

## Introduction

Trent University Durham provides students with hands-on archaeological experiences concerning local heritage through excavations at the Henry House and Martin sites. Although these opportunities provide students with experience in Cultural Resource Management, there are no opportunities to understand the significance of heritage and historical preservation in the city of Oshawa. As a part of the Oshawa Museum and a designated heritage property in Oshawa, the Henry House provides an ideal example of the potential of preserving local heritage and history, while still benefitting the community.



Figure 1: The Martin House 773 King Street West (Melissa Cole, 2010)

The original housing structure associated with the Martin site is known as the Martin House (Figure 1). The Martin House, currently located at 773 King Street West, is listed as a structure with potential for heritage designation. As Trent University Durham has shown an interest in the properties bordering the Southeast corner of King Street and Thornton Road, including 773 King Street West, it seemed appropriate to conduct further research on the Martin House.

Legal process regarding cultural heritage in Ontario

Protection of physical attributes of cultural heritage

Conducted under the Ontario Heritage Act

Figure 2: What is Heritage Designation?

The lot on which 773 King Street West resides is of interest to Trent University Durham, and the Martin house is valued by Heritage Oshawa, the municipal advisory committee advocating for the preservation of heritage and history in the city of Oshawa. Proposing the heritage designation (Figure 2) of 773 King Street West would provide Trent University Durham with a basis for future land use while preserving a piece of Oshawa's heritage. If the institution were to repurpose the Martin House in the future, the institution would be permanently intertwined with the heritage and history of Oshawa.

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## Research Objectives

This research aimed to designate a property with heritage potential in Oshawa, Ontario, as a heritage home on a municipal level (Figure 4). Following the understanding of the steps to achieve heritage designation, a how-to booklet was to be created for future students in the Anthropology Program interested in independent research. Future students would be able to choose a home from a list of properties with heritage potential and conduct the steps to apply for heritage designation on a municipal level. This research sought to address two primary objectives:

- 1) How can I successfully propose 773 King Street West for heritage designation on a municipal level?
- 2) Can I create a how-to booklet for future students to propose heritage designation for properties in Oshawa?

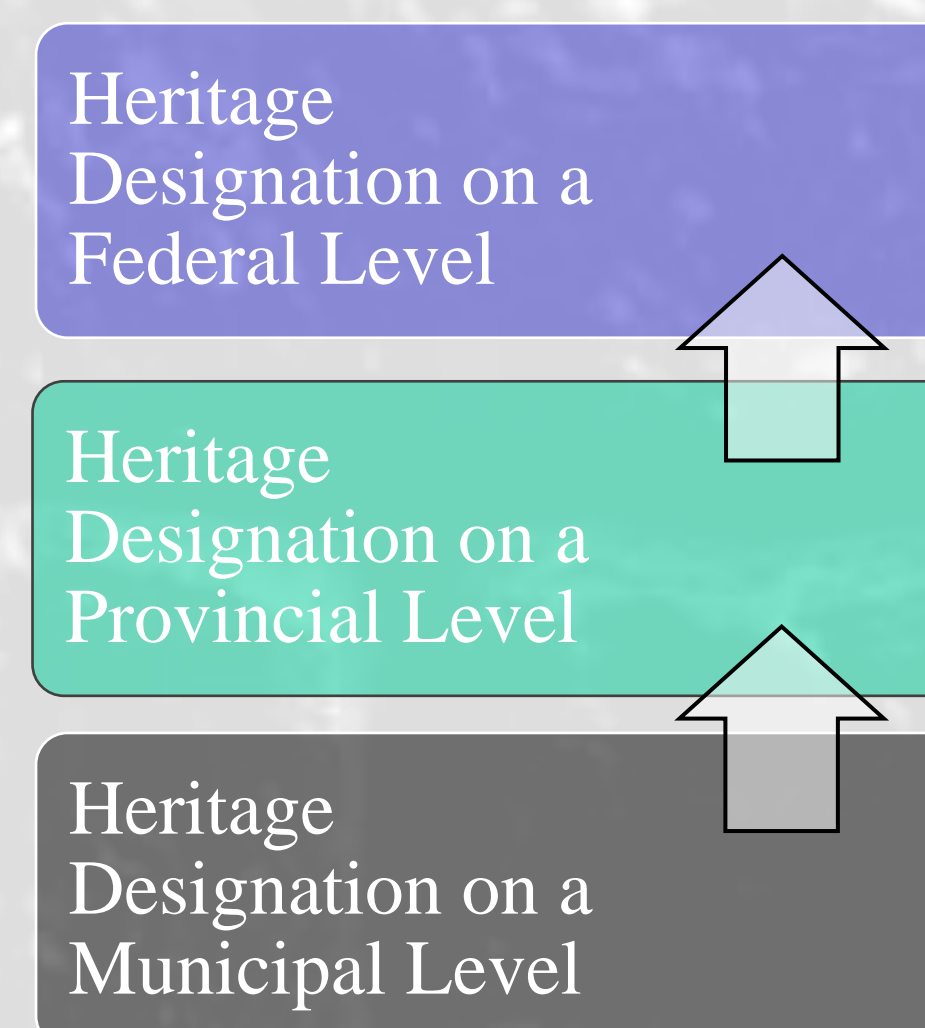


Figure 3: Levels of Heritage Designation in Canada (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2006)

## Materials and Methods

Research was conducted between the months of January and March 2023, and drew on textual sources and personal communications from those within heritage-related professions. Research included readings of the municipal and provincial documents (Figure 4) listed below and discourse over a period of three months with various professionals listed below.

### Provincial Documents

- *Heritage Property Evaluation: Designating Heritage Properties*
- *Ontario Heritage Act*
- *Ontario Heritage Toolkit*

### Municipal Documents

- "Heritage Oshawa Inventory of City of Oshawa Heritage Properties"
- "The City of Oshawa Register of Properties of Cultural Value or Interest"
- "The City of Oshawa Heritage Property Tax Reduction Program"

### AS&G Archaeological Consulting Documents

- "Heritage Report on 773 King Street West in Oshawa"
- "Cultural Heritage Assessment for 31 Thornton Road South"

Personal communication took place with the following professionals in heritage: Diane Stephen, Chair of Heritage Oshawa; Harrison Whilmsmith, Planner A at the City of Oshawa; Jennifer Wymark, Archivist at the Oshawa Museum; Margaret Wilkinson, President of the Oshawa Historical Society; and Helen Haines, Associate Professor at Trent University and Director-at-Large of the Oshawa Historical Society.

## Findings

Oshawa will not review a proposal for heritage designation if the owner of a property in question expresses disinterest in heritage designation. The owner of 773 King Street West had previously expressed disinterest, therefore the Martin house has never been proposed, despite being listed as having heritage potential.

Oshawa, had two classes for properties with the potential for heritage designation: Class A, "highest potential for designation". and Class B, "good potential for designation" (Heritage Oshawa, 2023a). The criteria were inaccessible to the public. Classes A and B were removed during the research period. Removal of the classes was denied by City Planner A. The new criteria were not made available to the public during this research.

### 6 Steps for Ontario Heritage Designation

1. Identifying the property as a candidate for designation.
2. Researching and evaluating the property.
3. Serving *Notice of Intention to Designate*, with an opportunity for objection.
4. Passing and registering the designation bylaw.
5. Listing the property on the municipal register.
6. Listing the property on the provincial register (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport 2006:7).

Heritage evaluation of properties in Oshawa are conducted by volunteers and not by professionals in heritage, such as those employed in Cultural Resources Management. Consequently, individuals without expertise in heritage bear the responsibility of determining whether, and to what degree, properties have potential heritage value.

Publicly accessible documents, including those from the city of Oshawa, the *Ontario Heritage Tool Kit*, and the *Ontario Heritage Act*, do not provide the criteria for structures with the potential for heritage designation. On both municipal and provincial levels, heritage matters are intentionally misleading and inaccessible to the public.

*Bill 23: Build More Homes Faster* was passed in December of 2022 (Environmental Registry of Ontario 2023), before my research was proposed. The municipal government passed a bill amending the Ontario Heritage Act without customarily notifying professionals within heritage sectors of the changes (Helen Haines, personal communication 2023; Jennifer Newton, personal communication 2023). Changes through Bill 23 also apply to Heritage Conservation Districts (Environmental Registry of Ontario 2023), putting greenspaces in Ontario at risk of annihilation for the sake of urban expansion. Heritage is at its highest risk of destruction in Ontario.

## Conclusion

Heritage designation is one of the few guaranteed methods of preserving what has made Oshawa the city it is today. The goals of this project, to propose 773 King Street West for heritage designation on a municipal level and to create a how-to booklet for future students to use, were not achievable. These findings show that, while there is a clear process for heritage designation, barriers exist that make it difficult for a citizen to do so. At the municipal level, access to publicly available documents critical for the designation process were almost impossible to receive, and the municipal government was generally uncooperative. Bill 23 puts more limitations in place for heritage designation, such as the reduction of the funding necessary to conduct the six steps for heritage designation in Ontario, and the changes to heritage criteria unknown to the public at the time of research. Ultimately, the loss of local heritage is the loss of local culture. Therefore, Oshawa is now at risk of permanently destroying its heritage and its culture.

## References

- Cole, Melissa  
2010 *Research Report 773 King Street West Oshawa*. Report on file at the City of Oshawa, Ontario.
- Environmental Registry of Ontario  
2023 Proposed Changes to the Ontario Heritage Act and its regulations: Bill 23 (Schedule 6) - the Proposed More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022.
- Heritage Oshawa  
2023 *Heritage Oshawa Inventory of City of Oshawa Heritage Properties*: Updated January 2023. Oshawa, Ontario.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport  
2006 *The Ontario Heritage Tool Kit: Designating Heritage Properties*. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Toronto, Canada.

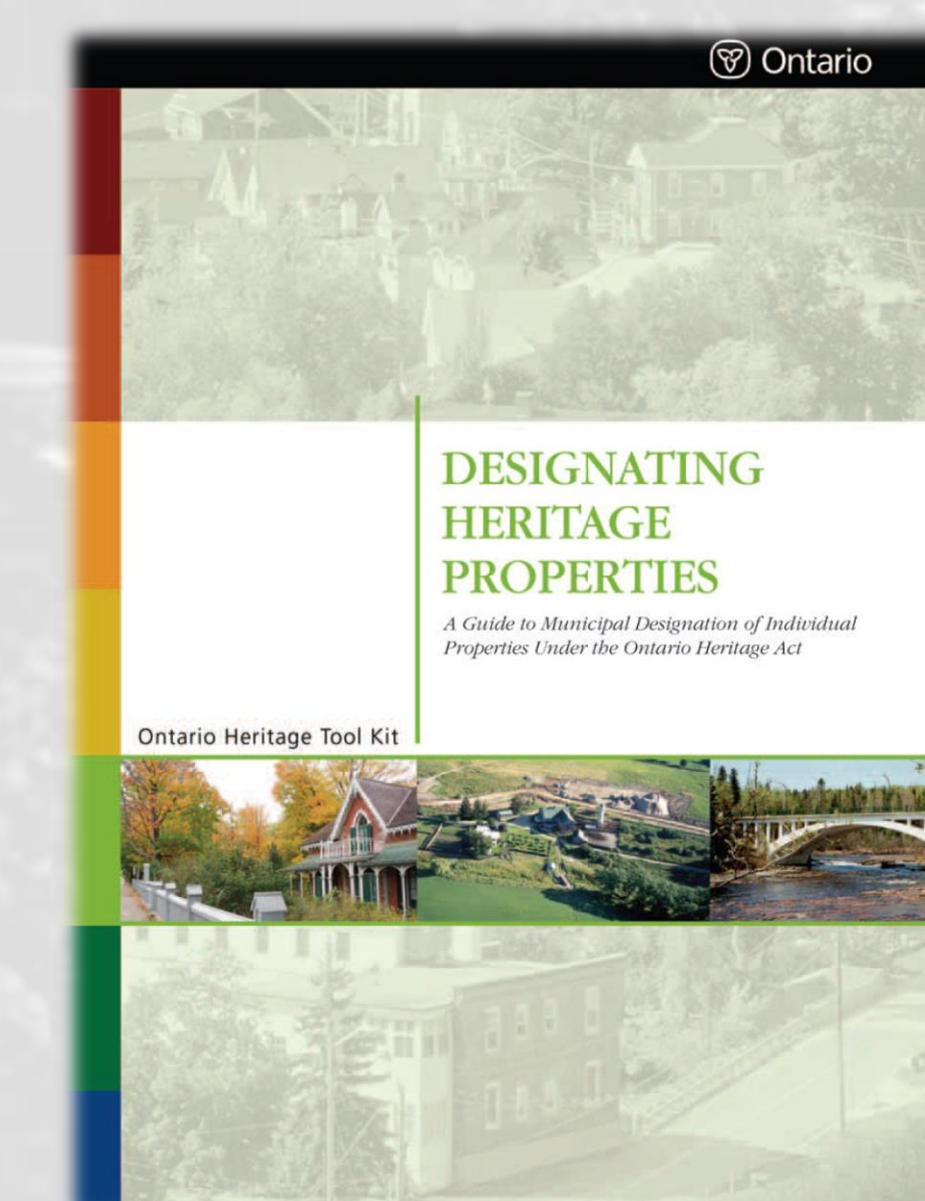


Figure 4: Ontario Heritage Toolkit: Designating Heritage Properties (The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2006)