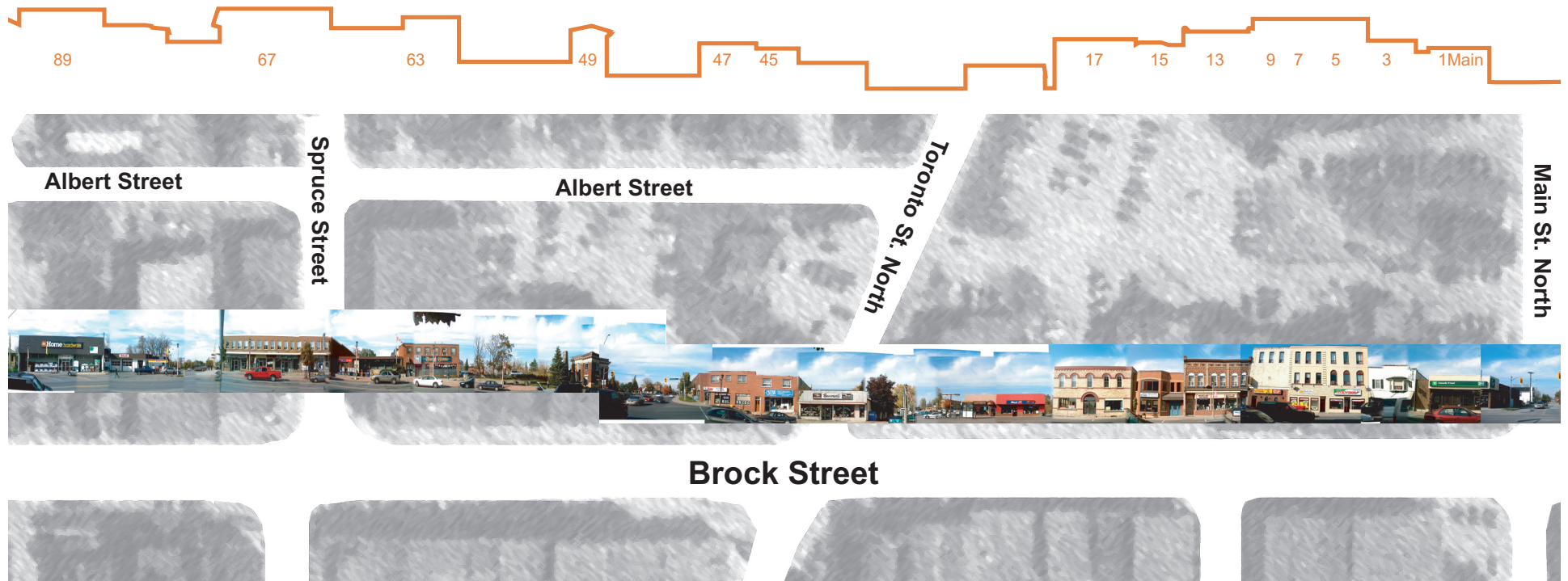


Township of Uxbridge

Brock Street Heritage Design Guidelines



Foreword

These guidelines have been developed as an advisory document for business and property owners as well as Council to help ensure the retention of the Downtown's heritage resources. Its purpose is also to provide a unified approach to improving and standardizing future development and renovation so that the area's special heritage character is enhanced.

There are many benefits for businesses and communities that retain their built heritage. Your Heritage Uxbridge Committee can advise you further on restoration and redevelopment issues. Thanks to the Heritage Uxbridge Committee and the B.I.A. for their support of this initiative. Thanks also to members of the Uxbridge community who took the time to input their thoughts and ideas for this project.

On behalf of the Steering Committee,
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1.0 Introduction

Over the last quarter century, many small to medium sized towns in Southern Ontario, particularly those within commuting distance of a larger urban centre, have seen and continue to witness an influx of growth.

Within this context, the main street takes on added importance as both a cultural and economic resource - a place where old and new mix side-by-side. Therefore, in order to improve upon and preserve the best qualities of their main streets, towns such as Uxbridge are taking steps to augment current main street planning practices.

To assist the Township of Uxbridge in this effort, this document identifies and recommends general urban design principles

and guidelines to instruct heritage building preservation/restoration particularly shop fronts on Brock Street between Spruce Street and First Avenue. The guidelines also address future new development from First Avenue to Cedar Street in the form of infill projects, additions to existing buildings, streetscape and signage.

Lastly, based on the recognition that the conservation and enhancement of historic qualities provide the basis for long term prosperity, this document identifies and recommends the phased implementation of a series of interrelated guidelines, regulations, and improvements as a means by which these qualities can be enhanced and maintained.

General Heritage Main Street Principles:

- Respect the 'original' or 'founding' main street character that has been established;
- Retain, conserve and restore heritage buildings;
- Encourage the conservation and restoration of heritage buildings;
- Prevent the removal or alteration of any historical architectural feature or building;
- Promote the retention and re-use of heritage buildings;
- Identify, maintain, and build back site-specific conditions that serve to reaffirm the best possible street wall assembly (massing and heights).



Figure 1.
The rolling topography common to the Brock Street road profile is clearly evident here at the Brock Street and Toronto Street intersection.

Several full blocks of Uxbridge's 'original' building fabric remain as part of the downtown main street façade. Of these, this block located between Toronto and Church Streets, represents the longest uninterrupted 'historic' street wall remaining.

2.0 Character of the Study Area

2.1 Historical Context

Uxbridge, like most early Canadian settlements, was sited to take advantage of available and abundant water power. At its peak, eight man-made ponds provided energy to a brewery, sawmill, and several gristmills. A number of these enterprises were located in close proximity to the Brock and Toronto Street intersection.

By 1870, owing to the entrepreneurial activities of men like Joseph Gould and John Plank coupled with the decision to build the Toronto and Nipissing Railway through the Township, Uxbridge's long term commercial prospects looked promising. This good fortune, however, was to decline due to a series of fires throughout the late 1880's and early 1900's, with the Township losing many of its local main street industries and commercial buildings.

At one time, four hotels, a market hall, a hardware store, tavern, barber shop and several restaurants could be found along or in proximity to the main street.

From the 1950s onwards, demolition of architecturally significant main street buildings further eroded the initial heritage character of Brock Street.

Now, as the Township embarks upon a plan to reinvigorate and protect the character of its main street, it is useful to look back to a time when all the services and goods desired by the residents could be found in the Downtown.



Figure 2.

Building height and massing varies along the length of Brock Street. The built form between Church and Victoria Streets is characterized by a mix of detached one to three storey buildings.



Figure 3.

The western gateway to downtown Uxbridge is well defined by the railway crossing and the two buildings it services: The Farm Co-op Building (above) and the Feed mill (below).

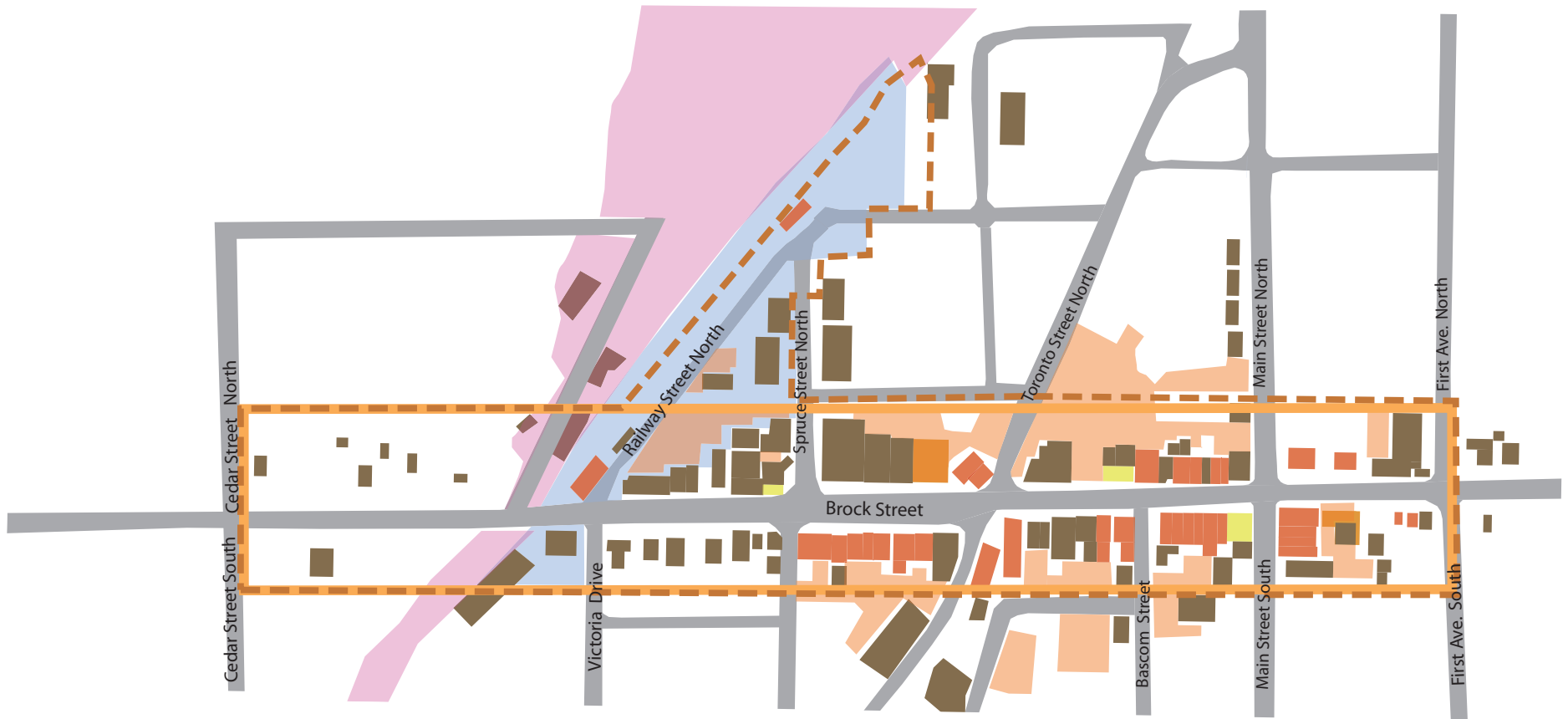
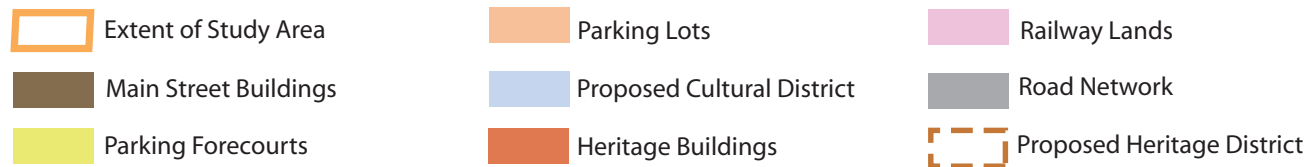


Figure 4. Heritage Design Guideline Study Area



2.2 Conditions and Opportunities

Brock Street includes a mix of relatively well-preserved heritage buildings, undistinguished recently constructed one or two-storey commercial buildings, chain stores with parking lots at the front (Coffee Time/Mac's, IDA), single and multi-unit residences including some notable early 19th century structures, and several well-considered infill buildings, e.g. 15 Brock Street.

Brock Street has a variety of building and streetscape conditions, providing a range of improvement opportunities. For example,

Condition 1:

The majority of Brock Street's heritage buildings (approximately one third of all main street addresses) are relatively intact.

Opportunity 1:

With well-considered restoration, existing heritage buildings could be returned to their original state (Section 4.0).

Condition 2:

Topographically distinct, Brock Street is roughly divided into upper and lower portions by a rolling incline where Toronto Street intersects with Brock Street.

Opportunity 2:

A 'renewed' streetscape design can advantageously work with this grade change to accommodate increased public amenity (Section 7.0).

Condition 3:

The eastern portion of the lower study area (Bascom Street to First Avenue) is characterized by single family houses converted into professional offices, and

small independent commercial businesses. Some original houses have been replaced by multi-unit residential buildings.

Opportunity 3:

This portion of the study area is primarily mixed in use and residential in form. As such it can provide a spatial transition between retail to the west and residential to the east. The streetscape palette would need to be designed to register this transition.

Condition 4:

Parking consists of parallel and diagonal on-street parking and surface parking lots located immediately behind main street buildings (Figure 4.).

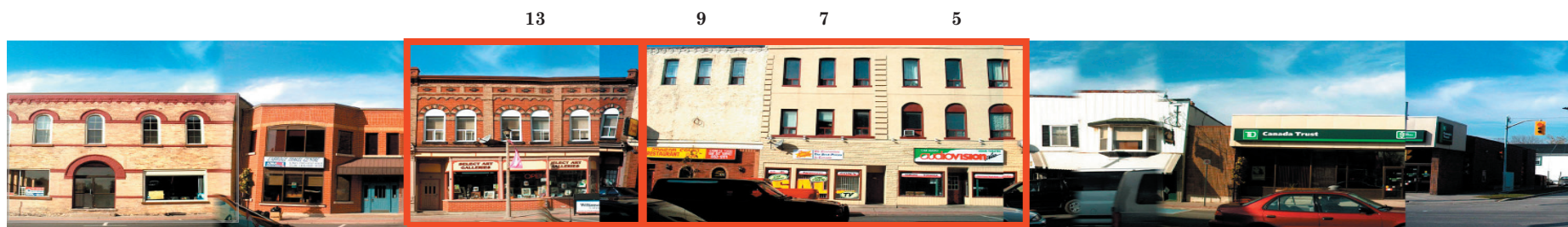


Figure 5. The Art Shop located at 13 Brock Street is a fine example of what can be accomplished through careful and thoughtful restoration. The buildings immediately to its east (9, 7, and 5 Brock Street) are excellent candidates for this same level of treatment.

Opportunity 4:

On-street parking should be regularized as part of any comprehensive streetscape improvement. Back-of-lot parking and public parking lots, located near to Brock Street, need to be adequately signed (Figure 46.0-46.2).

Condition 5:

Corner sites are occupied by a mix of important institutional uses, e.g. banks, libraries and other non-institutional commercial uses.

Opportunity 5:

Corner sites, with their double frontages and highly visible location at intersections, need to be developed with these attributes in mind (Section 5.0, Figure 31.).



Figure 6. Commercial franchises fronted by parking result in an erosion of the street wall on two frontages.

Condition 6:

Roadbed and sidewalk widths (1.8 to 2.7 m.) vary throughout the study area.

Opportunity 6:

Regularize road to sidewalk width dimensions along Brock Street, maintaining consistency block-to-block as much as possible.

Condition 7:

Building setbacks from the street line vary widely resulting in an inconsistent street wall character along sections on Brock Street.

Opportunity 7:

Setback alignments need to be established for newly proposed building fronts along Brock Street (Figure 22.).



Figure 7. Large volumes of heavy truck traffic along Brock Street create significant concerns for pedestrian safety and the ability to maintain the 'village' character of the main street area.

Condition 8:

Brock Street is a regional road and a main commercial shopping street, with large volumes of truck and other vehicular traffic posing a consistent problem to pedestrian activity on the main street.

Opportunity 8:

Where possible widen sidewalks and construct pedestrian crosswalks as part of a comprehensive streetscape design (Section 7.0, Figure 46.).

Condition 9:

Outlying retailers have undermined the range of essential goods and services initially found along Brock Street.



Figure 8. Sidewalks could be widened if angled parking were to be replaced with parallel parking.

Opportunity 9:

As part of the main street renewal strategy some of the former retail establishments found along Brock Street (and possibly Uxbridge industries) could be updated and brought back as part of new economic revitalization strategy, e.g. speciality food markets, boutique hotels, candy factory, brewery.

Condition 10:

The upper portion between Toronto and Railway Street is set apart by the presence of the rail line and the agriculturally related services, e.g. the Farm Co-op and the Feed Mill (Figure 2.&3.).

Opportunity 10:

The presence of the rail line, station, related facilities and abundant public land north of Brock Street provides an opportunity to



Figure 9.
The 'original' commercial building block located between Bascom and Main Streets exhibits the Italianate 1:2 height to building width ratio.

develop this area more fully as a heritage-cultural district (Figure 4.).

Condition 11:

Many of Brock Street's commercial enterprises are owner-run but located within leased commercial space.

Opportunity 11:

Incentive and regulatory programs need to be put in place to encourage all landowners with property fronting onto Brock Street to make a contribution to improving the main street condition.

Condition 12:

Main street properties located between Railway Street and Cedar Street are currently under developed.

Opportunity 12:

Well conceived future development of these properties can contribute significantly to extending the main street vision westward.



Figure 10.
Decorative brackets mounted to emphasize transition are a typical Italianate detail.

The Elements of a Building**Massing:**

Massing refers to a building's height to width ratio. Together, these define whether a building's form and composition is either symmetrical or asymmetrical in its overall proportion. Roof shape, pitch, and composition also contribute to defining a structure's massing composition.

Elements:

A structure's elements are those parts of the building's fenestration which add to the main volumetric of the building. Windows, doors, columns, porches, chimneys, placement, shape and size determine the building's architectural style.

Details:

Building details refer to the crafted pieces that make up the larger elements: how these pieces appear and are assembled in terms of pattern, degree of ornamentation, and how they fit together with each other to comprise the building's elemental nature.



Figure 11.

3.0 Main Street Buildings

Brock Street, like most Southern Ontario main streets, exhibits a built form that is comprised of several different architectural styles and periods. Many of the original buildings still retain their original mixed-use character, combining commercial uses at street level with residential units above. Heritage architectural styles found along Brock Street and on neighbouring streets include: Italianate (1850-1900), Greek Revival (1800-1880), and Queen Anne (1880-1915).

The most prevalent architectural style on Brock Street is the Italianate influenced commercial frontages. The best example is located between Main and Bascom Streets (Figure 9.).



This historic image of A.T. Bunton's department store illustrates how the same storefront depicted above (south side of Brock St. between Main and Bascom Streets), looked when it was first built.

3.1 Storefronts

The storefront is one of the most important features of a commercial façade. More than any other architectural element or sign, it serves to attract customer attention by providing display space, surfaces for signage, and views into the store. Like the building façade, it is comprised of parts or elements - a base, middle, and

top. The storefront often provides a visual linkage with its neighbours, and provides visual foundation for the rest of the façade composition. Within the Uxbridge context the lower or main street level of all the 'heritage' main street buildings is devoted to commercial use.

Usually, each building includes three shops, sometimes two. Heritage storefront frames are most commonly made of wood applied over brick projecting out from the masonry mass of the building. Storefronts are fitted between pilasters extending upward to the underside of the entablature. Doorways are centrally located within each frame flanked on either side by projecting bay windows and sidelight transoms (Figures 12. & 14.).



Figure 12. Heritage Storefronts: Italianate Commercial Building

The Italianate Commercial Building

- Typical architectural features include the combined use of highly decorative brackets under the eaves, low-pitched hip roofs, contrasting material selection, repetition of decoration, brick quoining and arched windows.
- Overall building form is usually twice as high (2-3 stories) as it is wide.
- Verticality is accentuated by the regular use of vertical brick pilasters extending from the street to the eaves.
- Horizontal entablature, one crowning the building and the other the uppermost limit of the storefront frame intersect this vertical sequence. This interplay creates a horizontal rhythm across the façade which is reinforced by regularly spaced window placement. Each intersection is usually marked by a decorative bracket.
- No part of the roof extends above the cornice giving the appearance of a flat-topped roof.

4.0 Storefront Preservation and Renovation Guidelines

As the storefront is the element of a commercial façade that has most commonly been altered from its original appearance it is important to consider the following prior to modifying heritage storefronts.

4.1 Heritage Storefront Preservation

- Where feasible preserve the original building fabric. Repair rather than replace deteriorated architectural features. When replacement is necessary, match the original. Replacement of missing features should be based on historical accuracy.
- Where existing alterations are out of character an opportunity exists to remove modern veneers to determine what, if any, of the original remains. Original elements that lie beneath the modern front should be preserved and replicated where necessary if damaged.
- Renovate shop fronts in keeping with the original building design, using those elements that are intact, and replacing missing features.
- Maintain the alignment of a storefront with adjacent storefronts.
- Do not remove or alter original material or distinctive architectural features.



Figure 13. This historic image of several storefronts located on the south side of Brock Street west of Bascom Street, illustrates the high quality of early storefront design and construction.

4.1.1 Base Panel

The base panel provides a visual and functional base for the storefront.

- Maintain the originals when they exist. Use materials of the same colour and texture as the display window frame, or the pilaster materials.



Figure 14. Parts of a Traditional Storefront



Figure 15. In many cases the heritage façade still exists behind modifications made to the storefront assembly over the years. Lowe's Furniture Store may well be an example of this.

4.1.2 Display Window

As the largest element of the shop front, the display window establishes the character of the storefront.

- Avoid breaking the continuity of the streetscape of large display windows.

4.1.3 Transoms

The display front is often divided near the top into transom windows.

- Maintain the transom as an important part of the display window. Remove any obstruction such as air conditioning units that have been inserted into this space.

4.1.4 Entry ways

Store entrances are usually recessed from the street line, affording an opportunity for more display windows, focussing attention on the doorway, and providing shelter at the entry.

- Maintain or restore these recesses as an important part of the streetscape continuity.

4.1.5 Doorways

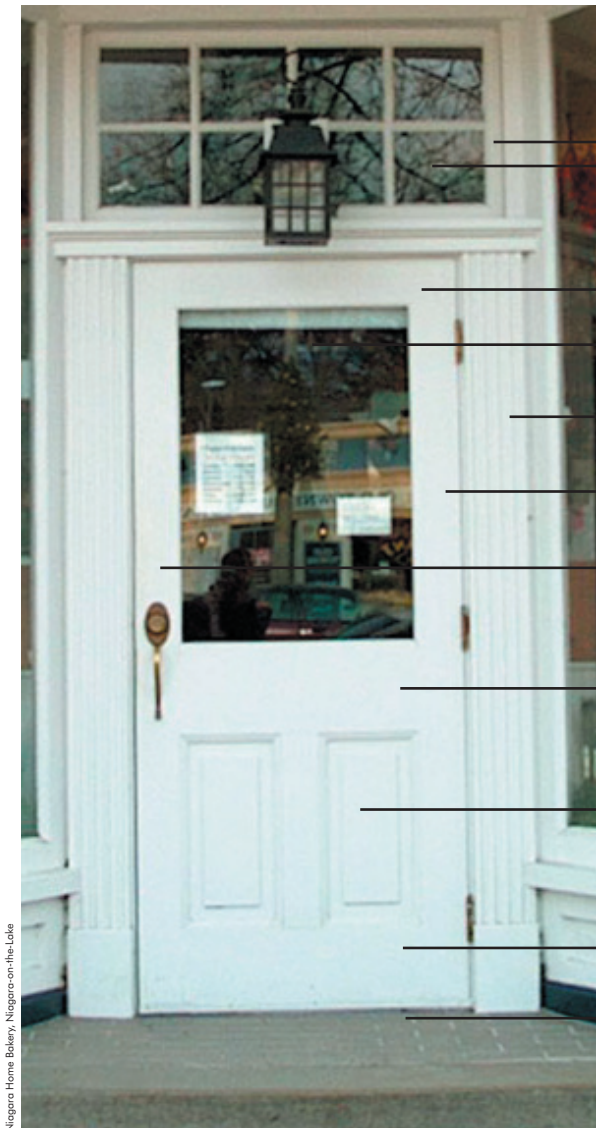
Doors are a very important functional design feature on the façade. The location, size, shape, and style of doors establish our most immediate impression of a building. Traditionally constructed of wood, glass and fitted with metal hardware, each style of door was designed to fit a particular style of building. Recognize the style and preserve it if possible. The shape of the opening, the divisions within it, and the surrounding trim each contribute to its stylistic character



Figure 16. Several contemporary storefronts along Brock Street exhibit only some of the attributes of a desirable storefront design including in this example, a recessed entry.

Replacing a Heritage Door

- Consider a replacement door only if your existing door is drastically deteriorated or is already an unsuitable replacement.
- Replacement of an entire door and frame will require attention to the surrounding trim and surfaces both inside and outside. Replacement is costly and seldom warranted.
- Duplicate the original in style, type and material. Custom wood doors can be produced by a local mill work shop to provide a near perfect match for the original. The Uxbridge Heritage Society and/or the Uxbridge Scott-Museum and Archive, can offer assistance in determining the original door character.



Niagara Home Bakery, Niagara-on-the-Lake

Figure 17. Typical Heritage Door Details

Transom Sash
Transom Glazing

Top Rail
Door Glazing

Door Frame
Hinge Stile

Latch Stile

Lock Rail

Door Panel

Bottom Rail
Threshold

- If an exact duplicate is too costly, try and find a salvaged door of the same historical style, or buy a new panelled door that has a pattern similar to the original.
- If the door is beyond repair a replica is the best choice. If you must use a new standard door, choose one that closely matches the original.
- Replace the traditional removable wood storm doors and screens with a duplicate of the original or the period door. Metal storm doors are inappropriate on the main doors.
- Choose a simple design, with the largest possible glass area. Paint the door to match the existing.
- Retain interior vestibules where they exist, or consider the installation of a new one as an energy conservation measure.

Besides providing light, outside view, and ventilation, windows are an important design element of a building façade. The location, size, shape and style of windows help to establish our impression of the building. The windows are the feature of a façade that is most often changed.

4.1.6 Replacement Windows

Replacement windows should duplicate the originals in style, type and material. Custom wood sashes can be produced by a local mill work shop at a reasonable cost to provide a near-perfect match for the original. If an exact duplicate is not possible, install windows with similar operation and internal divisions.

4.1.7 Infilling Windows

The size, location or number of openings on the main façades should not be changed, unless the property is being restored to its original appearance. In cases where the interior has been renovated and the ceiling lowered, a bulkhead or valance can finish the ceiling edge against the window. In some cases, an opaque upper pane may also be appropriate. At a later date, because



Figure 18.

In situations where the original windows have been removed and window openings filled in, consult a restoration architect or a heritage contractor prior to breaking open the masonry mass.



Figure 19.

It appears from a cursory inspection of the building in the middle, that window openings still exist behind the stucco cladding and could be re-opened without too much difficulty.

the original window openings remain intact, the opportunity exists to restore the interior to its original condition.

4.1.8 Paint

- Remove paint from all heritage buildings that were not painted initially.
- Repaint heritage buildings that were originally painted, in colours matching the original selection. Historic photographs (supplied by the local heritage society), and paint samples/fragments (retrieved from the

- structure if possible) will provide useful information.
- When selecting paints to match a historic colour, assess and compare them under a variety of lighting conditions.
- Paint can be used to reinforce effects of projecting and receding planes within a store front row or on an individual building - darker colours for doors and window sashes and lighter colours for surrounding frames (Figure 20.).

- Non-traditional colours should be discouraged, e.g. primary colours, pastels and overly bright tones and hues. Most traditional colours have a grey undertone to them.

4.1.9 Lighting

- Maintain historic lighting fixtures where they have survived, or replace them with closely matched new fixtures.
- Illuminate buildings in colours and patterns that bring out the essential forms and profiles visible during

the day. Use front-lit signs which use incandescent light sources as they do not significantly alter the true colour of objects.

- Follow historic practices in lighting storefronts and upper façades. Illuminate with lighting sources that render building and material colours accurately while having regard for energy efficiency (Figure 20.).



Figure 20.
When storefront signage is located on the entablature above the storefront, opportunities for traditional lighting exist.



Figure 21.
Traditional heritage colours would not have included pastel shades.

5.0 New Construction Guidelines

The following guidelines address new and infill construction on Brock Street. To achieve a modern translation of desirable heritage attributes within contemporary buildings, design considerations of massing and scale, and to a lesser degree, elements and details, are required.

Care must be taken to recognize the individual context and design of each building.

Buildings should not be altered through embellishment or other decorative means against their initial stylistic intent, e.g. applying Italianate or Victorian embellishment to a modern building's original character.

- On continuous building frontages, the building façade should be generally divided into individual storefronts or entrances.
- Roof lines for infill development should match or compliment pre-existing heritage roof lines if adjacent or proximate to the site of redevelopment.
- New buildings and changes to existing buildings should match the pre-established setback of adjacent buildings provided a continuous street wall is the result. This is extremely beneficial on sites where buildings are currently set back from the street or are missing altogether.
- Dimensions of windows in a proposed development should not vary by more than 10% of the average façade opening/wall ratio set by the continuous heritage frontage nearest to the development.
- On blocks with significant continuous heritage frontage, the height/width ratio of new development façades shall not vary by more than 10% of the height/width ratio of the existing heritage frontage.
- On blocks lacking continuous building frontage, consideration should be given to match heights/widths of neighbouring blocks that do.
- On sites that are wider than they are deep, street frontage should be developed as a row of individual stores or at the very least, project the appearance of multiple shops.
- Storefront design (as mentioned previously) should be designed to maintain the rhythm of the heritage storefront character with its recessed entries and large bay windows.
- Residential apartments above street level shops should be encouraged as this use contributes to increased street animation.
- Rear façades should also be upgraded and maintained in much the same way as storefronts, particularly when an opportunity exists to create active retail space, e.g. back-of-lot café, or as part of a larger community improvement plan e.g.) Albert Street loop/cultural district.



Figure 22.0
The building façade does not meet the required setback.



The proposed building façade meets the required setback.



Figure 22.1
Too low and wide. Correct proportions.



Figure 22.2
Symmetrical window and storefront proportions.



Asymmetrical window and storefront proportions.

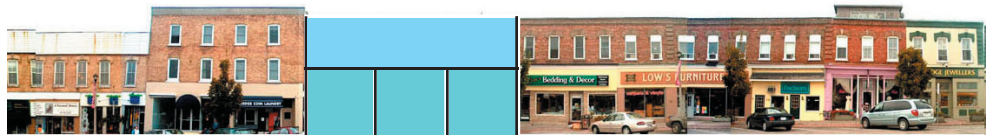


Figure 22.3
On wide lots, buildings should be designed to appear as multiple storefronts at grade.

New Construction Checklist

Building Setback

Where all buildings are on the same line, new buildings must do the same. If a variety of setbacks exist, the façade of the building must be aligned with the building on either side.

Building Height

The height of a development cannot be less than 80% and not more than 120% of the average height of adjacent buildings.

Building Proportion

The ratio of the height to the width of the façade of a building should be within 10% of the ratio of the heights.

Building Window Proportion

The proportion of window area in a building's façade and the size of windows should reflect those observed in nearby buildings.

Building Façades

On wide lots, building façades should be designed to appear as multiple storefronts at grade. This subdivision maintains the storefront rhythm of the street wall.

5.1 Infill Development

Particularly in infill situations, new development should, depending on its adjacency, reference the height, street wall setback, and massing of adjacent heritage buildings and/or reintegrate those aspects of heritage design that have been lost in a particular street segment. Exceptions to this include corner sites, or sites where a transition can be made between commercial and residential areas.



Figure 23.
This modern interpretation of an Italianate building (far left) is a fine example of translating historic details in a modern building.

5.1.1 Massing and Proportion

Massing:

Massing refers to a building's height to width ratio. Together these define whether a building's form and composition is either symmetrical or asymmetrical in its overall proportion. Roof shape, pitch, and composition also contribute.

- New building height/width ratio should not vary by more than 20% of the height/width ratio of the tallest building within a given block (Figure 22.1).



Figure 25.
This modern infill building at 15 Brock St. displays appropriate height and street wall presence.



Figure 24.0
A significant infill site opportunity along Brock Street is the publicly-owned parking lot located between 49 and 62 Brock Street.

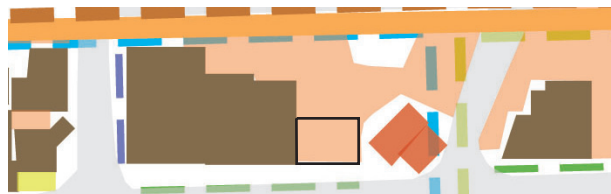


Figure 24.1 49 and 62 Brock Street.



Figure 26. South side of the Brock Street and Toronto Street intersection

At two of the four corners at the intersection of Toronto and Brock Street are located prominent institutional/historical buildings including the CIBC Branch (Greek Revival), the Joseph Gould Public Library (Italianate) and the Roxy Cinema (Art Deco). The Variety store located on the south-west corner, with its blank façade along Toronto Street misses the built form opportunity afforded by a corner site.



Figure 27.

Prior to 1963, the Martin's Mansion House Hotel, constructed by Joseph Gould in 1871, occupied the south-west corner of Brock and Toronto Streets.



Figure 28. North side of the Brock Street and Toronto Street intersection

The CIBC Bank, with evenly articulated façades on all four sides and multiple entrances, responds well to its corner site.

5.2 Corner Sites

Corner sites, particularly those at key intersections, were traditionally prized institutional settings actively sought for their on-street prominence resulting in buildings designed to respond to both street frontages (Figure 28.). In many Canadian cities and towns, bank branches were built to occupy key corners.

Two architecturally undervalued corner sites on Brock Street include the southwest corner of Toronto Street and Brock Street (Dollar Store, Figure 26.) and the southwest corner of Main Street and Brock Street (IDA, Figure 30.). These sites should be designated for future re-development to be occupied by buildings designed to take full advantage of these locations.



Uxbridge the Good Old Days, p. 169

Figure 29.
Uxbridge Post Office, north- east corner of Brock and Spruce Street 1914 -1968



Figure 30.
The IDA forecourt erodes the corner, creates a gap in the street wall and offers little in the way of street presence and character. Parking is no replacement for continuity of street wall fabric.



Figure 31.
This example of a contemporary corner building takes full advantage of its corner location and frontage on two streets.



Taken from the Uxbridge Village, p. 98

Figure 32.
Henry's Department Store, which formerly resided on the north-east corner of Brock and Spruce Street, burned down in 1902 leaving the site empty for the construction of the post office pictured below.



Figure 33.
The current building located on the northeast corner of Brock and Spruce Street could address the corner better, for example by adding another storey.

5.3 Building Addition

Additions to an existing building should reference the building to which it is being added both volumetrically and materially. Secondly, an addition should reference adjacent buildings only if they provide instructional worth. If they do not, aspects of heritage buildings should be referenced.

When adding structure to an existing building, particularly a heritage structure, care should be taken to match materials used in the original building in colour, texture, and type. While elements and details that are true to the original building should be introduced, the distinction between old and new should not be obvious to the casual observer.



Figure 34. Roof pitch, massing, and material of this addition to the Joseph Gould Library allow this modern building to fit well with its predecessor.

5.4 New Development

As the Township of Uxbridge continues to experience growth, vacant or under developed lands serviced by major road networks will be steadily built on. Properties situated between Railway Street and Cedar Street possess this general market appeal as well as the added commercial potential of contributing to the renewal of Brock Street. Therefore, any future development of these lands should be carried out with a mind to extending the collective main street vision westward.

In order to achieve this, new construction should conform to the built form guidelines e.g. massing, height and setback etc., established in this section of the document. Exceptions would be considered on a site-by-site basis following review by the local planning authorities. Proposed building use should compliment existing services found on Brock Street.

5.4.1 Materials and Details

In cases of infill and new development, once massing and setbacks have been appropriately established, stylistic considerations should be left to the discretion of the designer. Freedom should exist vis-à-vis material choice and design in new constructions and infill developments; details can be either contemporary interpretations of heritage details, or wholly modern designs provided that the storefront arrangement, window and entry way placement and design, generally reflect surrounding heritage massing and density (Figure 35.).



Figure 35. This residential row in Amsterdam is a wonderful example of a street wall that balances the variable play of element and detail, against consistent height and massing requirements.

6.0 Storefront Signage:

Signage has a major impact on the character of a main street, as it can create a sense of interest, permanency and project a feeling of care and civility. Conversely, signage can project feelings of impermanence, poor quality service and transience. It is an important part of the overall façade design, and when designed well, can complement the storefront's display function by offering specific information about the enterprise.

Designed to be seen by motorists or pedestrians, signs differ from a design point-of-view, e.g. size of type, location of sign etc. It is important to design a sign with both vehicular and pedestrian travellers in mind and to make design decisions accordingly. Along Brock Street, with its mix of signage

types, this distinction is an important one in terms of improving and replacing existing signs and ensuring their visibility.

In order to assist store owners in a signage renewal program, it is key that some measure of control and financial assistance be offered by the municipality.

To upgrade the quality of Brock Street's main street appeal, the following guidelines and principles provide the basis to be equally applied to both heritage and non-heritage buildings.

- Prepare and institute a sign by-law designed to compliment the main street heritage objectives of Brock Street.
- Prepare a sign permit application and guidelines that clearly sets out the

design criteria for signage within the downtown/main street area.

- In cases where the building is a heritage structure, use historic photographs, when available, to establish the styles and types of sign appropriate to the building.
- Assess your building façade taking note of what possible 'types' of signs could be located within its frame.
- Design signs to be viewed by pedestrians and motorists.
- Do not use back-lit fluorescent sign boxes against the fascia. Apart from their poor fit with the façade, they are not in keeping with the objective of enhancing Brock Street as a pedestrian-scaled main street.
- Remove fluorescent signs during major repairs and replace them with more appropriate signage.



Figure 36.

Back-lit sign boxes applied to historical building façades detract from the overall building appearance. They often deteriorate the original storefront frame due to improper flashing details.



Figure 36.1

- Awnings should be considered as an alternative to other forms of signage. Installation should be coordinated with neighbouring store owners, possibly across more than one frontage.
- Before removing and replacing an existing projecting sign, make sure that it does not have any historical merit, even if the sign was installed subsequently to the original construction of the building.

6.1 Storefront Fascia Signs

Storefront fascia signs come in a variety of forms, shapes, and sizes designed to fit within or project at a specific point on the façade.

A well chosen sign and its design provide enhancement and richness to the building façade (Figure 37.).

Storefront signs are located on the entablature (horizontal band) which divides the storefront windows from the upper façade. Traditionally, the business name was displayed in a single line of lettering large enough to be read by people walking on the street (Figure 37.&42.).



Figure 37.

The option to install a storefront fascia sign exists on virtually every commercial façade. When done well, the care and service level offered by the proprietor is clearly demonstrated.



Figure 38.

Location is an important factor when locating important public information signage.

6.2 Wall Signs

Wall signs are located flat against the surface of front or side walls. The maximum number of wall signs that can be installed is limited by the number of entablature on the building face.

6.3 Architectural Signs

Architectural signs are integrated into the building fabric and are constructed of permanent materials such as stone or tile.

Names and dates are an integral part of the design and should be carved into lintels and archways, and set into mosaic panels on façades and into the floors of doorway recesses.

6.4 Window Signs

Window signs are applied inside the glass of store front windows, upper-floor windows and doorways (Figure 39.0). Generally, the upper windows belong to either office or residential space unrelated to the shop below. As a result, upper-storey windows would be less likely to carry such a sign.

Signs should be etched, painted or attached to the glass, or displayed directly behind it. Window signs which include secondary information should include lettering that is small, centered and designed to be read at close quarters.

6.5 Projecting Signs

Projecting signs may be placed at right angles to the building face either within the storefront frame or above on the second floor façade. Designed to be seen from a distance with plain lettering and sometimes accompanied by an iconic image, these signs should be placed to compliment the storefront and window sign (Figure 39.).



Figure 39.

Awnings and multiple projecting signs can co-exist from one building to the next if spacing is carefully considered.

6.6 Signage Bylaws

In order to successfully implement a signage program key actions must be taken by the Township of Uxbridge to assist in the successful implementation of a signage bylaw:

- Provide store owners with a clear descriptions of what is considered acceptable signage; set maximum dimensions, type of mounting materials, numbers of signs allowed etc.
- Provide a set application form setting out a check list of questions for the applicant to consider;
- Designate personnel to update and enforce the bylaw;
- Provide incentives to facilitate the active adoption of the bylaw by the local commercial owners (Section 8.0).



Figure 41.

Signage incorporated into awnings should be placed on the side panels and front flaps only. Retractable awnings are preferred over permanent ones.



Figure 40.

Attractive window signs hung behind display window glazing or printed directly on the surface offer the pedestrian immediate access to secondary information such as hours of operation, sale information, etc.

Pedestrian Signage Design Criteria

- Design bold and utilitarian signs
- Use a variety of sign locations such as storefront upper wall, roof and windows;
- Use traditional colours;
- Use straightforward easily legible lettering;
- Use moulded frames;
- Use painted, raised or carved letters;
- Use letters sized for pedestrians and motorists;
- Use sizes to fit the area of the building where the sign is to be located;
- Use dark colours and strong contrasts, between letter and background;
- Use basic shapes.



Figure 42. Storefront Signage Examples

architectural sign

principal location for building date and name panels.

wall sign

should extend across full width of façade.

projecting sign (banner or sign)

located at right angle to façade or storefront frame as long as within easy view of oncoming pedestrians.

window sign

upper windows and storefront windows used for advertisement.

storefront fascia sign

principal location for displaying the name of the business. Should fit neatly into cornice above storefront.

window sign

a secondary but effective signage area, particularly for advertising services.

storefront signage guidelines



7.0 Streetscape Guidelines

Brock Street's current streetscape improvements lack uniformity of placement and character. As part of the Region's upcoming road and sidewalk work, the opportunity exists to introduce a consistent streetscape treatment along the length of the main street.

Key to this streetscape initiative is an understanding of the existing conditions of Brock Street some of these existing conditions include:

- Sidewalk widths range from six to nine feet. In some cases they are virtually non-existent e.g. along the north side in front of the Shell station and west of Spruce Street.
- Sidewalk slopes vary greatly in several sections due to the steepness and variability of Brock Street's road profile (Toronto/Brock St. intersection and west of Spruce Street to Railway Street, (Figure 43.).
- In these sections, each commercial lot has an uphill and downhill elevation requiring that ground floor elevations match the high end of this slope.
- Boulevard treatment shifts from a decoratively paved shoulder in the central area to landscape treatment (grass) between Spruce and Railway Street.
- The variety and inconsistency of existing streetscape treatment indicate that improvements have been made without the benefit of a master plan.



Figure 43.
Corners with slope variation (47-45 Brock Street) present great opportunities to provide amenities including tiered planters, seating walls and steps.



Figure 44.
This raised planter and seating area provides an attractive street edge and screening to the parking area.



Figure 45.
This image of a section of Brock Street reflects the positive affect of consistent streetscape design, signage and landscaping.



Figure 46.
Improved sidewalks, curb lines and drive access into the Shell station should be considered as part of the Region's streetscape improvements.

- Major sidewalk construction and reconstruction will be coordinated by the Region of Durham's roadwork and sewer replacement program. This type of work has occurred sporadically along Brock Street resulting in further fragmentation of streetscape treatment.
- Parking varies from parallel to angled within the study area, greatly varying the sidewalk width along sections of Brock Street.

7.1 Key Design Opportunities

Given the Township and Region's interest in enhancing Brock Street as a desirable pedestrian/commercial destination while making it a safer pedestrian precinct, a more unified and improved streetscape plan needs to be developed, addressing several key opportunities.

7.1.1 Sidewalks

- Where possible, sidewalks should be widened by replacing angled parking with parallel parking. This additional width may accommodate the opportunity for sidewalk cafés.

- At corners, boulevards can widen to provide decorative planting areas, seating areas and other amenities (i.e. fountains, public art).
- At locations where the grade differential is extreme, a custom sidewalk design should be prepared that addresses the grade as a tiered/stepped construction possibly incorporating planting, building access and seating.
- When these grade opportunities exist at corners, the tiered planter or raised sidewalk should be combined with a widening of the boulevard.

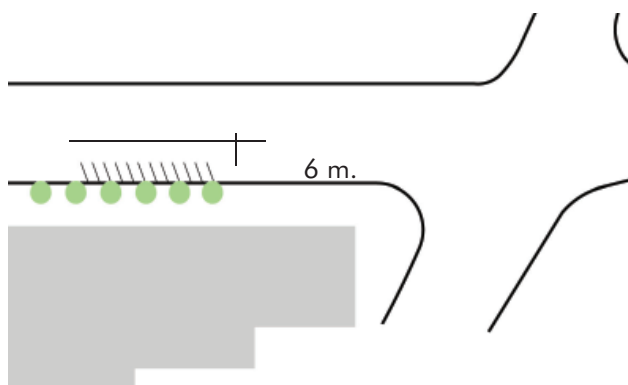


Figure 47.0

Not Recommended: Existing angled parking.

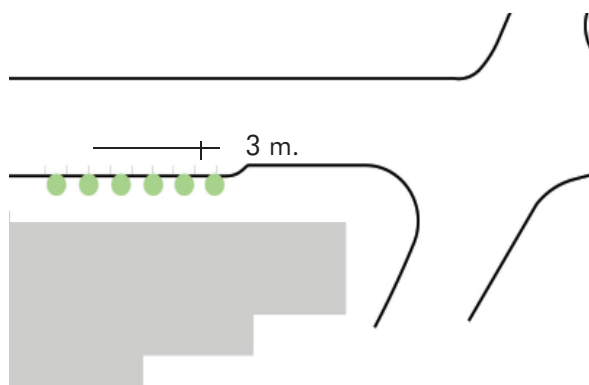


Figure 47.1

Recommended: Proposed parallel parking gain of 3 m. of sidewalk.

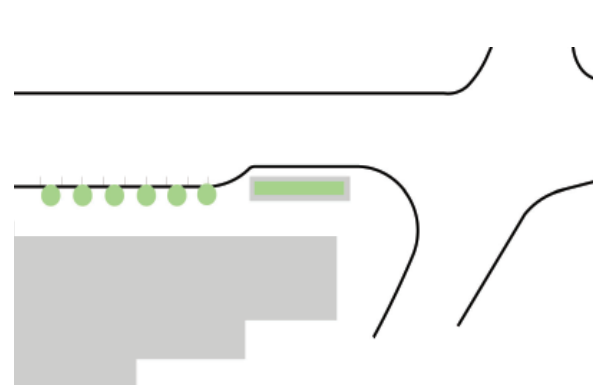


Figure 47.2

Recommended: Additional widening possibly resulting from other road reconstruction factors.

7.1.2 Street Trees

- Tree pits should be redesigned to allow for maximum root growth and rain percolation.
- Additional street trees should be planted where possible. Species should be selected for their tolerance for pollution and compliment existing street trees.

7.1.3 Parking

- Development applications proposing parking forecourts should not be supported. Sites that already include them should be designated for redevelopment.

- Parking lots that front onto Brock Street should be designated for redevelopment (Figure 24.).
- Parking on Brock Street should maximize street parking in front of shops, while the majority of commercial parking should be located behind the main street.
- Signage indicating available off-street parking should be implemented.
- Existing angled parking on main street can be replaced by parallel parking to allow sidewalks to be widened with an approximate loss of ten spaces (Figures 47.0-47.2)



Figure 48. Widened boulevards provide a range of streetscape improvements. Niagara-on-the Lake's main street includes a planting strip between the street edge and sidewalk providing buffering from the street and shade to pedestrians.



Figure 49. Widening the boulevard along St. George Street in Toronto dramatically changed this street into a great pedestrian promenade.



Figure 50. This sidewalk in London (U.K.) illustrates how instrumental a grade separation can be to public safety and comfort.



Figure 51. This widened boulevard and setback in Kleinburg accommodates off street parking and a generous sidewalk.



Figure 52.

The combined stair and ramp along the Thames handily manipulates change in grade in two directions. This same site condition exists along Brock St. and needs to be resolved as part of the upcoming streetscape reconstruction.

7.1.4 Street Furniture

Based on a detailed analysis of existing streetscape elements/furniture, location, and condition, a proposal should be prepared including:

- A detailed inventory of furniture components to be replaced, supplemented, and/or improved.
- Furniture selection (seating, lighting, waste receptacles) based on common design language.
- A streetscape lighting program that enhances key features, compliments individual façade lighting, enhances landscape and site specific treatments.

7.1.5 Banners and Street Signage

In addition to building signs, the following should be addressed:

- Tourist information signs should be uniform and coordinated in a few visible locations rather than distributed throughout the main street area.
- Signs should be uniform in character, with size and location constituting alterable exceptions i.e. wall mounted, pole mounted.
- In addition to designing a series of “everyday” banners, special event banners should also be considered to announce seasonal change or upcoming festivals and events.
- Consideration should be given to holding a public art and design competition for some or all of these banners (i.e. participation of school children).

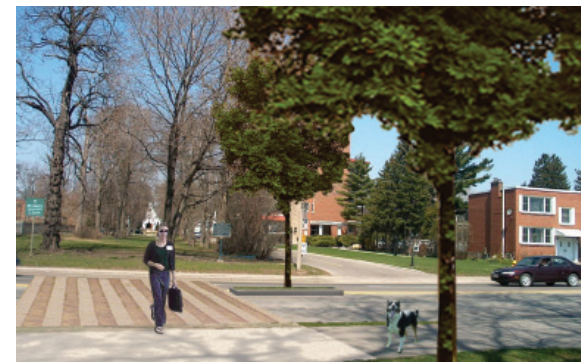


Figure 53.

Crosswalks at key intersections create a safer pedestrian environment and add to the level of streetscape amenity.



Figure 54.

Decorative upgrades add amenity to stock streetscape items.



Figure 55.

Seasonal planting adds a great deal of colour and interest to a main street setting.

8.0 Implementation and Incentives

8.1 Implementation

In order to realize the recommendations of this document, a working partnership based on a sharing of common objectives, vision, resources and strategies needs to be developed between the Township, the Business Improvement Association, individual property owners, and the public at large.

The designation of an area for regulatory and civic improvement whether called a Heritage Conservation District, Main Street Improvement Area, or something else entirely, is key to setting out a redevelopment and improvement strategy and working towards it.

Begin with determining the 'area' to be defined within the boundary. The key map at the beginning of this document offers one suggestion, but ultimately this decision rests with the municipality. A thriving downtown is the ultimate goal.

Identify and set out a plan of action initiative by initiative, supported by resources.

In some cases these initiatives will be development-led, best described in the action plan as anticipated outcomes. Public and private initiatives to improve Brock Street on an incremental basis will be the result of Township of Uxbridge working in conjunction with individual property/store owners and/or the Regional Government. Developed as part of this study the following listing of short, mid, and long-term actions provides an initial basis from which to begin to set out a comprehensive action plan.

8.1.1 Short Term Action

Area Designation

This area designation can be referred to and set in a number of different ways. Ultimately the boundary and scope of initiatives must be set to include side streets, other unique cultural areas (in this case the railway), and to allow for a full range of improvements to take place.

Potential Funding Source

In 2003, as part of its Historic Places Initiative, the Federal Government set up a Commercial Heritage Properties Incentive Fund. Properties eligible for support must first be listed with the Canadian Register of Historic Places. They can be commercial and privately owned and as such could potentially be a source of funding for improvements within the proposed heritage district.

Heritage Designation

- Individual buildings and/or areas can be designated as heritage or historical. Depending on the terms of eligibility for the federal government initiative, take steps to include the Uxbridge mainstreet/ railway on the Canadian Register of Historical Places. (www.pc.gc.ca).

Main Street Improvement Plan

- Develop a comprehensive main street improvement plan consisting of urban design guidelines, signage guidelines (the basis for the preparation of a signage permit document), and streetscape design. The latter to be implemented and developed in conjunction with the Regional Government's plan to reconstruct Brock Street.

Urban Design Guidelines

- Develop comprehensive urban design guidelines for the downtown. Once in place, this will in addition to guiding new development, serve as promotional material to attract new businesses and development, particularly along Brock Street.
- Prepare urban design guidelines that set out specific height, massing, and public improvement standards for Brock Street and incorporate them into the planning review process.

Streetscape Improvement Plan

- Develop a comprehensive streetscape plan for Brock Street to be implemented in conjunction with the Region's Plan to reconstruct Brock Street. This plan can be developed as a component of, or compliment to, the Urban Design Guidelines.



Figure 57.
York-Durham Heritage Railway Station.



Figure 58.
Back lot views off Albert Street to buildings fronting onto Brock Street.



Figure 56.
Panorama of the Rail Corridor and vicinity, possible site for culturally designated improvement.

Façade and Signage Improvement

- Develop (separately or in conjunction with the Urban Design Guidelines a Façade and Signage Improvement Program.
- As part of this effort, consider undertaking a restoration/signage demonstration project scheduled to begin or end with a well-timed public event.
- Set up an advisory body to review all façade and signage improvement applications.
- Target key service and retail uses that are currently missing from the main street.

In addition to complimenting existing enterprise, 'restore' and 'update' some of the former historic uses once found along Brock Street e.g.) speciality grocery store, boutique hotel.

- Launch a public relations campaign to communicate to individual property owners and the public at large the importance and potential of restoring heritage structures and of improving Brock Street. Identify ways to involve the public, e.g. a design competition for the creation of new banners, perhaps involving local schools.
- The Township should commit to locate all new public uses on main streets and obtain a similar commitment from other levels of government and agencies.

8.1.2 Mid-Term Actions

Economic Development Strategy

- Develop a coordinated economic development plan. The main street improvement initiative, even though it all likelihood will precede this action, is an important part of this strategy.
- A component of the overall action plan is an economic/marketing strategy targeted to develop key infill sites along Brock Street, namely the parking lot located between the CIBC Branch and Fiddler's Restaurant (possibly a public/private partnership).



Figure 59.

This back-of-lot store front illustrates the commercial and cultural potential of the Albert Street loop.

- An Uxbridge Website should be launched extolling the virtues and development potential of downtown Uxbridge.
- Put in place incentive programs to facilitate downtown improvement.



Figure 60.

Buildings such as this one located on Albert Street would make fine live-work studios.

8.2 Incentives

8.2.1 Short Term Action

Façade Restoration Loan Program

A program to assist downtown property owners interested in improving their building façade. Qualifying property owners may be eligible for a ten year, interest free loan up to a maximum of \$25,000.00 or half the value of the façade improvements being proposed. All buildings within a specific area designated by the municipality are eligible independent of style, age or use.

Improvements supported by the program include: repainting, repointing, window repair, removal of inappropriate signage or cladding, installation of new signage, canopies, awnings and lighting.

Property owners who qualify for assistance must be registered and have at least a 10% equity stake in the property. Prior to approval of assistance, a façade loan improvement application, supplied by the municipality, needs to be submitted along with two quotes in support of the proposed improvements.



Figure 61.

This façade improvement, undertaken as part of the London's (Ont.) main street improvement initiative (Façade Improvement Program), is a fine example of what can be achieved through a well co-ordinated city-endorsed program.

Loans are provided once the improvements have been completed, an inspection has been carried out by City Staff and a loan agreement has been signed. Loan recipients begin to pay back the loan six months after the date of issue on a monthly basis. At any time the loan can be repaid in full by the property owner.



Upgrade to Building Code Loan Program

This program assists property owners with interior improvements that relate to Fire and Building Code requirements. Qualifying property owners may be eligible for a ten year, interest free loan up to a maximum of \$50,000 or half the value of the work being proposed. All buildings within a designated area are eligible to apply.

Improvements supported by the program include: fire separation and protection systems, plumbing, heating, electrical and ventilation systems, reinforcement of floors, ceilings or walls, window openings, and professional fees for eligible works.

Application, eligibility, loan payment and repayment terms are similar to that of the Façade Restoration Loan Program.

Rehabilitation Grant Program

As a means of providing economic incentive for the rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of commercial and residential buildings in the core, the City will grant back to registered property owners whose improvement has resulted in a property tax increase a portion of the increase every year for ten years.

To be deemed eligible property owners submit an application to the City accompanied by a building permit. Based on this application a determination of the pre-improved and post-improved property tax assessment is made by the City.

Based on the increased property tax value an grant equal to a portion of the tax



Figure 62.

This row of main street buildings has recently applied for support through the City of London's Rehabilitation Grant Program.

increase is granted back over ten years. Property owners receive the grant at the completion of the tax year and after taxes have been paid.

Additional Programs and Incentives Development Charges

Waived for all residential development within the downtown.

Parking Requirements

Waived for all residential development in the downtown.

Consulting and Marketing Expertise:

In London, an arms-length organization sponsored by the City and the local B.I.A. has been set up to revitalize the downtown

through enhancement of its identity, preservation of its heritage, strengthening of its economic vitality and its restoration as a centre of community activity using the four point approach: organization, design, promotion, and economic restructuring.

This program illustrates the importance of developing a coordinated plan and adopting a team approach to achieving full scale improvement.

8.2.2 Long Term Action

- Revise the Official Plan and specific planning controls to allow and enable community improvement initiatives and allow heritage conservation goals to be fully realized.



Figure 63.

A view to the Uxbridge post office along Brock Street taken during the 1968 Christmas Parade.

Uxbridge the Good Old Days, p. 166

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