, Corktown survived the postwar years and eventually repositioned itself as a viable neighbourhood filled with heritage and possibility for redevelopment. Despite the large-scale demolition of parts of the neighbourhood, building typologies long lost to other parts of the city still remained, as did portions of the historical street pattern. Since the 1970s, a number of large-scale housing projects have been developed in an effort to bring residents back into the area. These complexes provided a creative means for bringing new residents to Corktown and using the area as a community, rather than a route for automobile traffic. Over the past 30 years, many private developers have taken over former commercial properties for the construction of condominium units and other commercial uses.

The past decade has perhaps seen some of the most positive change in Corktown's existence. The creation of the Distillery District has provided a tourism and entertainment landmark, bringing even non-residents into the neighbourhood. The West Don Lands project currently under construction has seen a wide scale clearing of many derelict industrial properties for redevelopment in anticipation of the 2015 Pan Am Games. When the games finish, the plan is to use these structures for residential and community uses.

Throughout history, Corktown has stood as a testament to the possibilities that hard work and taking chances provide, and it is in this spirit that Corktowners should determine the direction their neighbourhood will take going forward.





## Chapter 2. Policy Context

The City of Toronto's Official Plan actively looks to preserve the sense of place, local identity, and uniqueness of Toronto's many heritage buildings, landscapes, and districts. Toronto has identified an importance on conservation for it works as an economic multiplier by drawing in tourism and the film industry, and makes Toronto neighbourhoods more attractive, increasing their value and desirability.

The 2005 amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act strengthened and improved heritage protection across Ontario. The Act's amendments brought Ontario's heritage legislature in harmony with the leading jurisdiction of Canada. As of 2005 the Act gave the province and municipalities more power in delaying and stopping the demolition of heritage sites. Demolition controls were balanced with an appeal process that respects the rights of property owners.

The City's increased ability and input in the heritage conservation process is clearly reflected in the Official Plan through the heritage resource policies stated in chapter three of the Plan. In conforming to provincial legislation stated in the Ontario Heritage Act, the Official Plan is below the Heritage Act in terms of planning precedence and the hierarchy of planning documents.

Below is a brief description of the intent of nine of the City's thirteen heritage resource policies; these policies look to conserve heritage sites through:

- Listing designated heritage properties into a conservation agreement with owners;
- Encouraging the conservation of heritage resources by providing public incentives;
- Minimizing the impacts of public works near heritage resources
- Inputting heritage landscapes in an inventory;
- Commemorating historical sites following new development or public works;
- Preparing and adopting a Heritage Management Plan as a strategy for conserving and managing Toronto's heritage resources;
- Securing and maintaining heritage resources when a City owned property is sold, leased, or transferred;
- Establishing procedures for any potential archaeological sites through an Archaeological Master Plan;
- Providing the City's archives of any documentation of the resource prior to the removal of significant parts of heritage resources that are designated in the City's Inventory of Heritage Properties.

The Plan also describes the process that is undertaken when a development application is received for lands that are Listed or Designated on the City's Inventory of Heritage Properties. The City requests the applicant to submit a comprehensive plan for the development proposal, demonstrate how the alterations preserve the heritage property's character, provides architectural, structural, and economic information to evaluate the proposals to remove a heritage resource, and submit a Heritage Impact Statement for a zoning by-law or site plan agreement. In clearly identifying this process in the Official Plan, the City is actively preventing the demolition of heritage resources through stringent and comprehensive proposal and procedural process.

## 2.1 City of Toronto Official Plan

In addition to the requirements stated in the Planning Act and the Official Plan, non-prescribed information may be required to evaluate a planning application. In the context of heritage resources, the provision of additional information to the application may be indicated under zoning by-laws, plan of subdivision, consent to sever, and site plan control approval. The following are two additional application requirements of the City of Toronto and the Planning Act concerning the evaluation of heritage resource applications:

Additional Requirements for:	Zoning By-Law	Plan of Subdivision	Consent to Sever	Site Plan Control Approval
Natural Heritage Impact Study - when the proposed development is likely to impact aspects of the <i>Natural Heritage System</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heritage Impact Statement/Conservation Strategy - applies to listed or designated properties in the <i>City's Inventory of Heritage Properties</i> that may be impacted by new development	✓	✓		✓

Furthermore, the amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act in 2005 increased municipal power in delaying and stopping the demolition of heritage sites. This can be deemed a benefit because municipalities can better administer governance in the preservation and conservation of heritage sites within their legislative boundaries. With each municipality ensuring the adequate preservation of significant sites, the risk of a significant site or landmark being overlooked for designation will be minimized.

The municipalities' growing role in the process of heritage preservation may put constraints on landowners looking to develop, redevelop, or alter properties that are currently listed or designated as a heritage resource. The heritage resource policies in the City of Toronto's Official Plan reflects both the strengthening of the Act and the goals of the City in maximizing the conservation process through numerous outlets. City Council and City staff are now likely to make policy decisions regarding implementing by-laws and enforce other complementary plans and documents, such as Secondary Plans, and Community Improvement Plans in support of the preservation of heritage resources.

## 2.1 City of Toronto Official Plan

## 2.2 Ontario Heritage Act

The purpose of the Ontario Heritage Act (1990 and last amended in 2005) is to give municipalities and the provincial government the powers to preserve heritage in Ontario. The Act's primary focus is to protect heritage properties and significant archaeological sites. The Ontario Heritage Act has the legislative power to designate an individual property under Part IV of the act, as well as the legislative power to create a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Act. The Act also mandates a Crown agency, the Ontario Heritage Trust and the Conservation Review Board, which is a tribunal that hears objections to municipal and provincial decisions under part II and III of the Act, respectively.

In 2005, the government passed comprehensive amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. They strengthen and improve heritage protection in Ontario, bring Ontario's heritage legislation in line with leading jurisdictions in Canada and:

- a) Give the province and municipalities new powers to delay and also to stop demolition of heritage sites. They balance enhanced demolition controls with an appeals process that respects the rights of property owners.
- b) Further expand the province's ability to identify and designate sites of provincial heritage significance.
- c) Provide clear standards and guidelines for the preservation of provincial heritage properties.
- d) Enhance protection of heritage conservation districts, marine heritage sites and archaeological resources. (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2013)

The Ontario Heritage Act has the legislative authority to protect the physical environment of Corktown, both through individual designation (which has been seen already in the neighbourhood) and through the designation of a Heritage Conservation District (HCD). Properties and areas deemed to have significant heritage will be protected from demolition and alteration, ensuring the historic character remains intact. It is one of the more powerful legislative tools that ensure municipal council is aware of any threats against its valuable history.

Individual property owners wishing to remove designated properties have less power since the 2005 amendments. Owners previously could apply for a demolition permit and only have to wait 180 days after refusal from council to proceed with the demolition. The amendments (contained in Bill 60 – An Act to Amend the Ontario Heritage Act) removed the right to demolish, subject to an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

## 2.2 Ontario Heritage Act

In terms of altering and adding to a property designated under Part IV or within a Heritage Designation District under Part V, the owner cannot alter any part of the property besides the interior, erect any building on the property, or demolish any structure on the property unless the owner has a permit from the municipality to do so. Additionally, if a by-law is passed by a municipality under section 15.1 of the Building Code Act, 1992, the council of the municipality may prescribe by by-law minimum standards for the maintenance of heritage attributes of a property designated under Part IV and Part V of the Act. These maintenance standards are put in place to ensure the heritage value of a property or area is not lost, but can be costly and difficult for the owner.

All designated or listed properties in Corktown fall under the designation of the Ontario Heritage Act. Individual properties have been designated by by-law under Section IV of the Act. Listed properties are included in the Register of Municipal Heritage Properties under Part IV of the Act, and have been “cultural heritage value or interest”, but are not designated under Part IV of the Act. Owners of a Listed property must give municipal council at least 60 days notice of demolition in writing, and council may create a Municipal Heritage Committee to advise and assist decisions regarding the Act.

The Ontario Heritage Act is also responsible for creating Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Act. The four Heritage Conservation Districts closest to Corktown include St. James Cemetery to the north, just east of Parliament Street to the west (i.e. excluding Parliament Street itself), Carlton Street to the south, including the south side, and Wellesley Park, the Necropolis and Riverdale Park to the east.

A Heritage Conservation District is an area that is protected by the City of Toronto under Part V of Ontario Heritage Act. The areas are designated as an HCD to be legally preserved if a significant amount of historical characteristics or cultural values has been found within the neighborhood. HCDs may include multiple types of properties, streets, blocks or structures which can be found in any parts of the city that are identified as contributing resources to build the heritage values of an area. An HCD is an important part of conserving the city's heritage because it ensures that the historical significance and cultural value of the neighbourhoods are well managed and protected in a long term by the municipality.

There are three processes to designate the area or neighbourhood as an HCD. The first step is nominating an HCD. Any area in the city can be nominated as an HCD by any individual, group or organization who believes their neighbourhood has unique characteristic and historic value that should be protected and conserved over the long term. Community involvement is very important part of nominating an HCD because it requires a collective work between the community and the City to define the goals and objectives of an HCD as well as to understand why the area needs to be designated as an HCD.

The next step is creating the HCD Study. The HCD Study should examine the heritage significance, attributes and history of the nominated area to identify whether sufficient cultural value exists to receive an HCD designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. The study also lays out the next step for an HCD Plan through an in-depth understanding of the nature of study area and provides recommendation of other available planning tools that may be suitable to use for a designation process. The HCD Study is thought to be one of the most important parts because it gives an HCD a foundation to create effective policies and guidelines as well as set the boundaries of the study area.

Upon the completion of the study the HCD Plan provides the guidelines and framework for protection and management of heritage resources in a specific area. The plan should state clear conservation objectives, policies and planning procedures to ensure that neighbourhood's cultural heritage values, character and integrity are well conserved in a long term. Then, the plan will be adopted as part of the HCD by-law by the City Council to become effective.

## 2.3 Heritage Conservation Districts

As stated in Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto (2012), HCDs provide multiple benefits to the community such as;

- a. Create local community pride by recognizing the neighbourhood's unique "sense of place";
- b. Encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of the community's heritage attributes and strong relationship to history and the physical patterns of buildings, structure streetscapes, landforms, and a neighbourhood's natural features;
- c. Create consistent policy framework and guidelines for conservation in accordance with the goals of the heritage plan;
- d. Make the neighbourhood more attractive and stable by improving area's streetscapes, such as tree replanting, custom streetlights and signs;
- e. Municipal heritage conservation incentives such as grants, tax relief
- f. Protect the neighbourhood from damage to the integrity of its character and cultural heritage values.

An excellent example of the implementation of multiple HCDs is Cabbagetown, which is located just a northwest of Corktown. Cabbagetown has successfully designated four HCDs. The area has a sufficient amount of historic attributes such as Victorian architecture buildings, consistent historic streetscapes and patterns. The neighbourhood continues to preserve the integrity and cultural heritage values from development activities within the area under the provision of HCD regulations.

## 2.3 Heritage Conservation Districts

## 2.4 King-Parliament Secondary Plan

Secondary plans contain policies and mapping for districts identified within an Official Plan as requiring more detailed direction on land use, community design, natural heritage and transportation. They provide a framework for the development of new communities and employment zones or defined smaller areas like a downtown or an existing built-up area of Toronto. In addition, Secondary plans usually include a land use plan and policy statements that are adopted by Official Plan Amendment into the Official Plan to ensure that their intent is legally binding. Examining the King and Parliament Secondary Plan will outline the specific benefits and constraints found within.

Heritage is very important in the King-Parliament Secondary Plan and an entire section of the secondary plan is devoted to Heritage and Community Improvement. The secondary plan sees the heritage buildings as essential elements of the physical character of the area. The plan calls for retention, conservation, rehabilitation, re-use and restoration of heritage buildings by using various legal agreements. Many of the buildings located in the King-Parliament area are considered small by today's standards and thus homeowners may look to expand existing buildings. The secondary plan addresses this issue and will allow for the height of buildings on a piece of property that has one or more heritage buildings to be increased above the height limit that is specified in the zoning bylaw. However, for approval to be granted, the historic conservation restoration and maintenance of the existing heritage buildings must be achieved through an agreement between the owner and the City that is pursuant to section 37 of the Planning Act. In addition, elements such as building height, massing, scale, set backs, roofline, profile, architectural character and expression will be used to achieve a compatible relationship with existing heritage buildings. Another benefit that the secondary plan outlines is the use of Community Improvements that will be used to strengthen the neighbourhood's heritage character.

One limitation that was looked at was at what point are homeowners allowed to increase the height and density on properties that have at least one heritage building. This is a big concern because the secondary plan does not recommend or list maximum heights so the concern rests with regards to how high is too high.

Precinct planning looks at specific areas to define the location and character of parks, public spaces and promenades. As well as streets, city blocks, built form, location, transportation and public facilities. It is the final planning step before by-laws are enacted, and the detailed design and construction starts on streets, homes, parks and businesses.

When discussing the West Don Lands Precinct Plan, a lot of historical elements were incorporated into the plan. A proposal to realign the Bayview Avenue extension was inspired by the shifting riverbanks along the lower Don River adjacent to the site. In addition, numerous curved paths and landforms are also proposed for the Don River Park. Efforts to reflect characteristics of the original river mouth marsh delta have also been set in place that include the massing and character of the restoration landscape on the wet side of the flood control berm. As well, the West Don Lands Precinct Plan points out that the curved trails and paths are designed to replicate the original rail lines that were used for both early development as well as industry. A stage one Archaeological Assessment was conducted and nine areas of known archaeological interests were identified. During a stage two assessment, any articles found will be incorporated into new development.

In the early 1960's with the construction of the Don Valley Parkway, many of Corktown's original streets were destroyed. However the Precinct plan does not want to follow these past mistakes but rather the plan calls to reuse the historic street pattern wherever it is possible. The plan also calls to preserve important landmark buildings that remain. One of the buildings that the plan specifically calls to preserve is the Dominion Foundry as well as its adjacent building, located along Eastern Avenue near the intersection with St. Lawrence Avenue. Other changes to the area include relocating the original Don River Train Station presently located at Todmorden Mills, to the proposed street car loop and adjacent to the historic railway switching station. The redevelopment of the Distillery district will become a key reference point, as well as the preservation of the Canary Restaurant and former CN Police Building located at the intersection of Front and Cherry Streets. By having historic buildings at the corners of this intersection will be an everyday reminder of Corktown's heritage for generations to come.

The Precinct plan also recommends a highly detailed streetscape that focuses on the area's heritage. Examples of recommendations include industrial motif of steel checker plate tree covers, lighting fixtures designed to match original Distillery fixtures, retention of red brick gutters, and also the creation of interpretive kiosks with an industrial character. Remaining industrial artifacts will also be considered as potential points of reference in Urban Design Parcel Guidelines.

One of the main constrains is that there are only a limited number of heritage sites were listed in the precinct plan that should be retained. However there are dozens of heritage sites within Corktown that deserve preservation and they should also be mentioned in the precinct plan.

## 2.5 West Don Lands Precinct Plan

Much of the West Don Lands are currently under construction and policies from the Precinct Plan have been guiding the developments. Besides the archeological studies noted above, numerous other studies have also been conducted since the precinct plan approval such as environmental studies to address flooding issues as well as transit studies to address growth in the area. Most notably, block plans have also been created. Block plans have been created to provide more detailed resolution to the recommended pattern of streets and development blocks as created in the precinct plan. In addition, the Block Plans are intended to uphold the tenets of the West Don Lands Precinct and to refine the overall vision for the precinct plan according to new information and current conditions, essentially, bridge the gap between the master planning ideas envisioned in the public process and the eventual built product. Finally, provide guidelines for implementation that insure a high degree of design latitude without compromising the overall intent of the Precinct Plan.

Figure 1. The precinct plan for the West Don Lands / Canary District.



## 2.5 West Don Lands Precinct Plan

## 2.6 King-Parliament Community Improvement Plan

The King-Parliament Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was passed by City Council on September 22, 1997. Since then, a variety of recommendations have been completed in whole or in part. For example, the exterior lighting program for notable heritage buildings, the Distillery District's public realm and heritage elements, minor streetscape improvements along Queen and King Streets, and the commemorating of the First Parliament Site is well underway. Secondly, the number of listed heritage buildings or designated heritage buildings by the Ontario Heritage Act have increased by over two-dozen properties (the majority listed). However, the major recommendation that has not been clearly implemented is integrating individual historical sites into a holistic historical community that tells a thorough and complete story of Corktown. Policy tools in place that identify and protect heritage properties could further aid this process. If the King-Parliament CIP were revised today, the plan would continue to emphasize the importance of creating a holistic historical district in Corktown with enhanced policy capabilities due to the 2005 amendments of the Ontario Heritage Act.

There is still an incredible amount of insight from the original King-Parliament CIP even though the plan is in need of some updating to today's context. The primary benefit of the King-Parliament CIP is that it explicitly supports the protection and restoration of heritage properties within the plan's boundaries (Please refer to Figure 2). For instance, the CIP identifies two heritage related objectives including:

- 1) Facilitate the retention, conservation and re-use of existing buildings, particularly heritage buildings;
- 2) Protect and enhance the special physical character, including the structure of public streets and open spaces

The CIP further argues that the heritage identity of the area should be highlighted and strengthened. This would make the King-Parliament area including Corktown more attractive for investment, promote tourism, and has potential to integrate various heritage related initiatives such as the heritage interpretation centre of the Distillery District and efforts of both the Corktown and Old Town of York Residents.

### *The Façade Improvement Grant*

This program provides special emphasis on the improvement and restoration of heritage facades. The program can support Corktown property owners with financial assistance from the Economic Development Department of the City of Toronto. The CIP identifies that the Façade Improvement program could provide up to 65% of costs for listed City of Toronto buildings and 75% for buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to, restoration, wheelchair accessibility, doors, signage, windows, lighting and masonry.

## 2.6 King-Parliament Community Improvement Plan

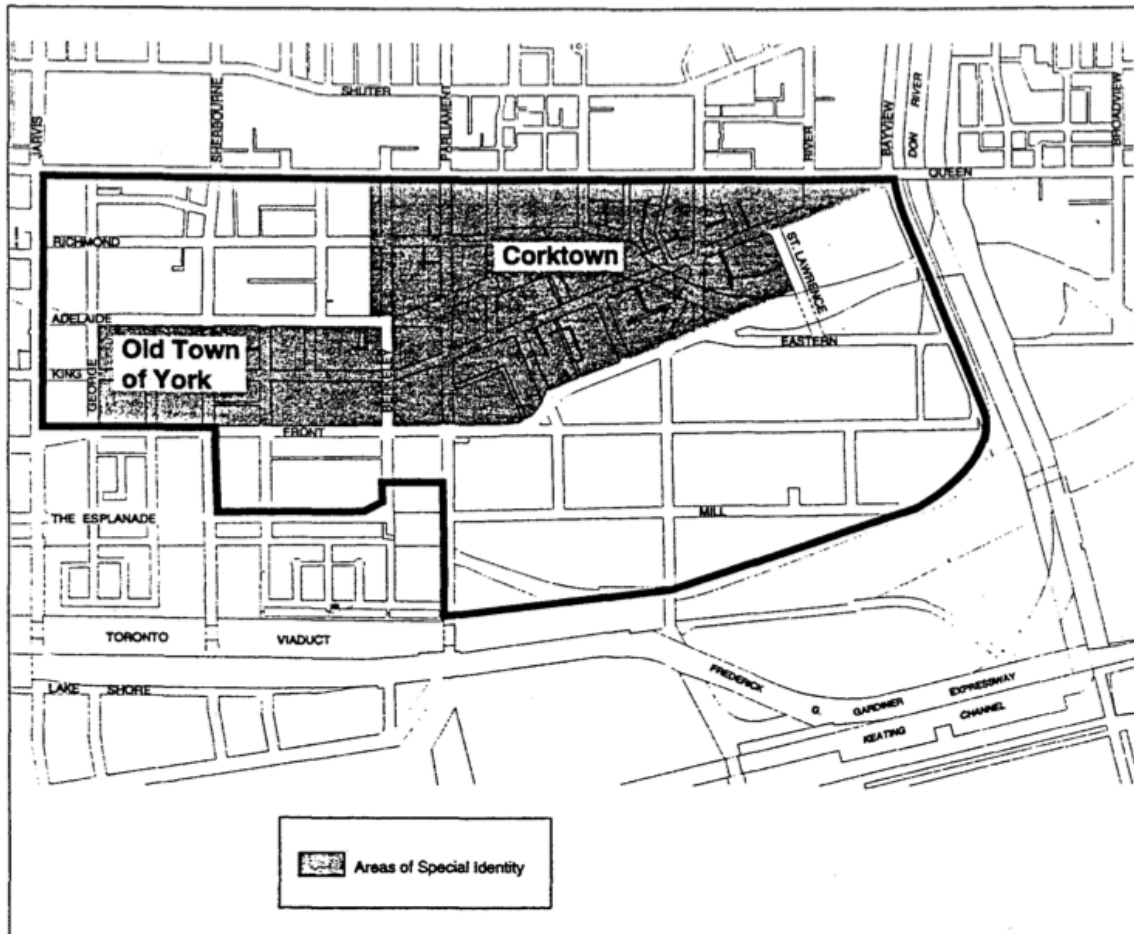


Figure 2. CIP Boundaries and Areas of Special Identity

### *Toronto Heritage Fund Restoration Grant Program*

The CIP identifies this program to encourage the restoration of architectural heritage by funding up to half of eligible restoration costs to a maximum of \$5000. Properties eligible for funding must be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. This program targets funding towards the preservation, rehabilitation of existing features, restoration of lost features, and technical studies. Technical studies could include heritage impact assessments, condition assessments, restoration plans, engineering reports, and paint assessments.

# 2.6 King-Parliament Community Improvement Plan

## *Heritage Interpretation Program*

The CIP identifies the need for a Heritage Interpretation Program that would enhance awareness of its heritage value and produce a more positive climate for reinvestment. As proposed in the CIP, the Interpretation program will include plaques and displays of important sites and buildings that have played a major role in the community's growth, industrial impact, architectural history, and prominent individuals in the early development of the area. This would be implemented in a holistic approach of the whole community to provide a thorough and insightful story of the community that will permit bus and walking tours.

The CIP states that this program should be implemented by:

1. The establishment of a interpretation committee
2. Public consultation
3. Implementation of program
4. Monitoring its success and adjusting where necessary

The plan stresses that the King-Parliament Area has significant historical sites like the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, the First Post Office and Little Trinity Church, but have not been incorporated in a greater historical plan.

## *Exterior Lighting Program for Heritage Buildings*

The CIP recommends that lighting will highlight the key architectural features of heritage buildings and will be integrated with the heritage interpretation program. Heritage lighting has been implemented through the Heritage Lighting Master Plan For Old Town Toronto, but only partially includes the Corktown Community (Boundaries identified in Figure 3).

## *Commemorating the First Parliament Building Site*

The significant historical importance of the First Parliament Building site has not been recognized to the degree it should. According to the CIP (1997), community members of the surrounding area have expressed interest in seeing the City of Toronto develop a public open space on the site with a theme focused on commemorating the site's significant heritage contribution to Toronto and Ontario. Since the CIP was passed in 1997, the City of Toronto has worked on procuring the site through a land swap with the incumbent property owner. This agreement has been completed and the City of Toronto is currently working on the planning, financing and vision of this site moving forward.

## 2.6 King-Parliament Community Improvement Plan



Figure 3. Heritage Lighting Master Plan for Old Town Toronto Map

The King-Parliament Community Improvement Plan is a crucial policy document to consider when seeking solutions to the preservation and restoration of Corktown’s unique architectural identity. Overall, the recommendations including the Façade Improvement Program, Toronto Heritage Fund, Heritage Interpretation Program, Exterior Lighting Plan and commemorating the First Parliament Building site will encourage reinvestment into heritage buildings and enhance Corktown’s distinctive character. We will further discuss the benefits and constraints of using these programs or a HCD in the recommendations and moving forward section.



## Chapter 3. Moving Forward

## 3.1 Community Involvement and Heritage Awareness

Garnering community support of the process and its outcome is an integral element to successfully implementing a strong HCD nomination. One of the most effective ways to build and maintain respect for a community's heritage is through a selection of activities that raise public awareness and increase appreciation of its history. By engaging the community and raising awareness before the nomination proposal begins it will ensure less backlash from the community once the process has been completed or implemented. These are the activities and events that engage the community with the purpose of raising the public profile of heritage buildings and sites within the community.

Examples of public awareness programs and incentives are:

- Interpretive plaque programs
- Heritage walking tours
- Annual award programs
- Community “how-to” workshops
- Lecture programs on heritage topics
- Heritage festivals
- School programs
- Tax reductions
- Festivities marking important historic events significant to the community, city, province or nation.

Although these activities are time-consuming and require commitment and energy from the community, they are often the most recognizable component of a heritage management program and consideration should be given as to whether one or more of these should take place before the process begins. The Corktown Residents and Business Association and a dedicated volunteer base could play the leading role in implementing a heritage awareness program.

Municipal efforts to encourage community involvement and broaden heritage awareness in the City of Toronto are the responsibility of the charitable agency Heritage Toronto. Section 1.2 of the Relationship Framework For: City of Toronto With Heritage Toronto details the legislative framework for the Heritage Toronto Board:

- 1.2.1 The Heritage Toronto Board is a City board under section 141 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006.
- 1.2.2 The City's delegations of authority, mandate and program directives to the Board are found in Chapter 103, Heritage, Article II, Heritage Toronto, of the Municipal Code and in this Relationship Framework.
- 1.2.3 Under the City's classification of agencies, boards, and commissions, the Board is considered a Program Operating Board, and is aligned with the general objectives of heritage and preservation programs of the City.

Heritage Toronto's mandate is in concert with the City's Strategic Objectives of recognition of heritage resources as stated in the City of Toronto Official Plan Chapter 3.1.5 HERITAGE RESOURCES. Section 3.2 of the Relationship Framework For: City of Toronto With Heritage Toronto illustrates Heritage Toronto's contribution or working with members of the community as a critical component to achieving heritage advocacy goals:

- Focusing on a shared knowledge and understanding by the City's residents of the diversity of heritage stories across the geographic breadth of the City;
- Increasing public support for heritage conservation through effective advocacy;
- Promoting better awareness of various heritage issues: built heritage, natural heritage, cultural heritage and archaeological heritage.

### Plaque or Interpretive Program

Heritage Toronto manages a Plaques and Markers Program. This program remembers key people, places and events of the City's past by way of historical marker. Applications are received for a variety of projects of heritage value including listed heritage properties. Corktown has heritage assets that qualify for the Plaques and Markers Program and may consider this approach as an interim strategy to raise the heritage profile while a HCD nomination is further considered.

### Special Events

The Enoch Turner Schoolhouse foundation is an excellent example of special event programming and historical re-enactment in Corktown for both adults and children. The success of the programming at the Schoolhouse may be used to spur corresponding events at other significant Corktown locations.

Doors Open Toronto is an annual event that allows visitors free access to properties that are either not usually open to the public, or would normally charge an entrance fee. This year's nomination process is closed but future events would serve community awareness extremely well. As with the Plaques and Markers Program, Corktown may consider organizing a Doors Open type event locally. In doing so, the community is able to define the theme and criteria on its own thereby maximizing positive exposure.

## Walking Tours

Walking tours are a popular way of arousing people's interest in their neighbourhood history. The established guided walks ongoing in the area are provided through the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, Heritage Toronto Walks Program and Jane's Walk. Corktown is encouraged to participate and capitalize on the notoriety and promotion of Jane's Walk and the Heritage Toronto program by submitting entries that showcase its heritage elements. The success of these programs may be expanded by developing less structured self-guided walking tours. Self-guided tours may be organized through the production of a tour pamphlet made available at local shops and promoted through the community association.

## Annual Programming

The Ontario Heritage Trust celebrates the third week in February as 'Ontario Heritage Week' with the federal Heritage Day kicking off the week. Corktown is encouraged to use these celebrations as a vehicle to stimulate awareness of the heritage resources and heritage-related issues within the community.

## Heritage Home Programming

Improving community perception of its heritage assets may be served by increasing the profile of heritage ownership. Many owners of heritage properties have an interest in the improvement and preservation of their investment. The establishment of a workshop featuring expert heritage repair and restoration advice will generate interest among owners and non-owners alike.

## Heritage Recognition Awards

Heritage Toronto operates an annual awards program which recognizes a category of Architectural Conservation and Craftsmanship. While the existing program category exclusively recognizes heritage restoration programs in the past year, Corktown is encouraged to submit an application should a local project meet the criteria. A local awards program may be initiated to recognize a particular heritage element and provide the opportunity to heighten the profile of the winning asset. The process may be as simple as online voting and newsletter acknowledgement.



Figure 4. Distillery District Walking Tour

## Heritage Tax Reduction

An integral component to widening the acceptance and celebration of heritage resources is incentive. Section 103-31 of the Toronto Municipal Code outlines a heritage tax reduction of 40% of the annual taxes for municipal and school purposes to be levied on eligible heritage properties. Such a significant reduction on property taxes may encourage hesitant property owners to further investigate designation.

The two primary constraints to community involvement and heritage awareness are funding and volunteers. The Corktown Residents and Business Association must consider cost and time effective options to increase their membership and programming capacity. For example, the costs of the Plaques and Markers Program might be too steep for the community to implement. Heritage Toronto encourages the local groups to find the support for the project including full cost of fabrication, installation and unveiling. These costs range from \$550 to \$5500 for a single project.

A cost effective alternative to the Heritage Toronto program may be an independent local initiative. Corktown artists may be encouraged to create small digital plaque representations that may be printed cheaply and placed at the appropriate locations and public spaces. The local program, with donor support and recognition, may be able to achieve similar levels of awareness of the Heritage Toronto program without the costly permanence of plaques. This program is best initiated in fair weather and may be combined with a special event

# 3.1 Community Involvement and Heritage Awareness

## 3.2 Final Recommendations

Legislation, plans and policies that are currently in place provide the CRBA with several options moving forward. These options will provide the CRBA with varying levels of heritage protection where they can choose to pursue some or all of these options.

### *Update the King-Parliament Secondary Plan and Community Improvement Plan*

These documents set the basis for the direction that the city takes when addressing potential development in the area. New development in close proximity to heritage structures can be required to be consistent to the surrounding heritage buildings. In addition, it can allow for renovations or additions to current heritage structures as long as the existing structure is restored or retained, based on the agreement that the landowner comes to with the City. These documents have not been updated since their initial version in 1997. With the passing of comprehensive amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act in 2005, there may be room in the Secondary Plan and CIP to take advantage of new programs or incentives for retaining heritage buildings. The CRBA can request an amendment to the City Official Plan through Section 22 of the Planning Act.

### *Moving Forward 1. The Process of Updating the King-Parliament Secondary Plan and Community and Community Improvement Plan*

Corktown Residents will be able to make changes by amending the King-Parliament Secondary Plan and the West Don Lands Precinct Plan in order to accomplish future goals. In order to amend, the official plan must be first amended and by doing this will inadvertently create amendments to both the Secondary Plan and Precinct Plan. If a person requests council to amend the official plan, council shall forward a copy of the request and the information and material required under subsections (4) and (5), if any to the appropriate approval authority, whether or not the requested amendment is exempt from approval. In addition a public meeting will be held under subsection 17 (15) or comply with the alternative measures set out in the official plan.

Figure 5. King-Parliament Secondary Plan Area

## 3.2 Final Recommendations

### *Identify individual buildings for heritage listing or designation*

The listing or designation of a property opens up avenues for funding from the provincial government in the form of grants for maintaining the buildings' façade. The Façade Improvement Grant could provide up to 75% of the costs incurred by restoring heritage façades, including, but not limited to, doors, signage, lighting and masonry.

To complement The Façade Improvement Grant, there is another grant program called the Toronto Heritage Fund Restoration Grant Program. This program can provide up to 50% of restoration of heritage building costs to a maximum of \$5000. This program, unlike The Façade Improvement Grant, is only available to designated properties under the Ontario Heritage Act.

The listing and designation of select properties is a good intermediate step for opening the doors to an influx of heritage preservation funding to the neighbourhood to enhance its heritage buildings. If not already listed or designated, the properties identified in the Interim Report are structures that are recommended to be the best opportunity for this.



Figure 6 (Top), 7 (Bottom) & 8 (Right). The listed properties on River Street.



## *Moving the Forward 2: The Process for Listing or Designating an Individual Property*

The process for seeking either a heritage listing or designation includes two meetings where both property owners and the public are invited to provide input. The Toronto Preservation Board holds monthly meetings where a staff research report is reviewed and any member of the public is permitted to comment. The Board's recommendations are then submitted to the Community Council and then to City Council. When making an application to gain a property listing or designation, it is recommended that the story of the property and its history be portrayed to the Committee. Photographs of the property's progression through time and what it looks like today will strengthen any landowner's case. If given the opportunity, use committee members for their advice and guidance before submitting an application. Prior to City Council making the final decision, members of the public are given the opportunity to comment on the motion of the heritage listing or designation being carried forth. At that point if no appeals or objections are heard, Council will make their final decision. The process is oriented to foster public participation and input, therefore the timeframe of how long the process takes to complete varies from case to case.

When the Heritage Committee is deciding if a property should be listed or designated, some of the questions they consider are as follows:

- Does the property have significant architectural value?
- Does the property relate to a significant historical event?
- How does it contribute to the character of the community or area?
- Does it display a high degree of craftsmanship, artistic merit, or scientific or technical achievement?
- Is it a landmark?
- Does it preserve the legacy of the past?

According to the Toronto Star article entitled, "The hidden value in heritage properties" from February of 2012, there are many benefits of a property gaining a heritage listing or designation. Those benefits include

- Heritage properties increase in value according to studies;
- The landowner may have access to heritage grant programs to improve the property;
- Rebates are available on property taxes;
- When selling a heritage home, it's designation is a positive feature;
- There is an increased sense of pride of ownership in owning a property that is designated as heritage.

These benefits not only combat the myth that a heritage designation will reduce the value of a property, but many other incentives are available for landowners who own a designated property.

### *Heritage Conservation District(s)*

We have identified several pockets as the best options for a Heritage Conservation District nomination. These areas, which we believe to be the most palatable to the community, include:

a) Percy Street and Ashby Place

These streets represent the best collection of workers' cottages from the industrial golden age of Corktown. With every property on both of these streets Listed on the Heritage Register with the City of Toronto, an HCD would further solidify the area as an important part of life in old Corktown and the emergence of the City of Toronto.

b) Bright Street

Bright Street is the last remaining segment of the old bent street grid that used to dominate Corktown between Queen Street East and King Street East. The preservation of this right-of-way is important in understanding how people used to move around before the Richmond-Adelaide interchange to the Don Valley Parkway severed the neighbourhood.

## 3.2 Final Recommendations



- c) The area bordered by Parliament Street, Front Street/Eastern Avenue, Trinity Street and King Street East.

This block contains the greatest concentration of important heritage structures in Corktown. Buildings located in this area include the Little Trinity Church, Enoch Turner Schoolhouse and one of the last remaining Consumer's Gas buildings, which currently house Toronto Police 51 Division. In addition, this block includes Derby Street, home of the Derby Street pub, a popular after work spot for people working in the area. What is now the corner of Derby Street and Erin Street was believed to be one of the most dangerous places to be in the entire City of Toronto, and is part of Corktown's cultural heritage worth preserving.



Figure 9. Bright Street in Corktown.

### *Moving Forward 3: The Next Step for Nominating Heritage Conservation Districts*

If the CRBA decides to create any of the above Heritage Designation Districts, a Nomination Form must be completed and given to the City of Toronto's Heritage Preservation Services office (see Nomination Form in Appendix II). Once a nomination has been approved by Heritage Preservation Services, a further and more extensive HCD Study will be undertaken before the final Heritage Conservation District Plan for the specified area is completed. The next steps in the process of acquiring an HCD in Corktown are described in further detail below.

Initial research is important in understanding if an area is a good candidate for an HCD nomination, and if the area will fit the criteria needed for a district designation. The initial research does not need to be onerous, and does not require professional consultation (which would be needed in the HCD Study if an area is passed for nomination). The CRBA could use the Ryerson Corktown Heritage Study Group's Interim Report as background documentation for a HCD nomination.

After the nominator has gathered enough information to warrant a nomination for a certain area, the next step is to gather support for the HCD nomination. This support can be through letters of support from historical societies, ratepayer and residents associations, community organizations, local City Councilor's, MPPs and MPs, and others to demonstrate support for designating an area as an HCD.

The general boundaries of the nominated district are important to make clear during the nomination process. Though the boundaries may change during the HCD designation process, there should be a general idea of the geographic area during the nomination stage.

A nomination form will be submitted for each district that a community wishes to see designated as an HCD. A completed nomination will show Heritage Preservation staff what the district looks like, its history and why it should be protected as an HCD. When Heritage Preservation Services receives an HCD nomination a preliminary evaluation is undertaken to determine if: 1) the area has been previously considered for an HCD designation by the City; and 2) the area has been identified for Section 37 funding to study as a potential HCD. Heritage Preservation Services staff can return a nomination if it is incomplete or if it is determined that the area will not likely satisfy the criteria for the determination of cultural heritage value for HCDs.

When a nomination is complete enough to determine that there may be potential for an HCD, a neighbourhood visit will be scheduled so Heritage Preservation Services staff can see the area and discuss it with the nominator. The neighbourhood visit is important to both the nominator and Heritage Preservation Services. The nominator and other community members will benefit because they will get a better idea of what City Planning is looking for in an HCD designation and Heritage Preservation Services staff will benefit by gaining a deeper understanding of the community's interest in an HCD.

If the nominated district is considered appropriate for an area study, Heritage Preservation Services staff will set up a community meeting to let the neighbourhood know that an HCD nomination has been made and that it is a good candidate for study. The purpose of this meeting is to receive feedback from residents and property owners in the area and to answer general questions about HCDs, their implications and benefits.



Figure 10 & 11. Percy Street in Corktown.

### *...Moving Forward 3: The Next Step for Nominating Heritage Conservation Districts*

After the community meeting, Heritage Preservation Services staff will prepare a report to City Council seeking authority to study the area under section 40 (1) of the Ontario Heritage Act. The area will be defined by a boundary that is informed by the nomination and additional analysis during neighbourhood visits and community meetings. If council determines that no authority should be given to study the area, then the nomination will be unsuccessful and the file will be closed.

If City Council determines that authorization to study should be granted, then the nominator may be responsible for locating and gathering funds to hire a consultant to study the area and write an HCD Plan. In addition, the nominator will be expected to provide quarterly updates on progress with fundraising, recruiting volunteers, conducting research and documentation, as well as the progress of the consultant once the formal study is under way.

Sometimes the City will lead an HCD Study or plan when City Council or staff has recommended that an HCD is desirable. When this happens, the City will ensure that the affected community is engaged in the process prior to all decision points in the study, planning and designation of the HCD. Whenever this occurs, the HCD Study and Plan consultation requirements found in the terms of reference will apply. Nomination requirements and progress reports will be waived for City Council, staff and its representatives.



Figure 12 & 13. Ashby Place in Corktown.

# Appendix

- I. List of Figures
- II. HCDs Nomination Form
- III. Development Activity Map
- IV. Final Recommendation HCDs Map

# I. List of Figures

Title page's background pictures: Corktown Heritage Study Group, 2013

Title page's background graphic: Corktown Residents and Business Association, 2013.

Chapter 1: Community Context page's background pictures: Corktown Heritage Study Group, 2013

Chapter 2: Policy Context page's background picture: Corktown Heritage Study Group, 2013

Chapter 3: Moving Forward page's background picture: Toronto Shopaholic. (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.torontoshopoholic.com/corktown-toronto.html>

Pictures on the Story of Corktown: Corktown Heritage Study Group, 2013

Figure 1. Corktown Residents and Business Association. (2013).

Figure 2. City of Toronto. (1997). The King and Parliament Community Improvement Plan.

Figure 3. Toronto Heritage Preservation Services. (2011). Heritage Lighting Master Plan for Old Town Toronto.

Figure 4. Segway Ontario. (2011). The Picture of School Group Tour in Distillery District.

Figure 5. Urban Toronto. (2012). King East Centre. Retrieved from [http://urbantoronto.ca/forum/showthread.php/6811-King-East-Centre-\(333-351-King-St-E-First-Gulf-6s-Pellow-20s-Diamond-Schmitt\)/page30](http://urbantoronto.ca/forum/showthread.php/6811-King-East-Centre-(333-351-King-St-E-First-Gulf-6s-Pellow-20s-Diamond-Schmitt)/page30)

Figure 6. Corktown Heritage Study Group. (2013).

Figure 7. Corktown Heritage Study Group. (2013).

Figure 8. Corktown Heritage Study Group. (2013).

Figure 9. Corktown Heritage Study Group. (2013).

Figure 10. Corktown Heritage Study Group. (2013).

Figure 11. Corktown Heritage Study Group. (2013).

Figure 12. Corktown Heritage Study Group. (2013).

Figure 13. Corktown Heritage Study Group. (2013).



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