

Alton Village HCD Public Meeting Q&A

November 5 2020



Questions & Answers

The following questions and answers have been transcribed from the Alton HCD Public Meeting held on November 5, 2020. The questions were posed by meeting attendees and were answered live at the meeting.

Q: Would the policies of the HCD Plan ensure that Alton Village would not be subject to new development which is artificial and makes the area “look historic” (i.e. the existing streetscape improvements added recently)?

A: The policies of the HCD Plan would apply to both private and public property. As a result, the Region and the Municipality would have to comply with the HCD Plan policies as it relates to streetscape and road improvements, once they come into effect after the area is designated by By-law. The HCD Plan could also include guidelines which speak to new development and avoiding “artificial” or “heritage-looking” additions to the area.

Q: Why aren't the Alton Greenhouses included in the proposed HCD boundary? They have been an institution to the Village. Is it because they weren't developed in the 19th century?

A: The Alton Greenhouses were not included in the proposed boundary for two main reasons. This includes a) location at the south end of the Village (i.e. further from the concentration of heritage features) and b) existing features. While this property may have its own character and features, this property is not consistent with the character of Alton Village, which is centered on the crossroads of Queen Street and Main Street.

Q: Will the HCD Plan require the Utility companies to put cables underground and eliminate the existing hydro poles?

A: No. An HCD Plan does not require or force any property to make change. If change is proposed by a landowner, then that change must comply with the policies of the HCD Plan.

Q: What would be the objective of designating Alton Village as an HCD?

A: The primary objective would be to conserve the identified cultural heritage value and character of the area. This would include the conservation of the identified heritage attributes. Note that conservation does not mean that the area is to be “frozen in time”. The adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and attributes, and the construction of compatible new development is typically encouraged in the objectives of an HCD Plan.

Q: What are the restrictions on new (“non-heritage”) properties within in the proposed HCD boundary?

A: In a typical HCD Plan, all new construction would require a Heritage Permit. The HCD Plan would provide guidelines in terms of scale, mass, and design for new construction to comply with. An HCD is not intended to make all new development to be of a particular architectural style. The goal is that any new construction (residential, commercial, institutional, etc.) be complementary to the identified cultural heritage character of the HCD.

Q: Would designation of the Village as an HCD prevent any improvements made to Queen Street West and Main Street, such as sidewalks on the North side of Queen Street West?

A: Not necessarily. The intent of the HCD Plan would be to ensure any changes within the HCD boundary conserve the identified heritage attributes. Improvements made on public lands, including streetscape/infrastructure projects would not be prohibited, but would be required to adhere to policies and guidelines to ensure that adverse impacts to heritage resources are minimized or avoided. A balance between meeting objectives related to streetscape improvements and heritage conservation is ideal. The HCD would provide guidance where improvements may happen, and how it could be designed to enhance the character of certain areas. At present, no sidewalk is anticipated at the north side of Queen Street West as part of the Environmental Assessment process for streetscape improvements in Alton Village.

Q: What are the possible benefits and challenges this designation would have on the future growth of the Village?

A: An Heritage Conservation District is not intended to guide growth. However, benefits of designation in an HCD can include the identification of an area of scenic beauty with a unique sense of place. This provides an element of attractiveness to those businesses, activities, organizations, residents and institutions seeking this kind of setting.

Q: Are Indigenous Communities being engaged in this HCD Study process, particularly as it relates to landscape features?

A: The Town of Caledon is currently working on establishing an Indigenous Communities Engagement Protocol. The Town will begin meeting with Indigenous Communities in Fall of 2020 in order to obtain information as to how they would like to be engaged in existing and future projects, including the Alton Village HCD Study.

Q: What landscaping features are considered important within the Village?

A: Landscape features which have been identified as contributing to the character of Alton Village include those located on both public and private lands. Landscape features include those which are of a larger scale, such as the Creek and the Pinnacle, and those of a smaller scale, such as mature trees and vegetation. Landscape features located on private lands are, in part, the result of the relatively close proximity of heritage structures to the street and sidewalks. These landscape features include stone walls, fences, gardens, and vegetation that contributes to the unique sense of place.

Q: Will every property within the proposed HCD boundary be subject to heritage guidelines if changes or repairs are needed?

A: Yes. Every property within an HCD is subject to the policies of an HCD Plan. However, an HCD Plan identifies those properties which are considered either “heritage” or “non-heritage”. Those which are identified as “non-heritage”, would be subject to a different set of policies and guidelines. Further, there are some classes of alterations which can be identified as minor and may not require a heritage permit.

Q: What takes precedence as it relates to streetscape and infrastructure improvements within an HCD? Would it be the HCD Plan or Regional and/or Municipal Plans?

A: Public works at the Municipal and Regional level of government would be required to comply with the policies of the HCD Plan. Typically, an HCD Plan recognizes that public infrastructure improvements can be a foreseeable part of future changes within a District, and can provide guidelines on how these may take place without negatively impacting the identified heritage character and attributes of the area.

Q: What is the appeal process for decisions made by the Heritage Committee as it relates to heritage permits?

A: All decisions as it relates to a designated Heritage Conservation Districts, including heritage Permits, are made by Council after consultation with its Heritage Advisory Committee. The decisions made by Council on Heritage Permit Applications are appealed to the Land Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT).

Q: How would the policies of the HCD Plan work in harmony with respect to historic Village characteristics and the commercial and residential components?

A: The HCD Plan does not control use of properties. The Town of Caledon Official Plan and Zoning By-law control land use.

Q: Would designation of Alton Village as an HCD improve chances of obtaining government grants to renovate or conserve heritage properties?

A: Few government grants exist, particularly at the Provincial and Federal level. Typically, any grants which may exist are only available to those properties which are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or similar governing body/authority. The Town of Caledon currently has a Heritage Grant Program, which matches 50% of the eligible cost of the rehabilitation of a designated heritage property up to a maximum of \$4,000.00, subject to available funds.

Q: Are there any other Villages in the Town of Caledon that have been designated as an HCD?

A: Yes. The Town of Caledon currently has one Heritage Conservation District designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, that being the Village of Bolton HCD. Further information on this HCD, including the Bolton Village HCD Plan which is in effect is available on the Town of Caledon website at <https://www.caledon.ca/en/living-here/heritage-conservation-districts.aspx>

Q: What is the appeal process if Council designates the proposed boundary as a Heritage Conservation district for Alton Village?

A: If Council proceeds to designate the area as an HCD Under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, this decision can be appealed to the LPAT (Local Planning Appeal Tribunal).

Q: What are the next steps in this HCD Study process?

A: The feedback from the public consultation meeting held on November 5 will be considered as input into the final Study document. A Draft Study document will be released to the community for review and additional consultation will take place. The final Alton Village HCD Study document would be provided to Council in Winter 2021. Should Council determine that the proposed boundary has merit in designation as a Heritage Conservation District, the Study would proceed to Phase II. The main task of Phase II is completing a draft HCD Plan and undertaking further community consultation.