


# Heritage

## WHAT IS HERITAGE?

 Heritage consists of the elements of a society's collective past that aid in the definition of its character and development. In essence, it is our shared concept of our history.

## WHAT IS A HERITAGE RESOURCE?

Heritage resources are generally divided into two categories: Built Heritage and Cultural Landscapes.

These two categories include tangible aspects of our past, that is, those things that can be seen and touched and provide a visual reminder of past events.



*MTO Protected Heritage House - Clarington*

**Built Heritage** includes houses, bridges, industrial buildings, and barns. Generally these structures are older and have associations with significant people or events from the past.

**Cultural Landscapes** are areas that have been altered by people or which have a special significance for them. They illustrate broad patterns of land use over an extended period of time. Generally, they consist of a definable area with a particular character that conveys cultural messages



*16 Mile Creek Bridge - Oakville*

about the past. These can range in size from an area as small as a set of formal gardens or a town square to an industrial complex or broader rural farmscapes.

Ontario's heritage also has several intangible aspects. These intangible elements are those that are not immediately observable but are emotionally felt or understood by a group or community. This may be best described as a way individuals, families, and communities recognize their relationships to each other, a place or a way of life. This is rooted in a sense of shared history.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) considers both Built Heritage and Cultural Landscapes in its environmental assessment studies.

## APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

In Ontario, heritage is protected by a number of pieces of legislation.

Most important amongst these are the:

- *Ontario Heritage Act*
- *Planning Act*; and
- *Environmental Assessment Act*.



Under these Acts, it is MTO's responsibility to plan and build transportation facilities with minimal impact to the environment and heritage resources.

## HOW DO WE IDENTIFY AND MEASURE IMPACTS TO HERITAGE?

During the planning of an MTO project, all heritage resources are identified by completing an extensive survey and research in the study area of the proposed facility. A detailed report is prepared describing and evaluating all of the heritage resources that might be affected by the project. The report includes details of the resources' particular history, character and qualities.

Once all of the heritage resources (buildings, bridges, archaeological sites, etc.) are identified, MTO considers the various ways of avoiding or limiting (mitigating) impacts to these resources. There are a greater range of options available for built heritage features than cultural landscapes but the overall goal in both cases is to minimize impacts from a new facility. The mitigation options are considered in an order of preference. These are:

- **Avoidance** – This is always the preferred option.
- **Encroachment** – While the presence of a new facility may have some effect on the overall character of the resource, the impact is reduced through use of landscaping or other design options to protect the overall character of the resource (building or larger landscape).
- **Tenancy** – For domestic structures, such as houses and barns, tenancy is considered when MTO intends to retain the property for a period of time. Occupation and use are always the best protection for a heritage structure.

- **Mothballing** – This option is considered in a small number of cases where a structure is in poor repair and unsuitable for occupation. In this process the structure is stabilized and secured against unwanted entry to protect it from further deterioration.
- **Relocation** – Used only in cases where degradation of the resource has reached a point where it is not cost effective for the MTO to preserve the structure in place. In the past, buildings have been awarded to private individuals to relocate and restore the structure at their own cost.
- **Demolition** – This is only considered when the above options do not work. When this option is chosen, a detailed record is made of the structures history, design and construction.



*MTO Protected Heritage House - Oshawa*

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## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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