

Heritage Places of Worship: A Guide to Conserving Heritage Places of Worship in Ontario Communities

Ontario's heritage places of worship are celebrated and respected as spiritual centres and enduring landmarks in our communities. Few places of worship are protected under the Ontario Heritage Act. Heritage places of worship are underrepresented in the record of Ontario's protected heritage properties.

Today, property owners of heritage places of worship face many challenges. These can include dwindling congregations, shrinking revenues and rising costs, aging building stock, public safety and accessibility, real estate pressures, adapting to new forms of worship and changing attitudes. At the same time, many heritage places of worship are important to the larger community as resources of cultural heritage value or interest, as well as centres of spirituality and community services. Property owners often have a difficult task of determining priorities regarding the ongoing care of heritage places of worship, accommodating the evolving practices and religious needs of faith groups, while considering and contributing towards the interests of the broader community.

In most cases, heritage places of worship must cover operating, maintenance and capital investments through a combination of donations, grants and incentives (for example, property owned by a church or religious organization or leased to another charitable organization as a place of worship is exempt from property tax under the Ontario Assessment Act).

Many heritage properties change or are adapted over time, but places of worship may be different in that they often have evolving spiritual value in addition to cultural heritage value. Heritage places of worship may be thought of as "living cultural heritage resources" due to the ongoing need to change or adapt them to new philosophies, doctrines or practices of worship. This should be considered when deciding the best approach to conserving a heritage place of worship.

This guide is meant to be an initial point of reference to assist in the conservation and protection of all types of heritage places of worship in Ontario. Each section provides links to relevant Ontario Heritage Tool Kit guides and other tools available on provincial ministry websites. Online sources of information specific to heritage places of worship are also provided.

The guide will help those involved in planning for and making decisions on the conservation, designation, alteration, disposal and demolition of heritage properties built or adapted as places of worship, recognizing their unique characteristics and circumstances.

What's in this guide?

1. Introduction

This section sets out the context for the conservation of heritage places of worship, including an overview of key provincial legislation guiding municipal and property owners' decision-making regarding heritage properties.

2. Identifying and Evaluating Heritage Places of Worship

This section describes considerations for identifying, researching and evaluating heritage places of worship, which may result in including the property on the municipal register.

- Case study 1 : St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Brampton

3. Recognizing Heritage Places of Worship in Your Community

This section sets out the range of options for recognizing, commemorating and protecting heritage places of worship, from good stewardship and promotion, through to legal tools provided under the Ontario Heritage Act — designation and heritage conservation easements.

- Case study 2: Sandwich First Baptist Church, Windsor

4. Effectively Conserving and Managing Heritage Places of Worship

This section discusses considerations for keeping heritage places of worship viable in the community while conserving and protecting their cultural heritage value or interest. It discusses the effect of the Ontario Heritage Act on alterations, as well as tools available under the Planning Act to extend the useful life of the property.

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7.1 Appendix A: Surveying and Researching Heritage Places of Worship

7.2 Appendix B: Conserving the Landscape of Heritage Places of Worship

This guide is one of several published by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries as part of the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit. The Ministry has published these guidance materials as an aid to municipalities and others working with the Ontario Heritage Act. The information in this guidance is not intended to take the place of legal advice. In the event of any conflict between this guidance and any applicable legislation or regulations, including the Ontario Heritage Act and its regulations, the legislation or regulations prevails.



Figure 1. Stewart Memorial Church in Hamilton is home to Hamilton's longest surviving predominantly Black congregation (Image courtesy of the City of Hamilton).

1. Introduction

This guide provides information on the heritage conservation process in Ontario and the specific considerations that may arise when heritage places of worship are involved.

The Ontario Heritage Act is the legislative framework for Ontario’s heritage conservation process. The process follows a standard series of steps and decisions, described in detail in the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit.

This guide discusses some of the unique aspects of places of worship that possess cultural heritage value or interest. It also highlights considerations that may be helpful to all parties involved in or affected by conservation, designation, alteration, disposal and demolition of heritage places of worship.

Communities find spiritual value in a wide range of places, and determining what makes a place a “place of worship” can be a community – or even a personal decision. This guide is intended to apply to any heritage place of worship that is currently owned or managed by a religious organization (“property owner”).

This includes properties in active use as places of worship as well as those that have ceased to be used for this purpose and may be under consideration for other uses.

For the purposes of this guide, “places of worship” is an inclusive term that includes churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, chapels (e.g., within convents or seminaries), shrines, meeting houses or other built places of assembly for religious purposes.

SIDEBAR:

The Ontario Heritage Act and the Planning Act

This guide focuses on the Ontario Heritage Act but occasionally refers to provisions and tools provided for under the Planning Act such as the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).

The Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries’ Ontario Heritage Act provides a framework for the protection of heritage properties and archaeological resources.

It defines the municipal and provincial roles in heritage conservation, including the role of the province’s heritage agency, the Ontario Heritage Trust.

The Act provides municipal councils with a number of tools to identify and protect properties with cultural heritage value or interest:

- *Power to establish a heritage committee*
- *Power to establish a register of heritage properties*
- *Powers to designate and manage changes to individual properties and heritage conservation districts*
- *Criteria to determine cultural heritage value or interest.*

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Planning Act sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario.

The PPS is issued under the authority of the Planning Act and provides direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development to planning authorities such as municipalities.

The PPS deals specifically with cultural heritage and resources in Section 2.6. This section requires planning authorities to conserve significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. The PPS also provides for the conservation of significant archaeological resources and consideration of protected heritage property when developing adjacent lands.

The Planning Act also provides the authority for the preparation of official plans and planning documents that guide development in Ontario communities.

More information on the Ontario Heritage Act can be found at

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries>.

More information on cultural heritage in the context of the Planning Act and the Provincial Policy Statement may be found in:

- Heritage Resources in the Land Use Planning Process: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology Policies of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020
- Strengthening Ontario's Heritage.

All are available at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries>

In addition, more information on land use planning in Ontario is available on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing web page: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-municipal-affairs-housing>.

2. Identifying and Evaluating Heritage Places of Worship

SIDEBAR:

In the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit:

Details about the processes described in this section may be found in Heritage Property Evaluation: A Guide to Listing, Researching and Evaluating Cultural Heritage Property in Ontario Communities, available at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries>

It is common to find heritage places of worship at the centre of a village, town or urban community, identified as local landmarks. The place of worship, its associated open space, cemetery, landscaping and related structures are all part of the overall context or setting. The physical location of a heritage place of worship and how it relates to its immediate environment produces, over time, a sense of place, based on personal, social, cultural and ancestral relationships.

SIDEBAR:

Definition of “heritage attributes”

The Ontario Heritage Act defines “heritage attributes” as: “in relation to real property, and to the buildings and structures on the real property, the attributes of the property, buildings and structures that contribute to their cultural heritage value or interest.”

The conservation of a heritage place of worship begins with understanding the full range of a community’s cultural heritage resources. A heritage property evaluation generally involves these steps:

- Research to gather and record information about the property
- Determination of “cultural heritage value or interest” based on provincially-prescribed criteria (hyperlink to regulation), with input from heritage consultants and the community
- Documentation of the research and evaluation process
- Preparation of a “Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest” and a description of “heritage attributes”.

2.1. Identifying heritage places of worship with cultural heritage value or interest

The process of identifying heritage properties in a community is essential for informed municipal decision-making. It creates community awareness, which may lead to formal recognition and protection.

Under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, the municipal clerk is required to keep a current register of properties of cultural heritage value or interest situated in the municipality. The register must include all properties designated under Part IV of the Act. In addition, property that has not been designated, but that the municipal council believes to be of cultural heritage value or interest, may be placed on the register. This practice of including non-designated properties in the register is commonly referred to as “listing”.

Municipal councils and staff often work with a municipal heritage committee, where one exists, a local interest group (e.g., historical society, local chapter of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario), or a *qualified person* ([link to glossary definition](#)) to identify and evaluate properties to include on the register. These groups normally conduct a survey of the community’s potential heritage properties and screen them against criteria for potential cultural heritage value or interest, before making their recommendations to council about properties to include on the municipal register of heritage properties. These properties can include heritage places of worship.

Since listing a heritage place of worship indicates that it could be considered for further municipal recognition and protection (e.g., designation), municipalities are required to notify property owners that their property has been added to the municipal register. Details about the notification process and requirements can be found in the *Heritage Property Evaluation Guide*.

Where the property owner’s administrative authority is centralized (e.g., a diocese), a coordinated strategic approach to research and evaluate multiple heritage places of worship may be the most efficient and effective manner in which to proceed. To do this, the property owner may need to engage with a number of municipalities in a region.

2.2. Research and analysis



Figure 2. 1842 sketch of old Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton (Image courtesy of the Archives of Ontario)

Historical research is necessary to document the history and development of a heritage property and to identify any association it has to the broader context of community heritage. This research involves the use of land records, maps, photographs, publications, archival materials and other documentation. In this regard, many faith groups maintain archives that can be useful sources of information about heritage places of worship.

Research should reveal dates of construction, original and later uses, significant people or events, technologies, philosophy, factors such as natural disasters or fires and other details about the heritage property. This information is useful in the evaluation of the cultural heritage value or interest of the property.

Site visits supplement the historical research. On-site examination of the property provides further opportunity to look for physical evidence of history and use.

Documentation and analysis of the heritage place of worship's landscape and context should be included to allow a full evaluation of its cultural heritage value or interest.

Associated cultural heritage landscape features of the property such as landscape design, cemeteries, fences, archaeological resources and trees may have cultural heritage value or interest.

The findings of the historical research and on-site analysis form the background information that will be used in determining the cultural heritage value and deciding the appropriate course of action for conserving a heritage place of worship.

See Appendix A for more information on surveying and researching heritage places of worship.



Figure 3. St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church in Kenora is listed on the municipal register of heritage properties (Image courtesy of the City of Kenora).

2.3.Evaluation

If a heritage place of worship is being considered for individual municipal property designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, it will undergo a more rigorous evaluation against

criteria set out in *Ontario Regulation 9/06, Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest*. The criteria are grouped into the categories of Design / Physical Value, Historical / Associative Value and Contextual Value. For more information on Regulation 9/06 see the *Heritage Property Evaluation guide* in the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit.

SIDEBAR:

Ontario's Places of Worship Inventory

The Ontario Heritage Trust maintains Ontario's Places of Worship Inventory, an online inventory of purpose-built places of worship across the province that are more than 25 years old. The inventory contains a wealth of information about Ontario's places of worship and is a helpful resource that can assist property owners and municipalities in planning for conservation and adaptive reuse. For more information go to: <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/en/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database>

If the property is being considered for provincial designation, it will be evaluated for provincial significance against the criteria set out in *Ontario Regulation 10/06, Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of Provincial Significance*.



Figure 4. St. Anne's Anglican Church, Toronto (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust)

2.4. Evaluating Interior Elements

One aspect of most heritage places of worship that makes them different from other heritage properties are their interior furnishings, fittings and decoration. These may have liturgical meaning, not just historic or artistic value. Liturgical elements are building elements, ornaments or decorations that are symbols or material things traditionally considered by a faith to be part of the rites of public worship.

Interiors contain items that may be classified as fixtures or chattels. Determining whether a liturgical element is a fixture or chattel can be complex and often must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

SIDEBAR

The Ontario Heritage Act defines property for the purposes of Part IV as “real property and includes all buildings and structures thereon”. This includes anything fixed to the property (“fixture”) but excludes anything portable (“chattel”).

Generally, a fixture is something affixed to the property by means other than its own weight, which cannot be removed without causing damage to the building fabric. A chattel is a moveable item of property not permanently attached to land or a building. Sometimes the liturgical element may seem to fall between the two categories. Wall paintings and leaded or stained glass windows would be considered fixtures but framed paintings and freestanding sculptures would not.

While both fixtures and chattels may have cultural heritage value or interest, only fixtures are part of property. Therefore, only fixtures may be protected under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Additional considerations in evaluating interior elements include:

- Their artistic, craftsmanship and design value (e.g., the element could be integral to the design or function and removal would affect the overall cultural heritage value or interest)
- Their historical value (e.g., the element could have a strong association with a religious or local community. It could document changes in building use for liturgical, social or community service purposes).

2.5. Result of Evaluations

The result of these evaluations is a recommended statement of cultural heritage value or interest and a description of the heritage attributes that support the property’s cultural heritage value or interest. These form the basis of the municipal council’s decision on a designation bylaw which sets out the features of the property that must be protected.

Municipalities should consult with the property owner on the evaluation and resulting statement of cultural heritage value or interest to determine the heritage attributes that require protection, as well as the most appropriate protective mechanism.



Figure 5. Christ Church, Chapel Royal of the Mohawk in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Bay of Quinte (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust).

Case study 1: St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Brampton - Evaluation of a Heritage Place of Worship



Figure 6. Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust

Designated in 2010 under the Ontario Heritage Act

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church is a landmark connected to the historic Irish community of Wildfield. Although little remains of historic Wildfield, the church is still known as the Mother Church for all Catholic parishes in Peel Region. It was designed by Post and Holmes Architects and built in 1894. The popularity of Father McSpiritt, the parish priest from 1887 to 1895, inspired a successful fundraising campaign for its construction, resulting in a building with a high level of craftsmanship. Sadly, the first ringing of the church bell was on the occasion of his burial in the churchyard.

The municipal protection of this heritage place of worship was initiated by council's request that the municipal heritage staff and the municipal heritage committee survey the historic settlements and list properties with the potential to meet the designation criteria on the

municipal register. Under Brampton's municipal designation process, which groups properties in categories, the church was identified as a 'Category A' heritage resource. Brampton's policy is to proceed with the designation process for 'Category A' properties. Council therefore requested that staff prepare a designation report, which involved documenting the site, conducting further historical research, and engaging with residents of the Wildfield community.

Brampton council also notified the property owner, the Archdiocese of Toronto, of its intention to designate and shared a copy of the draft designation report. The Archdiocese consulted with its own heritage and architectural advisors. Communication between the municipality and the Archdiocese was facilitated through a single point of contact – the municipal heritage planner and the Archdiocese's heritage consultant – so that the drafting of the designation bylaw could proceed with a common understanding. The shared goal was to protect the place of worship's heritage value while respecting the religious needs and operations. Community engagement strengthened understanding of the property through historical and associative values that are not always physically evident.

While heritage attributes included in a designation bylaw are decided on a case-by-case basis, chattels cannot be designated as they are not part of real property. In this case, discussion between the municipality and the property owner (i.e., the Archdiocese) led to agreement that the designation bylaw would reference interior heritage attributes such as the stained glass windows while also excluding liturgical objects in order to facilitate the ongoing use of the building as a church.

As noted in the staff report to the municipal council on the designation, "Notwithstanding any other references to the contrary, the following are not reasons for the heritage designation nor are they elements of the property that will be designated pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act: liturgical elements and liturgical furnishings, being symbols and material things that are part of the worship of God. The principal liturgical furnishings of the church include, but are not limited to, the altar, the chair, the ambo, the tabernacle, the pews, and images, including any windows with liturgical images."

While this approach met the needs of the parties involved in this case, it would be more appropriate to specifically list in the bylaw any liturgical objects or other physical features that are not considered heritage attributes for the purposes of designation to ensure there is a common understanding of the effect of the designation bylaw.

In addition, the municipality recognized that the church's contextual value as a landmark was one of the most important cultural heritage values to protect. The designation signals that any

future planning and development on adjacent lands will need to be respectful of this heritage place of worship.



Figure 7. Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust

Points to note:

- The municipality took a proactive and planned approach to listing and designation.
- The municipality engaged the property owner in dialogue and collaboration early in the designation process. The resulting bylaw reflected the property's value to the community while taking the ongoing religious use of the heritage place of worship into consideration.
- The community was involved in providing associative and contextual value.
- Both the municipality and the property owner retained heritage consultants at key points in the process.

3. Recognizing Heritage Places of Worship in your Community

SIDEBAR:

In the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit:

Details about the designation processes described in this section can be found in:

Designating Heritage Properties: A Guide to Municipal Designation of Individual Properties under the Ontario Heritage Act

Heritage Conservation Districts: A Guide to District Designation under the Ontario Heritage Act

Infosheet: Ontario Heritage Act, Part Iv: Provincial Powers to Conserve Property of Cultural Heritage value or Interest of Provincial Significance

All are available at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries>.

The act of commemorating, recognizing and protecting heritage places of worship provides a public demonstration of what a community values. These activities promote awareness in the community and beyond and help ensure change is appropriate to the unique circumstances of the heritage place of worship.

Commemoration, recognition and protection can be initiated by the municipality or the property owner and can be achieved through a variety of tools. Municipalities should work in collaboration with owners of heritage places of worship to determine the most appropriate tools to use.

Many of the tools outlined in this section can be used in combination to tailor commemoration, recognition and protection to individual circumstances of a heritage place of worship.

3.1. Good stewardship and promotion

Good stewardship and promotion of a heritage place of worship is often informally fostered by religious organizations, members of a congregation or a Friends Group who voluntarily undertake to commemorate and conserve it without any legal protection mechanism. This may be as simple as developing a brochure or a website. More formally, the governing authority may develop manuals or guidelines for property care.

Capital improvements and restorations are often supported through fundraising campaigns. Donors of building features (e.g., stained glass window) may provide endowments with terms that stipulate how they are to be cared for.

Heritage places of worship across Ontario may also be promoted through publicity and interpretive events such as Doors Open Ontario, Ontario Heritage Week activities, local tourism initiatives, walking tours and similar events that build awareness of a community's cultural heritage resources.

3.2. Commemoration and recognition

Public recognition of a heritage place of worship acknowledges and builds awareness of its history and cultural heritage value or interest. Many organizations interested in local, provincial, or national history, including local historical societies and municipal heritage committees, recognize cultural heritage resources with formal plaques or markers. Forms of recognition such as plaques do not in themselves provide legal protection.

Most levels of government have programs to recognize important heritage sites through commemorative plaques.

The federal government commemorates National Historic Sites through plaques installed by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

The nominated subject must have historical significance from a national perspective, not only from a local or regional standpoint. Examples of heritage places of worship in Ontario commemorated as National Historic Sites include Notre Dame Roman Catholic Basilica National Historic Site in Ottawa, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church/Former St. Andrew's Church National Historic Site in Hamilton and Nazrey African Methodist Episcopal in Amherstburg.

The Ontario Heritage Trust operates the Ontario government's plaque program for properties of provincial significance. These familiar blue and gold plaques enliven Ontario's heritage by sharing stories of the people, places and events that have helped to shape the province. Applications for plaques come from communities. For more information visit the Trust's plaque website at: www.heritagetrust.on.ca/plaques.

Many municipalities have established their own plaque programs to identify and recognize designated properties or other properties of cultural heritage value or interest to the community.



Figure 9. The unveiling of the provincial plaque for the Kneseth Israel Synagogue in Toronto. (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust)

SIDEBAR:

Doors Open Ontario

Doors Open Ontario is a free annual cultural heritage tourism program led by the Ontario Heritage Trust (the Trust). Since 2002, the program:

- *Encourages Ontarians to discover the stories inside the province's most unique and fascinating historic places, cultural, and natural sites – all free of charge.*
- *Celebrates community identity and drives tourism in communities of all sizes across Ontario.*
- *Builds networks and capacity to create partnerships among arts, culture, heritage and tourism organizations, community business associations, municipalities, and the Trust.*

Doors Open Ontario provides opportunities to showcase heritage places of worship, draw attention to conservation efforts and engage the community. For more information visit:

www.doorsopenontario.on.ca.

SIDEBAR:

The Ontario Building Code

Part 11 of the Code provides compliance alternatives where compliance with the standard requirements under the Code is not viable because “it is detrimental to the preservation of a heritage building”.

Also, where an existing building is subject to alteration or repair, the Code will apply only to those parts of the building being altered or repaired. The entire building is not required to be brought into compliance with modern standards.



Figure 11. St. Mary Immaculate Church (Image courtesy of Richmond Hill)

3.3. Listing on a municipal register

Listing on a municipal register publicly recognizes a property’s cultural heritage value or interest and flags it for consideration in the municipal planning process. In addition, listing provides temporary protection for non-designated properties. The Ontario Heritage Act stipulates that owners of a listed property shall not demolish or remove a building or structure on the property or permit the demolition or removal of the building or structure unless they give the council of the municipality at least 60 days notice in writing of their intention to do so. Municipalities may

also have their own policies about information needed to support the notice to demolish or remove (e.g., heritage impact assessment).

3.4. Designation of individual properties

Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act enables municipal councils to pass bylaws to formally designate individual properties of cultural heritage value or interest. For more detailed information on designating individual heritage properties see the *Designating Heritage Properties guide* in the Ontario Heritage Toll Kit.

Heritage designation:

- Recognizes the importance of a property to the local community
- Protects the property’s cultural heritage value or interest
- Encourages good stewardship, conservation and wise management
- Provides clarity about the property’s heritage attributes to be conserved
- Promotes knowledge and understanding about the property.

The advantage for the owner of a heritage place of worship is that designation recognizes the significance of the property and provides assurance that future owners will respect its cultural heritage value or interest. Designation may provide property owners with access to grants or loans to support the conservation of the property. It also allows flexibility and alternative approaches for compliance with Ontario Building Code requirements (e.g., retaining existing railing heights or door widths).

For the community, designation of heritage properties provides a process to ensure the heritage attributes of a property are conserved over time. Property owners, the municipal heritage committee, where one exists, and municipal staff should work together to ensure that changes to the property respect its cultural heritage value or interest.

SIDEBAR:

Definition of “Alter”

The Ontario Heritage Act defines “alter” as: “to change in any manner and includes to restore, renovate, repair or disturb”.

As set out in Section 1, the statement of cultural heritage value or interest and a description of the heritage attributes form the basis of the designation bylaw, which sets out the physical features of the heritage property that must be protected. They help to guide future alterations

to the designated property by clearly identifying its heritage attributes that should be protected and conserved.

Municipal heritage committees and municipal staff can work with the owner of a heritage place of worship to draft a designation bylaw. Working together is the best way to make sure that the religious based purposes of the property are considered in the process of protecting its cultural heritage value or interest.

During this process it is important to keep in mind that liturgical elements that are chattels (i.e., not real property) or are not of cultural heritage value or interest are excluded from designation. For liturgical elements that form part of the real property and have cultural heritage value or interest, dialogue between decision makers and property owners (on a case-by-case basis) is recommended to determine whether or not they are included or excluded as heritage attributes in the bylaw. The minimum bylaw standards prescribed by regulation permit designation bylaws to include a list of physical features that are not heritage attributes.

Early and meaningful engagement during the designation process will help to address the unique circumstances of describing the heritage attributes of a place of worship, including consideration of ongoing religious use and potential changes to liturgical elements.



Figure 12. The Quaker Meeting House in Newmarket is set back from the road and located in a park-like setting that creates a unique spirit of place (Image courtesy of the City of Newmarket)

SIDEBAR:

Example of a municipal designation bylaw: Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, Toronto



Figure 13. Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust

Designated by the City of Toronto in 2007 under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act

Description of Property – Toronto, 21 Swanwick Avenue

The property at 21 Swanwick Avenue is worthy of designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the categories of design, historical and contextual value.

Located on the south side of Swanwick Avenue, west of Main Street and opposite the entrance to Enderby Road, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church (1893) is documented in J. R. Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto (Vol. 4, 1904, pages 304-306). The property was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1984.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Physical or Design Value:

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church is a representative example of a religious building with Gothic Revival styling. Inspired by English medieval prototypes, Gothic Revival designs are recognized

by the application of pointed-arches, buttresses, and varied window types. Emmanuel Presbyterian Church is a modest rendition of the style, with attention focused on the treatment of the corner tower.

Historical or Associative Value:

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church is an institution that contributed to the historical evolution of the East Toronto community. The development of the site dates to 1888 when a small building was constructed following the merger of two Presbyterian congregations as Emmanuel Presbyterian Church.

The present church was completed in 1893 under the direction of contractors McMillan and Costain. Alterations in 1901 and 1914 included an entrance porch and a large wing (for a church hall and Sunday School). With changes in local demographics, in 1973 Emmanuel Presbyterian Church joined with St. James Presbyterian and St. Matthew's Presbyterian (both established in 1925) to create the Tri-Congregations, a three-point charge served by a team ministry. In 1988, the latter congregations amalgamated as Faith Presbyterian Community Church, now located in East York.

Contextual Value:

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church is a local landmark that is carefully positioned to terminate the view at the south end of Enderby Road. The church contributes to the character of East Toronto, which was incorporated as a Village in 1888 and a Town in 1903.

The residential community grew up around the intersection of Main Street and Gerrard Street East, providing housing for workers at the Grand Trunk Railway yards at the northeast end of the municipality. Among the institutional, religious and educational buildings that became important neighbourhood markers, Fire Hall No. 22 and Police Station No. 10 at 85 and 97 Main Street were completed after the City of Toronto annexed East Toronto in 1910. Located one block east of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, the latter properties are recognized on the City's heritage inventory.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church related to its design value as a representative example of Gothic Revival styling are found on the exterior walls and roof, consisting of:

- The plan, with the main body of the church rising one extended storey under a steeply pitched gable roof with the gable end facing Swanwick Avenue.

- *The application of red brick cladding, with brick, stone, wood and metal trim.*
- *The square tower, anchoring the northeast corner, with an entrance and pointed-arched window opening at the base, pointed-arched openings with louvres and tracery, and a pyramidal roof with tourelles, and copper trim.*
- *The open porch, protecting the main entrance, with detailing reflecting the early 20th century Arts and Crafts movement.*
- *On the main body, the principal (north) façade with a trio of pointed-arch window openings and a narrow lancet window beneath the apex of the gable.*
- *On the side elevations of the main body (east and west), the battered buttresses, gabled wall dormers, segmental-arched window openings with brick flat arches and stone sills and, on the west wall, the enclosed entrance porch with pointed-arched window openings (one of the window openings on the east wall has been bricked in).*
- *The complementary addition at the southwest end of the church, with brick cladding, gable roof with a gabled dormer on the north slope, and flat-headed door and window openings with brick and stone trim.*

The rear (south) wall of the church has no distinguishing features and is not included in the cultural heritage value of the property.

3.5. Designation of heritage conservation districts



Figure 14. The Waverley Park Heritage Conservation District in Thunder Bay surrounds one of the oldest municipal parks in Ontario. The district has four churches located within its bounds: Trinity United Church, and St. Paul's United Church, as well as St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church and First Baptist Church, pictured here. The relationship of these churches to the park creates an important sense of place in Thunder Bay (Image courtesy of the City of Thunder Bay).

Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act provides for the designation of heritage conservation districts – heritage that extends beyond the individual properties.

Properties protected within a heritage conservation district are noted for their contribution to the character of the area. Context is often important for places of worship, which tend to have large and prominent buildings and features that are familiar community landmarks. Heritage places of worship can be significant not only for their buildings, but also for cultural heritage landscape features such as landscaping, cemetery or burial ground, viewsheds and corridors, as well as archaeological resources and historical associations.

District designation enables the municipality to manage and guide future change in the district, through a district plan with policies and guidelines for conservation, protection and enhancement of the area's special character. Municipalities must consult with their municipal heritage committee, where established, and the public in the development of the plan.

The municipal clerk is required to keep a current register of all heritage conservation districts (as well as individual designated and listed properties) situated in the municipality.

Following approval of a local designation bylaw for a heritage conservation district, any exterior alterations, additions and demolition to property within a heritage conservation district requires a permit from the municipality. Decisions on whether to issue a permit generally depend on the approved guidelines and plan for the district. Interiors of buildings are not included in a district plan.

It is possible for a heritage place of worship to be designated under Part IV of the Act in addition to being included in a heritage conservation district. This provides for a higher level of protection of both exterior and interior heritage attributes that may otherwise not be covered in a heritage conservation district plan.

For more detailed information about heritage conservation districts, see the *Heritage Conservation Districts guide* in the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit.

3.6. Provincial designation and stop order

Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act enables the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries to designate property of provincial significance and to prohibit the demolition or removal of buildings or structures designated as heritage properties of provincial significance.

Provincial designation is available only if the Minister, in consultation with the Ontario Heritage Trust, determines that the property is provincially significant and there is a provincial interest in designating the property. To be considered provincially significant, properties must meet the specific criteria of provincial significance as set out in Ontario Regulation 10/06.

The Act also enables the Minister to issue a stop order with respect to any property to prevent alteration, damage, or demolition or removal of any building or structure on the property, if the Minister is of the opinion that the property may be of provincial significance.

3.7. Heritage conservation easements

Heritage conservation easements are highly flexible conservation tools. An easement is a voluntary legal agreement entered into by a property owner to protect the heritage character of a property. The terms of the easement are registered on title with the land and apply to all subsequent owners of the property. Easements do not usually prohibit change or limit use. Instead, they ensure that change is managed in a manner consistent with sound conservation principles and that heritage character is preserved and maintained. The level of control is determined by the easement terms and conditions.

The Ontario Heritage Act empowers the Ontario Heritage Trust to enter into heritage conservation easement agreements with property owners. The Act also provides for municipal councils to pass bylaws allowing them to enter into easement agreements for the conservation of property of cultural heritage value or interest.

Easements may be used to protect exterior and interior features, as well as landscape features. Because each property has its own unique cultural heritage value and heritage attributes, an easement agreement may be tailored to the specific circumstances of a place of worship. The Trust or the municipality works in partnership with the property owner to develop the terms and content of each agreement.

Details about the Ontario Heritage Trust's Conservation Easement Program can be found at <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/en/pages/tools/conservation-easements>.



Figure 15. The Sharon Temple, East Gwillimbury, is protected by an Ontario Heritage Trust easement (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust).

Case study 2: Sandwich First Baptist Church, Windsor



Figure 16. MHSTCI

Community Recognition of a Heritage Place of Worship

Designated in 1995 under the Ontario Heritage Act

Located in the historic Town of Sandwich, the Sandwich First Baptist Church is one of the oldest active Black churches in Canada. The church was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act for its important historic connections to the anti-slavery movement and the Underground Railroad. It was also recognized with a provincial plaque in 1997 and was designated a National Historic Site in 2000.

As a border town near a river crossing, Sandwich was a popular destination for slaves seeking freedom in Canada. The Sandwich First Baptist congregation was established in 1840 in a log church located on or near the current site. The congregation played a key role in the Underground Railroad by sheltering and assisting many of the new arrivals. The church was a founding partner of the Amherstburg Regular Missionary Baptist Association, an organization formed in 1841 to assist in the formation of Black Baptist congregations in Canada. The organization consists of nine cross-border partner churches, and remains active today.

In 1847, Queen Victoria granted the congregation land for construction of a church and cemetery. The modest church seen today was constructed from handmade bricks fashioned from clay found on the banks of the Detroit River by members of the congregation. As completed in 1851, the church's original design was plain and simple, with a wooden gabled entrance porch. Gothic windows were added in the 1880s and a two-storey tower replaced the wooden porch in 1920.

Sandwich First Baptist Church is part of Parks Canada's system of National Historic Sites commemorating the Underground Railroad. Through interpretive and educational events such as concerts, plays, tours and Doors Open activities the small congregation promotes awareness of the history of the Black community in Windsor. The tours are very popular, drawing visitors from Canada, the United States and Europe. The congregation also provides educational programs for local school groups, has partnered on provincial and federal government initiatives to promote Black History and is actively building an artifact collection documenting the history of the community.

As a designated property in Windsor, the church is eligible for funding from Windsor's Community Heritage Fund. In 2010, it received a grant of \$47,000 to restore the roof and front door. The congregation worked with the municipal heritage committee and the municipal heritage planner, as well as a local engineer, to ensure that restoration work was sympathetic to the cultural heritage value of the historic church. With limited resources, the congregation

has been able to successfully commemorate and conserve this important symbol of Black History in Canada.

Points to note:

A history of multiple partnerships builds strong community roots and broad recognition.

Recognition by multiple levels of government, builds community pride and awareness.

Community support and recognition is demonstrated by municipal designation and grants to help keep the heritage place of worship viable.

4. Effectively Conserving and Managing Heritage Places of Worship

SIDEBAR:

In the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit:

Details about the municipal process for alteration of designated properties can be found in [Designating Heritage Properties: A Guide to Municipal Designation of Individual Properties under the Ontario Heritage Act](https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries), available at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries>.

The statement of cultural heritage value or interest and accompanying description of heritage attributes is a guide for decisions on conservation, and management of the heritage place of worship. At the same time, those decisions will need to take into account the evolving religious needs of the faith group and other users if it is to remain viable.

Some key factors that help property owners successfully conserve heritage places of worship include:

- Understanding the property's cultural heritage value
- Responsiveness to ongoing change
- Sound conservation principles, using the advice of a multi-disciplinary team of specialists
- A core group of dedicated volunteers
- Taking a proactive approach
- A broad base of community and public-sector support and participation
- Identification of the heritage property as a community asset.

The goal should be to conserve cultural heritage value while keeping heritage places of worship viable as active, evolving functional spaces. This section sets out some key considerations for managing heritage places of worship.

4.1. Preventive conservation and maintenance

The conservation of a heritage place of worship covers a range of activities, from ongoing maintenance to large-scale capital restoration projects. Preventive conservation involves developing and implementing a good maintenance routine to reduce deterioration and extend the heritage place of worship's working life. In the long term, it is also cost effective. Many larger municipalities have property standards for the maintenance of heritage structures with which owners and occupants must comply. For example, heritage property standards bylaws have been adopted by the cities of Burlington, Hamilton, Kingston, Kitchener, Mississauga, Toronto and Waterloo and the Town of Oakville.

A good first step is to develop a conservation plan – a practical guide for carrying out ongoing maintenance routines and repairs, as well as planning for future alterations, development or possible disposal. The Ontario environment, with its extremes of temperature, is hard on heritage buildings. A well-thought out conservation plan looks beyond cosmetic work on the appearance of the building to ensuring the short-and long-term stability of the structure. Its purpose is to help manage change in a way that minimizes impact on the heritage place of worship's cultural heritage value or interest without stopping change altogether.

The Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries has produced eight guiding principles for the conservation of cultural heritage properties and their surroundings. These guiding principles set out commonly accepted best practices for decisions concerning heritage conservation. Property owners should use them as a guide when planning for preventive conservation, alterations such as restoration or expansion, and disposal of heritage places of worship. You can find the eight guiding principles at:

http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/InfoSheet_8%20Guiding_Principles.pdf

Periodically conducting a full assessment of the property's condition is important to both understand its physical condition and manage changes and alterations. Such an assessment typically includes a review of the following elements of the heritage place of worship:

- Structural materials and integrity (e.g., foundation, masonry and wood deterioration, interior finishes, hardware and roofing)
- Mechanical systems operation and potential issues (e.g., lighting, mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems, energy conservation)

- Accessibility, safety and security systems
- Exterior property issues (e.g., landscape, drainage, signage, parking)
- History of past repairs.

Decisions about the preventive maintenance of a heritage place of worship should address both the need to conserve its heritage attributes with the requirements of ongoing use. In keeping with the guiding principles, some conservation best practices include:

- Maintaining heritage attributes on an ongoing basis, with the least intervention necessary
- Repairing heritage attributes using recognized conservation methods
- Replacing missing or extensively deteriorated parts with original materials, based on surviving prototypes
- Conducting ongoing routine condition monitoring.

Many faith groups are striving to be more environmentally conscious about their property decisions by implementing “greening” programs. Often property owners assume that a building feature, such as a window, must be replaced when it merely needs to be repaired. Repairs are not only cost-effective, they also maintain original building materials, fulfilling significant heritage conservation and environmental sustainability principles. Programs such as [Greening Sacred Spaces](#) assist faith groups in taking action to create a more sustainable and energy efficient place of worship.

See *Appendix B* for considerations regarding the conservation of the landscape and context.

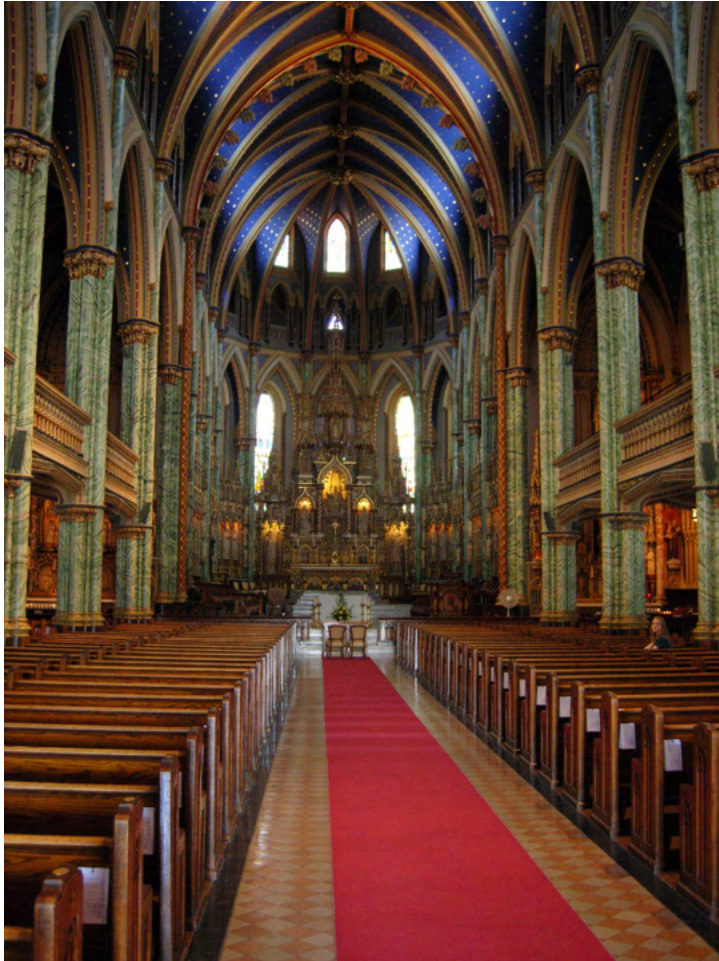


Figure 17. The interior of Notre Dame Roman Catholic Basilica in Ottawa (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust).

4.2.Alterations

Over time, a heritage place of worship may require alterations, either to accommodate changes in religious use or community programs, or to comply with legislated requirements in such areas as public health, safety and accessibility. Before deciding to make changes to a heritage place of worship, it is recommended that the property owner engage a qualified person to conduct an assessment of the building condition and its needs (“needs assessment”), to help determine the appropriate course of action over time. This assessment should outline:



Figure 18. St. Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust)

Whether current conditions, unchanged or with minor modifications, would conserve the cultural heritage value while meeting the religious needs and/ or legislated requirements

- The impact, both physical and visual, of the proposed change on the heritage attributes.
- Whether the proposed change will improve the heritage place of worship's long-term viability
- The resources required for the proposed change and its long-term maintenance.

If the change will affect the heritage attributes of the heritage place of worship or its appearance in its context (e.g., construction of an addition), a heritage impact assessment by a qualified person is also recommended.

A heritage impact assessment is a study to determine if a heritage property will be impacted by a specific proposed development or site alteration. This type of study can also show how the

heritage place of worship could be conserved in the context of a site redevelopment or alteration (e.g., subdivision of the property).

If the property is designated or protected by an easement, sharing this documentation, together with a description of the religious needs and mission of the place of worship, with the municipality or easement holder before making an application for alteration will allow for early dialogue in the decision-making process.

Recognizing that heritage properties may require alteration as needs and uses shift over time, the Ontario Heritage Act provides a statutory and procedural framework to help manage and guide change in a way that also sustains the cultural heritage value of the property.

The alteration processes set out in Parts IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act help to ensure that the heritage attributes of a designated property or a property in a heritage conservation district are conserved. If the property owner wishes to make alterations to the property that affect the property's heritage attributes, the owner must obtain written consent (for an individual designation) or a permit (for a property in a heritage conservation district) from municipal council. The demolition or permanent removal of a heritage attribute on a designated property is considered a 'demolition' under the Ontario Heritage Act and would require the approval of council. Under the Ontario Heritage Act, the property owner may appeal municipal decisions on alteration and demolition applications to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), which has the power to render a decision that is binding. If a place of worship has been listed but not designated, the Ontario Heritage Act does not require municipal consent for alterations. It is recommended, however, that owners of non-designated heritage places of worship included on a register engage with the municipality when considering an alteration.

Properties protected by heritage conservation easements have their own specific review and approval processes for alterations.

Early contact and communication between the property owner, the municipality or easement holder and the municipal heritage committee, where one exists, is important. Having discussions and identifying any issues at the beginning of the process will save time and money and help build community understanding and relationships.

The designation bylaw is a guiding document for a municipality considering alteration or demolition applications to a designated heritage place of worship. Municipalities should also consider any other relevant requirements that might apply to the particular situation (e.g., Provincial Policy Statement, Ontario Building Code) when making their decision.

In addition, key considerations include:

- Reason for the alteration or demolition (e.g., liturgical purposes, public safety, accessibility)
- The appropriateness of the proposed design, character and materials proposed
- Other options considered and rationale for the preferred option
- Whether the alteration or demolition improves the property's continued use
- Alignment of the proposed alteration or demolition with the guiding principles for conservation of cultural heritage properties (e.g., reversibility)
- History of alterations or demolitions to the property
- Visual impact of the alteration or demolition on the heritage attributes and appearance
- Visual and physical impact of the alteration or demolition on surrounding properties
- Impact of the alteration or demolition on other features of the place of worship (e.g., an alteration that allows more natural light into the interior may negatively affect light-sensitive objects such as works of art)



Figure 19. The Precious Blood Cathedral in Sault Ste. Marie (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust).

4.3. Additional consideration for exterior alterations or demolitions

Concerns for exterior alterations (restoration, additions, partial demolitions or expansions) generally focus on sensitivity to the historic appearance of the buildings, property and the context.

If the alteration is an addition, a range of design options is possible, from historic reproduction to contemporary. Key considerations include:

- Impact of the addition's form, scale, massing, and positioning on the design and context of the heritage property
- Impact on the historic appearance and functionality of the building
- How the materials and finishing fit with the heritage building.
- Additional considerations for interior alterations

Interior features of a heritage place of worship can be included as heritage attributes in the designation bylaw. Examples of interior features that could be identified as heritage attributes include, but are not limited to, columns, screens, pulpits, memorials, light fixtures and decorative woodwork. Alterations to the interior may be necessary for liturgical reasons, to further the faith group's community mission, to address requirements of public safety, access or security or to restore the original appearance. In addition to the general considerations, other issues that may arise when considering alterations to the interior of a heritage place of worship include:

- Impact of the proposed alteration on the original design, appearance and functionality of the building's interior
- How any new elements, materials and finishes fit with the interior heritage attributes and affect how people use or experience the building (e.g., covering or removal of floor finishes can have an impact on acoustics as well as a visual impact)
- How elements that might be removed (e.g., seating that is being updated) will be maintained or reused.

As with exterior alterations, the approach to interior alterations should be sensitive to the heritage attributes of the heritage place of worship. If a heritage attribute is permanently removed, it is considered a demolition under the Ontario Heritage Act and would require the approval of council.

4.4.Subdivision of Property

Property owners of heritage places of worship on large properties may wish to divide this large piece of land into two or more parcels and offer one or more for sale, providing funding for

conservation or community programming. This is subdividing property and the provisions of the Planning Act come into play. Property owners should consult with the municipal planning department to determine whether subdivision is permitted and about any planning related considerations (e.g., requirement for a heritage impact assessment).

If the property owner proposes to subdivide the property for development purposes, key considerations include:

- The statement of cultural heritage value or interest may include the landscape or context of the property
- Visual impact of the proposed subdivision and development on the heritage place of worship (e.g., setbacks, size, height)
- Impact on views and sightlines to the heritage place of worship from the street and neighbouring properties
- An archaeological assessment may be required if the property has archaeological potential (e.g., cemeteries, which may also have burials outside the boundary of the property).

4.5. Rezoning to adjust density

Some municipalities grant planning and development concessions as an incentive to retain heritage places of worship with cultural heritage value or interest in a new development. One example of this is rezoning to adjust density.

Essentially, this involves protecting a heritage property (e.g., through designation or heritage easement) to ensure that it is conserved, in exchange for allowing the developer to increase the amount of floor space or number of residential units they are allowed to create on a subdivided or neighbouring property through a rezoning process.

As this is a Planning Act process, property owners should consult with the municipal planning department for information on their land use policies regarding this process.



Figure 20. The City of Guelph protects views of the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady Immaculate through its Zoning Bylaw and the tools available under the Planning Act, in addition to listing it on the municipal heritage register (Image courtesy of City of Guelph).

4.6. Adjacent development

The Provincial Policy Statement enables municipalities to develop policies and processes to consider mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches, with the goal of conserving the heritage attributes of a protected heritage property potentially affected by adjacent development or site alteration.

4.7. Community partnerships



Figure 21. Poster of annual church picnic (Image courtesy of the Archives of Ontario).

Due to their public community-based mission, heritage places of worship are often thought of as semi-public spaces. The value of the heritage place of worship's history of community service is often considered when evaluating its cultural heritage value or interest. Property owners may seek assistance and support from a wider community beyond their faith group. Partners or friends' groups can assist with their care, maintenance and sustainability.

For the local neighbourhood or community, many heritage places of worship provide large exhibition, performance or gathering spaces, making them ideal partners for local groups or community meetings. These partnerships are mutually beneficial and help to maintain the viability of a heritage place of worship that otherwise might struggle to survive.

For the property owner, involving the wider community in the use of the heritage place of worship builds a broader base of supporters for its conservation and confirms the fact that it is a shared landmark that others value.



Figure 22. St. George's Greek Orthodox Church, Toronto. (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust).

Case study 3: Beth Ezekiel Synagogue, Owen Sound - Managing Heritage Values of a Heritage Place of Worship

Designated in 1990 under the Ontario Heritage Act

Community members of Beth Ezekiel Synagogue refer to it as a 'Shul', a Yiddish term meaning "school" or "community". The former Methodist church (constructed in 1903) is the centre of the Jewish community in Owen Sound.

Jewish families in Owen Sound began meeting in various temporary locations in about 1904. When the former Calvary Church was put up for sale in 1946, community members pooled their resources to purchase it. Because of the Eastern orientation, simple design, and plain windows, few changes were needed to make it into a synagogue. The Ark (an ornamental cabinet where the sacred Torah scrolls are kept) was also reclaimed from a Toronto synagogue demolished in the 1940s.

In 1989 the synagogue contacted the City of Owen Sound to inquire about a heritage designation. Municipal staff met with the members to explain what heritage designation would mean, and the following year Beth Ezekiel was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Rather than focus on the architectural elements, the designation reflects the heritage place of worship's meaning to the Jewish community and its connection to pioneering Jewish families in rural communities.

Designation gave the synagogue access to grants. As well as addressing immediate repairs, the synagogue used some of the funds to hire a heritage consultant. The consultant assessed the building's condition, recommended alterations for its long-term viability while maintaining heritage attributes, and prepared a conservation plan.

By the 1990s, only 15 families remained in the congregation. Members began to discuss what to do with the building as membership declined. They decided to undertake a commemorative window project: each family worked with a local artist to design a window that told their unique story. Refurbishing the windows renewed members' sense of pride and spiritual connection to the building.

In 2002, major structural problems were discovered. After much deliberation and with some concern, the congregation decided to open the doors to the wider community to raise the necessary repair funds. "Rhythm & Jews", a fundraising event highlighting the music, stories and food of the Jewish community, quickly sold out and donations began pouring in. \$30,000 was raised for the restoration work. More importantly, the event reconnected the Shul with the broader Jewish community, more than doubling the congregation.

Since then, the community has continued to raise funds and work on the conservation of the building, in order to meet its evolving community and religious needs. The municipality has contributed to the cost of exterior improvements, including painting, banners and custom-made shutters. In 2007, a major renovation of the courtyard was completed, extending the use of the building without affecting the historic design.

Points to note:

- Designation allows the heritage place of worship to access funding for restoration work.
- The development of a conservation plan helps manage change in a way that minimizes impacts on the cultural heritage value without stopping change altogether.
- Fundraising and capital projects provide social and spiritual connection in the community.

5. Managing Disposal of Heritage Places of Worship

It is always a difficult decision, but not unusual in a rapidly changing and evolving society, to declare a heritage place of worship redundant. Changes in demographic forces and the religious

needs of faith groups may require consolidation of multiple places of worship or moving to a new expanded facility in order to allow the faith to continue to serve its members.

Few congregations are structured to, or capable of, financing the long-term conservation of a property that they no longer use. Some owners of multiple heritage places of worship are faced with making difficult decisions about disposing of properties no longer in active use. Disposal of a property can be a means of funding the conservation of other heritage places of worship.

When the heritage property is no longer viable as an active place of worship, the method of its disposal must be carefully considered to protect its cultural heritage value or interest. Having a conservation plan helps determine the most strategic approach to disposal. It is important to engage with the community when developing a policy or strategy for disposal, as the heritage place of worship remains a part of the community's heritage.

Many former heritage places of worship have been adapted successfully to new uses, giving them a continuing role in the life in the community. It is important that the new use is compatible with the heritage place of worship's cultural heritage value, to ensure its ongoing conservation.

5.1. Deconsecration and removal of liturgical elements

When a congregation or faith group relocates from a designated heritage place of worship to another building there is often a wish to relocate liturgical elements of the building that are intrinsic to worship. If the elements are included as heritage attributes in the designation bylaw, their removal would require municipal approval. In this circumstance, the objectives of heritage conservation and protection should be considered along with the religious needs of the faith group on a case-by-case basis.

5.2. Sale for adaptive reuse

A common option for disposal of an unused heritage place of worship is to sell it. Redundant heritage places of worship are often attractive properties for reuse, either continuing as a place of worship or adapted to a new use. From a heritage conservation point of view, the sale of a property in "as is" condition is preferred to mothballing, relocation or demolition.

Reusing heritage buildings instead of demolishing them is also considered to be better for the environment as it reduces waste of energy and materials.

Ideally, a potential purchaser's proposed new use will suit the existing building and avoid alterations that could impact its heritage attributes.

There are many examples in Ontario of successful adaptive reuse of a heritage place of worship in its original location, undertaken with sensitivity to its heritage attributes. In addition to the examples in this guide, the Ontario Heritage Trust’s Places of Worship Inventory contains detailed case studies showcasing a wide range of adaptive reuses.



Figure 25. The former Queen Street United Church in Kingston is a successful example of the adaptive reuse of a heritage place of worship (Image courtesy of the City of Kingston).

5.3.Mothballing

Where a heritage place of worship is unoccupied but no alternative use has been found, and options for disposal are being considered, there is still a responsibility to maintain the heritage place of worship at a minimal level to avoid loss of its cultural heritage value or interest. This is often called “mothballing”. In this case, the property is stabilized to prevent deterioration and secured against damage from weather, pests, animals or vandals, and regularly monitored and repaired as necessary. This helps protect its heritage attributes and economic value for future use.

The municipality may enforce building standards to ensure the property is not subject to “demolition by neglect”, potentially posing a public health and safety hazard.

5.4.Relocation

Relocation may be considered when a heritage place of worship's heritage attributes would be threatened in its original location. An example would be a proposed road widening or similar public municipal infrastructure project extending into the area of the building itself. If the goal of relocation is to upgrade or provide new facilities, other design options that leave the building in its original position should be considered.

Where it has been determined that a heritage place of worship cannot be retained in place, the first option should be relocation or reorientation on its original site. Relocation off site should be considered only after all options have been fully explored.

If the heritage place of worship is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, relocation is considered "removal". The property owner must follow the same approval process as a request for demolition when seeking approval to relocate a designated heritage place of worship. If relocation is approved, council must repeal the designation bylaw on the original property and may consider passing a new bylaw designating the property to which the building has been relocated. Regulation XX under the Ontario Heritage Act provides municipalities with the option of following a modified and expedited designation process as part of a demolition / removal application process where a building or structure from a previously designated property is relocated to a new property and it is determined that the new property has cultural heritage value or interest. Further details on steps a municipality can and must take following consent to removal of a building or structure on a designated property can be found in the *Designating Heritage Properties* guide.

If relocation from the original site is determined to be the only option, the new location should be chosen with the heritage attributes of the building in mind.



Figure 26. Victoria Square Wesleyan Methodist Church in Markham is a modest 165-year-old wooden frame building which served as a place of worship until 1880, when it was replaced by a larger brick Gothic Revival Church. The building was moved off site and converted to a blacksmith's shop. In 2003, the Victoria Square United Church rallied to purchase the vacant and badly damaged structure. The original wooden chapel was moved back to the church property and lovingly restored (Image courtesy of the Town of Markham).

5.5. Demolition of a Heritage Place of Worship

SIDEBAR:

In the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit:

Details about the municipal process for demolition of designated properties can be found in [Designating Heritage Properties: A Guide to Municipal Designation of Individual Properties under the Ontario Heritage Act](https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries), available at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries>

As a community heritage asset, the demolition of a heritage place of worship should be considered only as a last resort after options that do not involve demolition have been fully explored (e.g., mothballing, sale for adaptive reuse, relocation, retention or partial retention in a new building).

Property owners may need to consider full or partial demolition when the structure of a heritage place of worship is determined to be unstable or unsafe and beyond repair (e.g., as a result of a fire). In these cases, before making the decision to demolish, the property owner should have an analysis of the structure done by a qualified structural engineer with experience in conservation of historic structures to determine whether the damage can be repaired.

Heritage places of worship protected under the Ontario Heritage Act (e.g., listed on the municipal register, designated or with a heritage conservation easement) must follow the demolition permitting process as set out in the Act, as well as any processes specific to the municipality. Proposed demolitions or removal of structures on designated properties require written consent from the municipal council. The property owner may appeal council decisions about demolition to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

If demolition goes ahead, it is important to complete a full record of the existing building. Measured drawings and photographs are the best means to capture the overall structure and property, along with expert recording of as much information as possible on the history, manufacture, placement and detailed description of the heritage attributes. When the property is protected under the Ontario Heritage Act, a best practice is to file this report with the municipality as a record of the property.

The property owner may wish to erect a commemorative plaque, monument, or didactic panel to acknowledge the former historic structure and the site's heritage.



Figure 27. The former St. Francis Roman Catholic Church in Ajax has been converted into the St. Francis Centre, a multicultural space and theatre. This is an example of how a heritage place of worship can be adapted to new use to meet the needs of the community (Image courtesy of the City of Ajax).

Case study 4: Rydal Bank United Church, Township of Plummer Additional - Adaptive Reuse of a Heritage Place of Worship



Figure 28. MHSTCI

Designated in 2006 under the Ontario Heritage Act

Rydal Bank United Church is a heritage place of worship that has been successfully adapted for reuse in its original location. The Carpenter's Gothic style church was constructed in 1907-08 to service the bustling northern farming and mining community. Built on a stone foundation containing "puddingstone" (a local conglomerate rock), the simple wooden church features a steeple, decorative wood shingles, and pierced board gable trim. The church is an important symbol of the town's rich history – at one time Rydal Bank boasted two hotels, a general store, a sawmill, and three churches. When the church was closed in 1978 community members feared that the local landmark would be torn down or allowed to decay; they had already seen other community churches dismantled and moved.

Over the next 10 years, community members worked to ensure that the building did not deteriorate. They carefully preserved the wooden exterior, stained glass windows, and the natural wood paneling of the interior. The Rydal Bank Historical Society was formed in 1987 in an effort to find a new use for the church. The historical society purchased the church in 1989. Its dedicated volunteers now maintain it as a 'living museum' and promote the history of the church and Rydal Bank through open houses, museum displays, and educational tours.

In 2006, the historical society initiated designation of the property under the Ontario Heritage Act in order to ensure the church's continued protection. This was the first heritage designation in Plummer Additional. Using the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit for reference, the historical society walked municipal staff and council through the designation process and requirements. With the support of the municipality and the assistance of an architect based in Sault Ste. Marie, the historical society carefully drafted a bylaw that would protect the stained glass windows and interior heritage attributes – the white globe lamps, wooden pews, communion table, pump organ and pulpit – as well as the wooden exterior. By doing much of the legwork for the small municipal staff, the historical society made the designation process easy and appealing.

Rydal Bank is a small community of only 23 families, yet the historical society has managed to raise significant funding to restore and maintain the building. To mark the 100th anniversary of the church in 2008, the group raised over \$30,000 (including a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation) to restore the stained glass windows. The historical society continues to fundraise through special events and an annual community Thanksgiving dinner. The successful adaptive reuse and conservation of this local landmark by a small, rural community is due to the hard work of the historical society, continued community support, and the cooperation of the various parties during disposal.



Figure 29. MHSTCI

Points to note:

- Creative adaptive reuse was the result of grassroots volunteer activity in a small rural community.
- The heritage place of worship was mothballed and carefully maintained for an extended period until a new use was found.
- There was successful long-term cooperation and collaboration between the property owner and municipality before and after the adaptive reuse.

6. Resources and Further Information

For more information on the Ontario Heritage Act and conserving your community heritage, contact the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries or the Ontario Heritage Trust at:

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries

Ontario Heritage Trust

www.heritagetrust.on.ca

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A: Surveying and Researching Heritage Places of Worship

Surveying and research are important first steps toward determining a heritage place of worship's cultural heritage value or interest. Surveying identifies potential heritage places of worship. Research provides design, historical and contextual information and analysis. This information is used to evaluate the heritage place of worship against the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest set out in O. Reg. 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act. See also the *Heritage Property Evaluation* guide.

Surveying

A survey provides a broad understanding of the range of heritage places of worship within a defined geographic area. It may be done by:

- A faith group surveying all of its affiliated heritage places of worship within its jurisdiction (e.g., diocese, synod, presbytery)

- A community (e.g., municipality and municipal heritage committee) surveying all heritage places of worship within its boundaries
- A collaborative partnership of faith group and community.

An existing community survey of heritage properties may already include heritage places of worship. If not, a good starting point is the Ontario Heritage Trust's Ontario's Places of Worship website. This web-based tool can provide a list of purpose-built places of worship over 25 years old within any given area in Ontario. It also provides a template for a basic survey record, including:

- Heritage place of worship name
- Architectural description
- Municipal street address
- Designer and builder
- Municipality
- Type of protection (e.g., listed, designated)
- Legal description of the property
- Type of commemoration (e.g.,
- Associated faith group's plaque)
- Year constructed
- Photographs
- History of the property
- Research and analysis
- Sources of information

Many communities have municipal heritage committees or municipal staff with expertise in heritage conservation.

Community-based resources include local libraries, archives, municipal records, historical and heritage organizations and local branches of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.

Many faith groups have their own archives (e.g., Ontario Jewish Archives in Toronto, Baptist Church Archives in Hamilton).

Individual places of worship may hold records.

A title search at the local land registry office may reveal development approvals and other historic rights and interests affecting the property over time.

Hiring a qualified person to undertake this work can be a cost-effective option when resources permit. Qualified persons means individuals – professional engineers, architects, archaeologists, etc. – having relevant, recent experience in the conservation of cultural heritage resources. They are familiar with the research and analysis process.

Design value or physical value

Apart from providing a physical description and history, architectural analysis often tells much about the goals and aspirations of the faith community as shown through the stylistic qualities of the building. Architectural records (e.g., sets of plans) are especially useful sources of information, if they are available. Key information to consider includes:

- Original layout, style and appearance, reflecting the designer’s intent and vision
- Overall shape, form, architectural style, external composition and internal plan
- Materials used for construction and finishing and the relationship between components (e.g., changes in brick size, appearance of mortar joints)
- Interior spatial arrangement, layout, furnishings, decoration and liturgical objects that reflect the historic use of the building
- Comparison with other heritage places of worship of similar design or period to determine whether it exhibits unique features
- Alterations that contribute to the story of the heritage place of worship’s development, including changes in taste or use. Some of these changes may possess their own heritage value. For example, St. Anne’s Anglican Church in Toronto was built in 1907 but is best known for the Group of Seven paintings added in the 1920s. Alterations may also reflect the change in demographics, economics, expected comfort levels such as upgrades in heating/cooling, lighting and washrooms.

Historical value or associative value

A heritage place of worship’s physical value may be limited or expressed in a simple building, but its history in a community may be significant. Key information to consider includes:

- The role the heritage place of worship has played in the history of the community (spiritual and geographic communities) and the contribution it has made to the development of a community and individuals within the community
- Alterations that reflect liturgical or religious changes in use, such as:

- Philosophical changes within a religious group (e.g., Roman Catholic Vatican II changes, Anglican evangelical movement)
- Change of an Orthodox synagogue to a Conservative synagogue, which alters the seating structure and use by the congregation.
- Alterations that reflect changing community or societal demographics or attitudes, such as:
 - Expansion due to congregation growth
 - Increased awareness of special needs (e.g., accessibility) or changing attitudes (e.g., greening).

Contextual value

In both small rural communities and urban centres, heritage places of worship are often landmarks and noted for their physical presence within a broader context. Key information to consider includes:

- Historic and current landscaping and elements such as significant trees, garden walls, decorative fencing
- Siting, setting and context, including the relationship to neighbouring properties, the streetscape and broader community or jurisdiction (e.g., parish). This may include:
 - consideration of context within a broad scope such as a terminus to a view corridor,
 - framing a public square or park, or
 - its contribution to other places of worship on neighbouring properties (e.g., two to three places of worship at an urban intersection).

7.2 Appendix B: Conserving the Landscape of Heritage Places of Worship

The landscape surrounding a heritage place of worship can contribute to its “sense of place”. Often, a heritage place of worship may have an associated cemetery, buildings, monuments or landscaping. It may be part of a heritage conservation district or a cultural heritage landscape, or elements or features of the landscape may be listed as heritage attributes within the designation bylaw.

Maintaining the context can contribute to a deeper understanding of the heritage place of worship as both a spiritual and community centre. This is even more important if the landscape or elements of it have cultural heritage value or interest and are identified as heritage attributes in the designation bylaw. This section contains some considerations for conserving the landscape.

Conservation of landscape design

- Original trees, plants and landscape design that contribute to the cultural heritage value or interest of the property should be maintained as much as possible.
- New trees, plants and landscape design should be sympathetic to historic planting schemes and design, and the heritage place of worship.
- Existing or new trees, plants and landscape design should not obscure views of the heritage place of worship that are identified as heritage attributes.
- The design and materials of footpaths and parking areas should be sympathetic to the landscape and the heritage place of worship. Footpaths and parking areas must also comply with municipal zoning or bylaws and accessibility requirements.
- The periodic condition assessment of the property should include looking at the exterior for potential damage to the building.
- Ensure trees and shrubs are not planted or growing too close to foundations, walls and roofs
- Grading around buildings and on parking lots continues to drain water away from building foundations.
- During building maintenance or construction, trees should be protected by hoarding around the drip line to reduce damage to the roots.

Conservation of built landscape elements (e.g., boundary walls and fences, signage)

Original built landscape elements should be conserved and repaired as necessary.

If this is not feasible, replacement elements in similar style and material are preferred. The original elements should be conserved and stored as artifacts.

The design and location of new built landscape elements (where none existed before) should be sympathetic to the landscape and heritage place of worship.

The design of replacement or new built landscape elements may be based on appropriate examples from other heritage properties, historical documents and photographs.

Built landscape elements must comply with municipal zoning or bylaws (e.g., signage bylaws).

Cemeteries

The care, maintenance, alteration and planning for registered cemeteries is regulated by the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (link).

Many existing cemeteries are not registered. Older cemeteries may have inaccurate burial records. Some burial sites may be unrecorded or may be outside the cemetery boundary. An archaeological assessment must be conducted by a licensed archaeologist before any construction or alterations (e.g., new boundary walls or fences) that will have below ground impacts.



Figure 30. The Auld Kirk in Mississippi Mills (Photo courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust)