



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Mission Statement: As stewards of the Town of Amherstburg, we strive to improve the quality of life of all residents through the delivery of effective, efficient, and affordable services.

Author's Name: Adam Coates	Report Date: June 7, 2024
Author's Phone: 519 736 5408 ext. 2147	Date to Council: June 25, 2024
Author's E-mail: acoates@amherstburg.ca	Resolution #:

To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Amherstburg Heritage Conservation District Study

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. The designation of the study area described as Option 1, in the "*Amherstburg Heritage Conservation District Study*," prepared by MHBC, dated May 2024, and attached as Appendix A, which includes all Character Areas with the exception of the Belle Vue Character Area, **BE APPROVED**; and,
2. The "*Amherstburg Heritage Conservation District Study*," prepared by MHBC, dated May 2024, and attached as Appendix A, **BE ADOPTED**.

2. **BACKGROUND:**

At the Council meeting on March 27th, 2023, Council awarded McNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited (MHBC) the consultation services to prepare a Heritage Conservation District as a result of the Request for Proposal (RFP 2023-005) through Council Resolution 20230327-008.

At the Heritage Committee meeting on June 8th, 2023, MHBC provided a memo regarding the status of the Heritage Conservation District Project to the committee members.

At the Heritage Committee meeting on August 10th, 2023, MHBC updated the committee with an in-person presentation. During that time period, the MHBC team was completing field work in the town and documenting properties.

At the Heritage Committee meeting on March 21st, 2024, MHBC updated the committee on their progress and presented their preliminary findings as well as the information that would be shared at the upcoming Public Open House. The presentation is posted on the Talk the Burg website on the HCD project page.

On April 15th, 2024, MHBC hosted a Public Open House at the Libro Centre with presentation boards and a question and answer session. Comment sheets were provided to the attendants and were posted at Town Hall and other municipal locations. The presentation boards are posted on the Talk the Burg website on the HCD project page. Refer to “*Appendix C – Comment Sheets from April 15th Open House*” for the comments collected during the open house.

From April 15th, 2024, through May 14th, 2024, the Town of Amherstburg hosted a digital survey regarding the HCD Study which asked questions about the importance of Cultural Heritage to the community and also identified potential concerns regarding the HCD. Refer to “*Appendix D – Heritage Survey Response Report*” for the responses collected during the online survey

On June 6th, 2024 the Municipal Heritage Committee received a draft copy of the “Amherstburg Heritage Conservation District Study” prepared by MHBC. The Heritage Committee was presented with two options for endorsing the study area which will be used in the next phase of the project. The Heritage Committee endorsed the designation of the study area described as Option 1. The committee was presented with two options. The first option included all the “Character Areas” with the exception of the Belle Vue “Character Area.” The second option included all of the “Character Areas,” with the exception of the Belle Vue, and Sandwich Street “Character Areas.”

3. DISCUSSION:

The Heritage Conservation District designation process has two phases.

Phase 1: HCD Study

Phase 2: Preparation of HCD Plan.

Attached as Appendix A is the “***Heritage Conservation District Study***” completed by MHBC. This represents the completion of Phase 1 of the HCD project.

Work completed to date by MHBC includes:

- Project start-up and background review;
- Historical research and policy review;
- Initial site visit and detailed field inventory;
- Update and presentation to Municipal Heritage Committee;
- Evaluation of properties within the Study Area;
- Preparation of preliminary mapping outlining findings.
- Community open house;
- Finalization of recommended HCD boundary;
- Completion of draft HCD Study document (including detailed inventory pages);
- and,
- **Consideration of recommendations by the Heritage Committee and Council.**

The *Heritage Conservation District Study* (Appendix A) provides a comprehensive understanding of the study area.

The study is comprised of following sections:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Policy Context
- 3.0 Historical Context
- 4.0 Fieldwork, Local Data Collection & Engagement
- 5.0 Analysis
- 6.0 HCD Boundary Identification and Guidance
- 7.0 Recommended Objectives of District Designation
- 8.0 Conclusion
- 9.0 Bibliography

The Amherstburg Heritage Conservation District Study should be read holistically and in totality, as the entire document provides an understanding of the area within the study boundary. That being said, there are some sections that should be highlighted in order to add context to the recommendation. Particularly sections “**5.0 Analysis,**” and “**Section 6.0 – HCD Boundary Identification and Guidance.**”

Section 5.0 Analysis (of the Amherstburg Heritage Conservation District Study)

The purpose of the analysis section is to describe the heritage character and attributes of the area that was studied based on the evaluation and analysis of historical research, fieldwork, local data collection, and public engagement. Through the evaluation and analysis work, MHBC was able to identify distinct “Character Areas” within the study boundary, as identified on Figure 1.

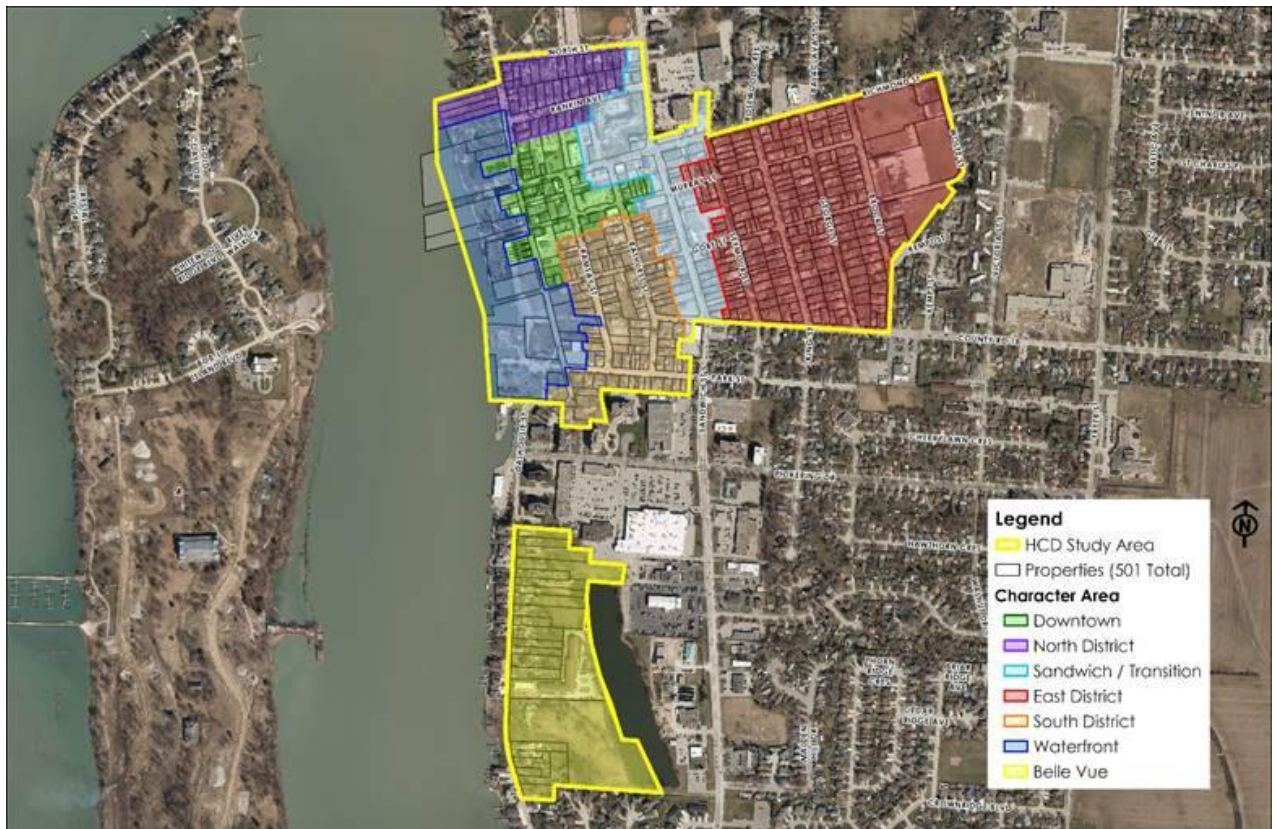


Figure 1- Amherstburg HCD Study map with defined Character Areas, Map Provided by MHBC

The “Character Areas” include:

1. North District;
2. Downtown;
3. South District;
4. Waterfront;
5. Sandwich Street / Transition;
6. East District; and
7. Belle Vue.

These “Character Areas” are described in detail in *Section 5.5 – Heritage Character and Attributes (Character Areas)* of the study.

Section 5.6 – Contributing Properties outlines the analysis method for identifying “contributing” and “non-contributing” properties within the study area. The analysis of “contributing” and “non-contributing” properties has been used to determine if the criteria of O. Reg 9/06 has been met. The findings of the “Contributing Analysis” have identified that **306 of the 501** properties within the study area are “contributing.” This is approximately 61% of the properties analyzed. This exceeds the minimum 25% required by the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). A breakdown of the number of contributing properties by “Character Area” is as follows:

1. North District: **39 of 43** properties assigned a contributing status (**±91%**);
2. Downtown: **31 of 70** properties assigned a contributing status (**±44%**);
3. South District: **63 of 94** properties assigned a contributing status (**±67%**);
4. Sandwich Street: **14 of 48** properties assigned a contributing status (**±29%**);
5. East District: **137 of 197** properties assigned a contributing status (**±70%**);
6. Waterfront: **9 of 19** properties assigned a contributing status (**±47%**); and
7. Belle Vue: **13 of 23** properties assigned a contributing status (**±57%**).

In order for MHBC to move forward to the next phase of the project, council has to approve the boundary that will be used for the creation of the HCD Plan, as required by the OHA. Section 40(1)(b) specifies the following as it relates to identifying a recommended boundary as part of a HCD study:

(b) examine and make recommendations as to the geographic boundaries of the area to be designated.

Section 6.0 HCD Boundary Identification and Guidance (of the HCD Study)

The purpose of the *Boundary Identification and Guidance* section is to provide an understanding of the HCD Boundary, including:

- Evaluation under Ontario Regulation 9/06;
- Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest;
- The method and approach for analyzing the HCD Boundary;
- Identification of HCD Boundary Options;
- Review of the HCD Boundary Options; and,
- District Boundary Recommendations.

Section 6.4 – Identification of the HCD Boundary Options explains how the consultant identified the various “Character Areas” and the rationale for the recommendations. Section 6.4 states:

“The recommended boundaries for the proposed Amherstburg HCD were identified based on several factors, including:

- The identification of contributing and non-contributing properties in each Character Area based on the data collected during fieldwork which demonstrates a concentration of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes that are linked;*
- The framework of structured elements such as: street patterns, geographic features, and major transportation routes;*
- The sense of visual coherence which is demonstrated by the similarity in building scale and mass, material, proportion and age of construction that conveys a distinct sense of time or place; and,*
- Character Area-specific evaluation and classification of heritage resources.*

Through the inventory and research completed by the project team, it became apparent that some of the identified Character Areas were more cohesive in terms of the built and streetscape character. As such, it was logical to address certain areas (i.e. Belle Vue and Sandwich Street / Transition) differently in the final HCD recommendation.

Given the results of the evaluation undertaken, two options are presented for consideration related to the potential implementation of the findings of this HCD Study. Both options have the same recommended boundary limits, with the distinction being how the Sandwich Street / Transition character area is addressed through the proposed District designation and subsequent implementation by the Town.

The recommended boundary options include properties with uses being a mix of residential and non-residential land uses (depending on the Character Area), as well as open spaces generally associated with the waterfront area.”

Section 6.5 – Review of the HCD Boundary Options explains the rationale for Option 1 and Option 2. Section 6.5 states:

“Through the analysis undertaken, the Belle Vue Character Area was determined to have a less cohesive character than other areas. It is also physically separated from the balance of the HCD Study Area and is located outside of the traditional settlement area of the Town. While the Area contains a collection of resources, some of which are currently designated or warrant conservation, the area does not have a streetscape that is similar to other portions of the HCD Study Area. Rather, it can be described as a number of homes (resources) that happen to be beside each other. As such, it is recommended that the Belle Vue area resources be conserved through potential individual designation under the OHA.

The Sandwich Street / Transition Character Area has been modified and redeveloped through past activities, such that the character has evolved into a more modern car-oriented character. While there are some concentrations of heritage resources, the Area does not have a consistent feel. The Area is however contiguous to the balance of the

HCD Study Area; therefore, there are two conceivable options to address the Character Area through potential HCD designation:

HCD Option 1 would see much of the Study Area designated as one HCD, which would include all Character Areas except for the Belle Vue. This would have the benefit of the entire area recommended for designation being managed through implementation of one HCD Plan. Different Character Areas would likely have slightly different guidance to manage change, to be determined through development of the HCD Plan.

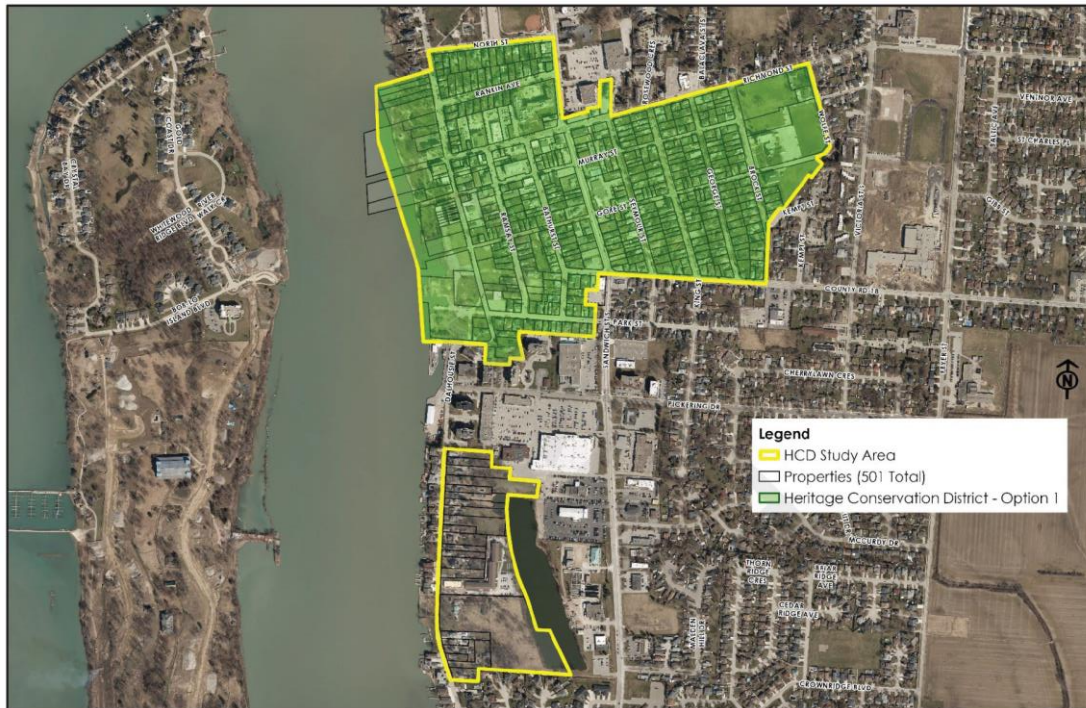


Figure 2 - Heritage Conservation District - Option 1 Recommendation

HCD Option 2 would share the same boundaries and number of properties, except that the Sandwich Street / Transition Character Area would not be designated as part of a future HCD. This would result in two HCD Plans being prepared, since there would be two separate HCD areas. The Town could then develop future urban design guidelines or policies through other processes which would manage change and guide future development within the areas excluded.”

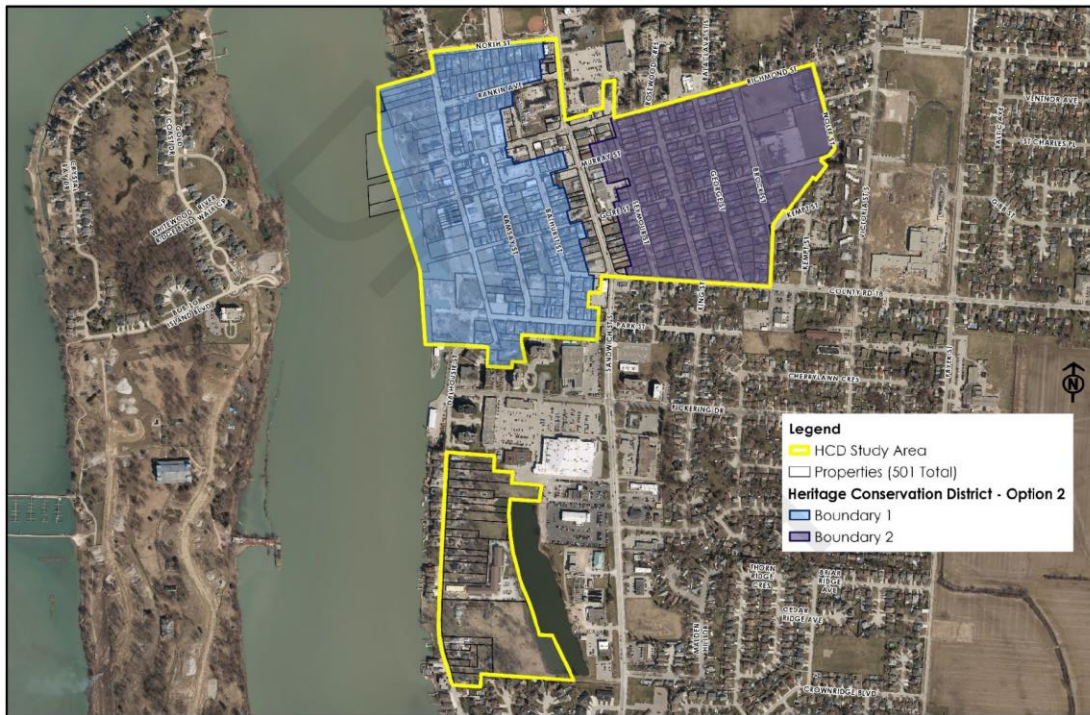


Figure 3 - heritage Conservation District Option 2

Both recommended options are valid and meet the requirements in the background study. The Sandwich Street / Transition has seen the most amount of change to the cultural heritage built environment. The Heritage Committee has endorsed the adoption of Option 1.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

There is a high level of cultural heritage risk associated with this report. In order to move to the next phase of the project, an HCD Boundary must be adopted by Council. The single HCD boundary would result in a single Heritage Conservation Plan being developed and brought before Council for consideration. A Heritage Conservation District provides an opportunity for the municipality to preserve its past, while providing guidance for future development.

There is a moderate level of timing risk associated with the endorsement of an HCD boundary. The Properties of Interest (POI) currently protected from demolition will lose that protection as a result of Bill 23. To mitigate the timing risk, the OHA allows a municipality to designate a study area by by-law for a period of one year.

Prior to the completion of the current phase of the HCD project, administration had identified 17 POI that were not captured within the study boundary. It is the opinion of MHBC and the municipal Heritage Planner that the Belle Vue Character area should not be included in the HCD Plan. There are two POI in the Belle Vue Character Area that should be individually designated under Part IV of the OHA.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report. The completion of *Phase 2: HCD Plan* was included in the original scope of the project.

6. CONSULTATIONS:

The information in this report did not require consultation outside the Development Services Department.

7. CORPORATE STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Vision: Preserving our past while forging our future.

<i>Amherstburg Community Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 1 Deliver Trusted & Accountable Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Improve trust between council and staff, and residents, by strengthening governance and internal accountability structures. <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver transparent and efficient financial management. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase effective communication and engagement with residents. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop our staff team, resources, and workplace culture. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to deliver strong core municipal services. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure Amherstburg is an inclusive accessible and welcoming community committed to reconciliation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 3 Encourage Local Economic Prosperity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage development of commercial and industrial lands. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to promote local tourism industry, especially overnight accommodation. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to facilitate downtown development for residents and visitors. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to leverage partnership opportunities with other provincial, federal, and local governments, agencies, and organizations.
<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 2 Invest in Community Amenities and Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain safe, reliable and accessible municipal infrastructure and facilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase access to recreation opportunities for all ages. <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize and execute plans for town-owned lands (e.g. Duffy’s site, Belle Vue) <input type="checkbox"/> Create public access to water and waterfront <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize opportunities to reduce environmental impacts of Town operations and increase Town resilience to climate change. 	<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 4 Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Define and communicate a vision for the Town’s future and identity. <input type="checkbox"/> Promote and plan for green and “climate change ready” development. <input type="checkbox"/> Review and implement policies that promote greater access to diverse housing. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protect the Town’s historic sites and heritage. <input type="checkbox"/> Preserve the Town’s greenspaces, agricultural lands, and natural environment.

8. CONCLUSION:

The Heritage Committee has endorsed the recommendation being made to Town Council. The recommendation for the HCD boundary is appropriate and has been shown through historical research, field work, and analysis to be deserving of an HCD Plan.



Adam Coates

Heritage Planner, Urban Design, and Community Improvement

- Appendix A – Heritage Conservation District Study (MHBC)**
- Appendix B – Heritage Conservation District Presentation (MHBC)**
- Appendix C – Comment Sheets from the April 15th Open House**
- Appendix D – Heritage Survey Responses Report**

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Amherstburg Heritage Conservation District Study.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Appendis A - Amherstburg Heritage Conservation District Study.pdf- Appendix B - Heritage Conservation District Study Presentation.pdf- Appendix C - Comments Sheets from the April 15th Open House-RM.pdf- Appendix D - Heritage Survey Responses Report-RM.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 13, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

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