

**CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**  
FOR 277 COLLEGE STREET, EAST HERITAGE DISTRICT, COBOURG, ONTARIO



Prepared by: Christopher Wallace Architect, OAA. RAIC. CAHP

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## INTRODUCTION:

This CHAI submission seeks heritage approval to accomplish two things: A) to demolish a house at 277 College Street in Cobourg's East Heritage District. And B) to construct a new dwelling on that property.

The Ontario Heritage Act, the Provincial Policy statement on Cultural Heritage, the Cobourg Official Plan and the Cobourg Heritage Master Plan all set an understandably high bar for permission to demolish a structure in a Part V Designated Heritage District. I believe that we have met that bar. On one level, there is nothing wrong with the existing house on the property. It's not structurally unsound. It hasn't been ravaged by fire or flood. It provided perfectly good if modest and economical accommodation when it was built in 1962. But on evaluation of the characteristics that define the East Heritage District, it makes a negligible contribution.

A new house on the property, on the other hand, can comply to a far greater extent with the guidelines and defining characteristics of the street. The standards for approval of new construction are also high, but not unreasonable. We have an understanding of both the letter and the spirit of the extensive guidelines. And we have the experience. We've put this understanding into practice, having successfully designed numerous new homes and major addition projects in Part V Designated Districts.

College Street is the heart of the East Heritage District, but it is not a homogeneous neighbourhood in its architecture. There is considerable variety in size & scale, architectural style and vintage of its collected homes. On the one hand, we acknowledge that it would not be disastrous for the existing house to remain. It does have comparable precedents on the street. But collectively these precedents, single-storey bungalows build in the mid twentieth century, constitute the weakest element in the urban fabric the justifies the existence of this unique Designated Heritage District. We wish to rectify this with a new home that does make a very real, architectural contribution in full compliance with the Guidelines.

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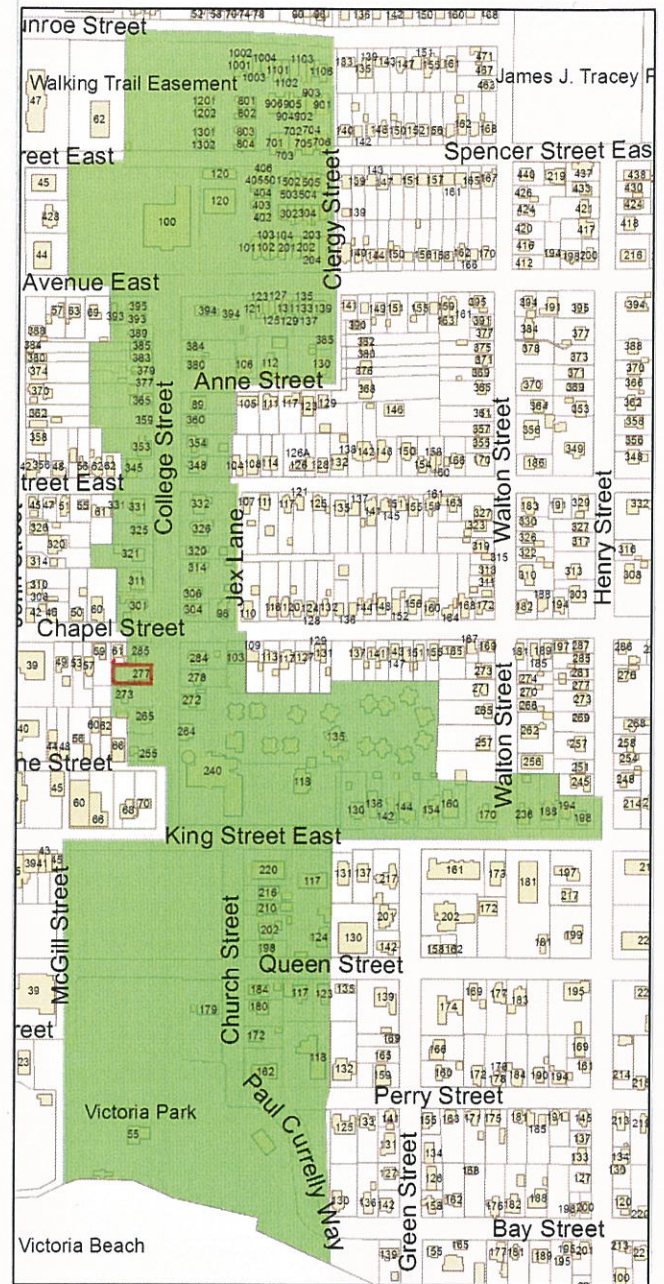


## ASSESSMENT OF THE EAST HERITAGE DISTRICT

The East Heritage Conservation District was designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1991. The East District is a prominent residential neighbourhood east of the downtown commercial core, and contains mid-to-late 19th century and early 20th century residential dwellings situated on generous lots. The East District also contains some notable institutional properties such as the former Victoria College and St. Peter's Anglican Church. Victoria Park provides a southern anchor to the District and an important public open space. Infill development has occurred in the East District over time, but much of the infill is complementary to the form and materials of historic properties and the heritage character of the District.

The East District includes properties that front on both sides of College Street, Church Street, and University Avenue East between Spencer Street East and the former Victoria College. The District also includes properties on the north side of King Street East between College Street and Henry Street, as well as the first properties on Queen Street and Perry Street east of Church Street.

College Street is the central spine of the East District, stretching between Victoria Park and the former Victoria College. And College Street is certainly the focus of this study. At either end, views along College Street terminate in these properties, providing distinctive views within the District and the wider Town of Cobourg. The views along the street are framed by the vegetation of the District with wide grassed boulevards on both sides of the street, with street trees in the boulevards in addition to front yard plantings. The deep setback of most properties from the street and the depth of the boulevards allows of long views down College Street to be framed primarily with the extensive tree canopy and other street landscaping.



EAST HERITAGE DISTRICT PLAN

A foundry was located just north of St Peter's Church, and many of the early dwellings on the street were in the form of small foundry workers cottages, one of which was located at 277 College. In 1871 the foundry relocated, and the small cottages were gradually replaced by more substantial, and in some cases grander homes, into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is these that homes that create the unique character that is preserved in the East Heritage District



## HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES IN THE DISTRICT

- Residential character of the neighbourhood consisting of one to two-and-a-half storey residential buildings
- Predominance of low to moderate hip and side gable roof types with some front gables
- Predominance of red brick cladding on residential properties
- Large, non-residential properties including the former Victoria College, Victoria Park and St. Peter's Anglican Church
- Generous lot sizes
- Varying of setbacks of buildings from the street
- Orientation of houses to the street
- Wide grassed boulevards with street trees
- Vegetated front yards with lawn and/or landscaping and minimal front yard fencing (except for low ornamental or vegetative fencing)
- Views along College Street terminating at the former Victoria College to the north and Victoria Park in the south.

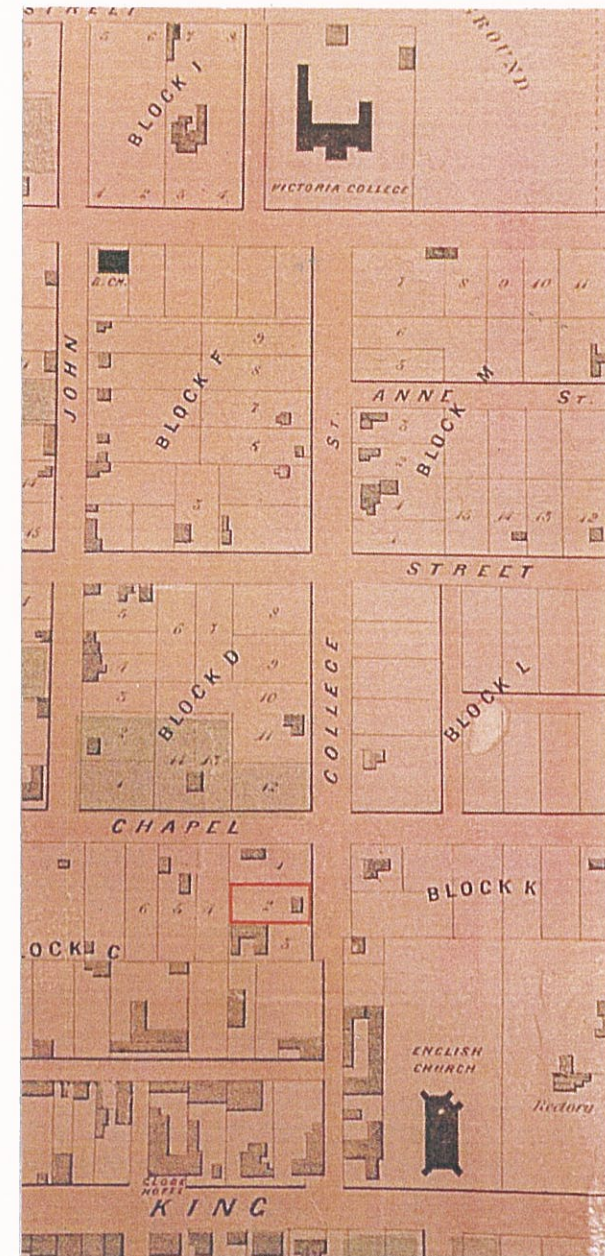


College Street - Street View looking north

Many of the homes in the district are architecturally striking in themselves, when you stop, turn, and look at them. But they do not form the initial, visual impression of the street. College Street is green. The tree canopy over the street and the green corridor focusing one's view to the north and south - these are the first impressions when one enters College Street. And it is this green environment which is essential; which should be protected and preserved, along with the heritage architecture of the street.

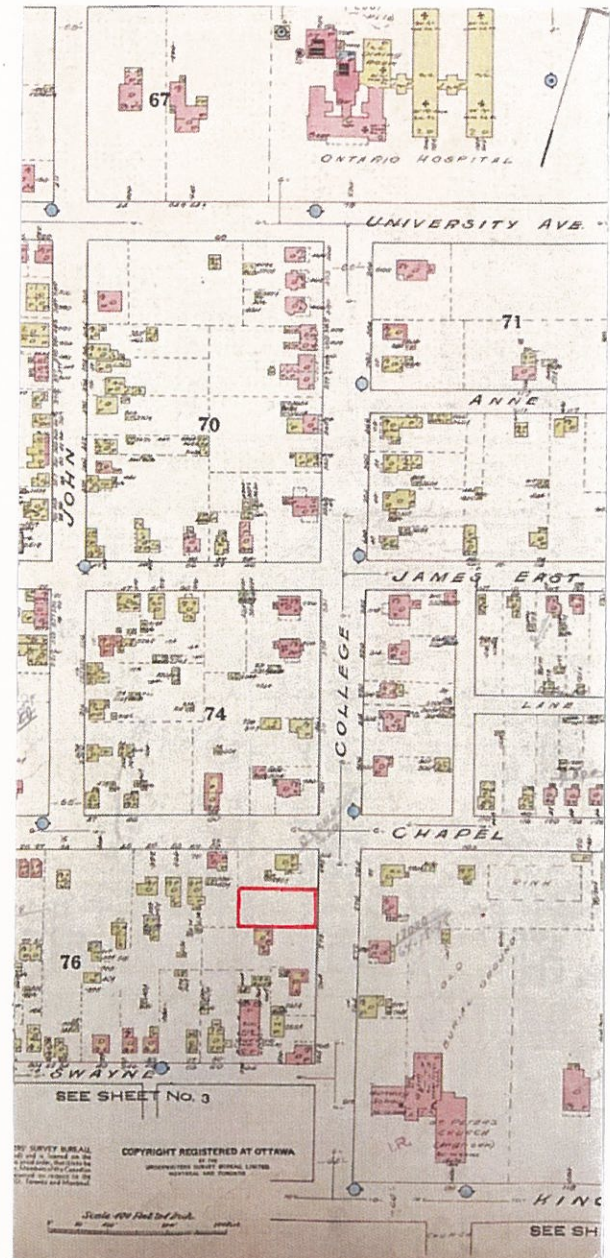


## PROPERTY HISTORY



Hannaford & Lloyd plan of Cobourg, 1858

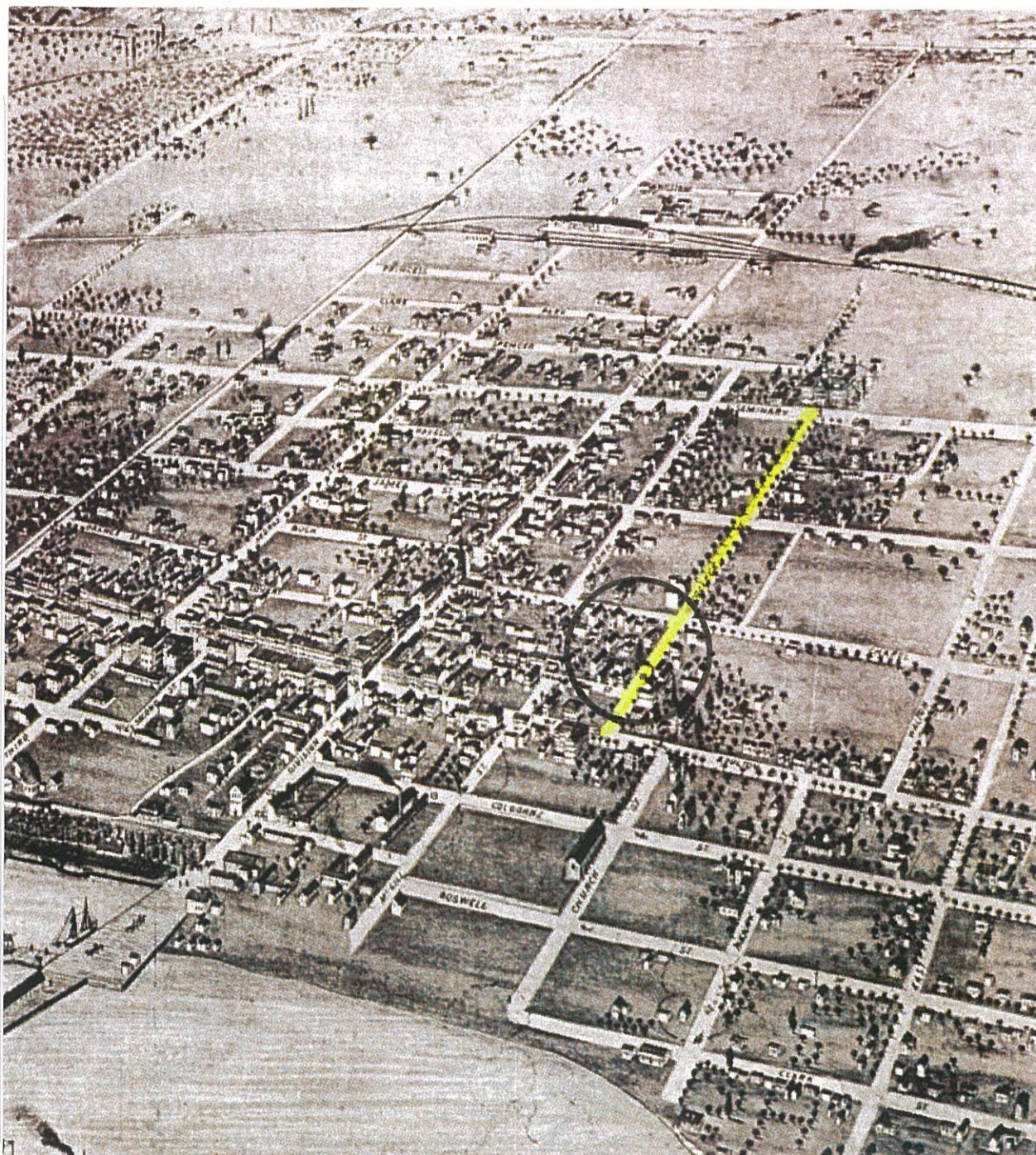
The early history of 277 College Street is unclear. The Fleming plan from 1847 shows a distinct residential lot in the name one J. Polacci, although no building is indicated. The Hannaford & Lloyd plan from 1858 indicates a small foundry worker's cottage near the street frontage. This plan shows some larger houses on the street, although many worker's cottages still exist. But did a larger dwelling exist on this lot in the latter part of the century, as grander dwellings gradually replaced the workers' cottages during that era?



Goad's Fire Insurance Plan, 1946

We do know that at some point the lot became vacant, whether this was due to fire or other causes. The Goad's Fire Insurance Plan from 1947 indicates extensive build-out of the street, but clearly shows no. 277 as a vacant lot. The current house was built on this lot in 1958 by Henry Lord who rented it to Ralph Zarboni, plant manager of CGE in Cobourg. It was purchased in 1971 by William and Lavigne Halstead, grandparents of the current owner, Gary Ferguson, and has remained in the family ever since.





The Birdseye View of Cobourg in 1874

This aerial view from 1874 shows more substantial built development along College Street, although not yet a full build-out of the street. The image does show a fully developed block on the west side of College, between Swayne Street and Chapel Street, a block which includes No. 277. College Street.

While such drawings of this era were meant to be a documentary record of the town's growth, and were intended to be generally accurate, they are not precise records. Buildings are graphically simplified, eliminating details such as dormers and porches. And errors do occur; records indicate, for example, that the foundry illustrated in 1874 actually relocated in 1871, although it's quite possible that the buildings remained in 1874 even if the operation was gone,





Birdseye View 1874 - Enlarged

With the understanding that the birdseye view of Cobourg was intended to be a fair documentary record, but that fine detail cannot be relied on, we should take a closer look at the block between Swayne Street and Chapel Street, on the west side of College Street.

The property to the north, at 285 College, shows a street-facing gabled house on the corner of Chapel, much as it exists today. To the south, at 273 College, the drawing shows a house with a taller front gable and a shorter side gable, set back significantly from the street. Early photographs show this configuration, with a subsequent second storey addition over the lower, side-gabled wing. Again, a configuration much as it exists today. On our subject property, the aerial view clearly shows a storey-and-a-half, side-gabled structure, very much like our current proposal.

In all honesty, we did not design our current proposal to replicate this geometry. In fact we were not aware of the existence of this predecessor image when we developed our schematics. We simply worked toward a generic vernacular configuration that fitted my clients' programming requirements, and that suited the character of the neighbourhood. It was most interesting to discover this similarity, and gratifying to note that, just perhaps, this property may come full circle.

To summarize the property history of 277 College Street:

- In 1856 there was a small, presumably foundry worker's cottage, on the site.
- Some time before 1874, this was presumably replaced by a larger, 1 ½ storey side-gabled home
- Some time before 1946, this home was, again presumably, removed, due to fire or other cause.
- The property remained vacant until 1958 when the present bungalow was built
- A new 1 ½ storey side gabled home is proposed to be built on the site in 2022



## ARCHITECTURE IN THE DISTRICT



Edwardian Classicism 394 College Street

One of the most common architectural styles in the District is Edwardian Classicism, generally towards the north end of the street. And Vernacular design predominates in the southern half. As well, there are examples of Gothic Revival, Neo Classical, and Greek Revival (Victoria College), Italianate and Georgia design, distributed throughout the District. These demonstrate the incremental growth of the District between the 1830s and 1915. It is this era that is the *raison d'être* for the creation of the East Heritage District. A variety of other, later styles and building types occurred, throughout the balance of the 20th century.

The predominance of classically inspired design results in architectural details that are refined and understated in the majority of the heritage era buildings. And many, although not all of the later additions to the street follow their example.



Vernacular style 304 College Street

### Defining Characteristics:

- Side gable and hip roof forms with a low to moderate pitch are most common.
- Balance or symmetry are found in many building facades.
- Rectangular window openings, vertical proportions, traditional divided lights
- Scale is predominantly substantial, but not consistently so, ranging from single storey bungalows under 1,000 sq. ft. to larger 2 ½ storey homes in the 4,000 sq. ft. range.
- Red brick is the most dominant cladding material, although other materials exist.

On the following pages, we have grouped all 38 homes on College Street into three classifications; building height, building material and building era, so that we may quantify the architectural patterns on the street and identify the commonalities that define the district.



## HEIGHT & SCALE ASSESSMENT

The dominant height among College Street houses is 2 ½ storeys. These larger, more impressive homes set the tone for the street, and to a large extent are the justifications for the creation of the East Heritage District. 1 ½ storey homes are the next most frequent.

1 storey .....	7 homes	(18%)
1 ½ storey .....	13 homes	(34%)
2 storey .....	3 homes	( 8%)
2 ½ storey .....	15 homes	(40%)
<u>TOTAL .....</u>	<u>38 homes</u>	<u>(100%)</u>

It's worth noting but not surprising that in the era when the street was developed, there are very few full two-storey homes. In that era, mass-produced wood trusses had not entered common construction practice. Roofs were framed with individual timber rafters, leaving volumes of usable space beneath the roof pitch and creating opportunities for half-storey finished spaces.

The range of heights on the street, from 1 storey to 2 ½ storeys, all play a part in contributing to the diverse visual texture of the neighbourhood. With a few exceptions, however, the single storey structures are few in number and make a minimal contribution to the heritage fabric of the street.

The 2 ½ storey homes predominate on the north half of the street, while the 1 ½ storey configuration is most common on the southern half where No. 277 is located. And it is this height configuration which is clearly the most appropriate for any infill proposals on the southern portion of College Street.



one storey



one and a half storey



two storey



two and a half storey



## BUILDING MATERIAL EVALUATION

Red brick is clearly the dominant exterior material on College Street. Brick gives the street a visual cohesiveness, and adds a sense of solidity and permanence to the neighbourhood. The street however is not homogeneous and a number of other materials are present, contributing to the rich texture of the streetscape. There are examples of buff / beige brick on College Street. White brick exists elsewhere in the East Heritage district, although there are no examples on College Street.

Traditional stucco and siding round out the palate of materials found in the district. While these are common on 19<sup>th</sup> century residential architecture, they are not so dominant in the east heritage district.

This same variety of materials applies to the newer infill dwellings on the street as well as to the original 19<sup>th</sup> century and turn-of-the-century homes of the heritage era.

red brick .....	25 homes	(66%)
buff brick .....	4 homes	(10%)
stucco .....	3 homes	(8%)
wood siding .....	6 homes	(16%)
<hr/>		
TOTAL .....	38 homes	(100%)



red brick



buff / light brick



stucco



wood siding



## HERITAGE ERA

I've classified the houses on College Street as 'Heritage' (generally pre-World War 1) and 'Contemporary' (post-World War 2).

Heritage houses .....	28 homes	(74%)
Contemporary houses ....	10 homes	(26%)
<hr/>		
TOTAL .....	38 homes	(100%)

While the heritage era homes quite appropriately dominate the East Designated Heritage District, there are a number of contemporary era homes that fit comfortably on the street. In particular, a number of the storey-and-a-half houses fit the scale and massing of the older houses on the street. Unfortunately, not all of the contemporary era houses on the street are compatible with the street's character; some due to their design characteristics, some due to their small scale, and some, like 277 College Street, due to both.

Most if not all of the contemporary era homes were built before the formal designation of the East Heritage District, and while some do fit comfortably within the District, they were not subjected to the more rigorous guidelines now in effect. New homes in the District today will of course have to comply with these guidelines and as a result will fit even more seamlessly into the character of the street.



heritage era house



heritage era house



contemporary era house (compatible)



contemporary era house (not compatible.)



## EXISTING HOUSE AT 277 COLLEGE

The existing house at 277 College Street is superficially similar to a simple Ontario Cottage with a near-square footprint and a basic hipped roof. On closer inspection, however, this house fails to meet the defining characteristics of that style. The front wall is two offset planes and the façade is asymmetrical. The doors, windows, and eaves are aluminum, and are clearly mid-century contemporary.

At this point in a CHIA, it would be appropriate to list the heritage characteristics that link this property to the heritage characteristics of this Part V Designated District. In the case of 277 College street, these are minimal except for the use of red brick on the exterior. And even this is a later type of bark brick, artificially textured and pigmented; not consistent with the hand-cast clay bricks that are a defining feature of the district. The 'stone' foundation cladding is obviously synthetic cast stone. The rear porch and garage are modest and adequate, if rather unimpressive additions.

None of this is to suggest that the existing house is not perfectly good, economical and quite pleasant accommodation. That's not at issue. The point at issue is whether this building contributes to, or detracts from, the unique character of the East Heritage District.

We have evaluated the house on College Street to identify whether it complies with the defining characteristics of this community. Clearly this is not a homogeneous community when compare to, for example, Cabbagetown in Toronto. There are, however, common characteristics that that visually tie the community together. There are many other homes on College Street that share these characteristics and contribute in their own way to the rich if somewhat eclectic heritage character of the street. 277 College Street, regrettably, is not one of them.



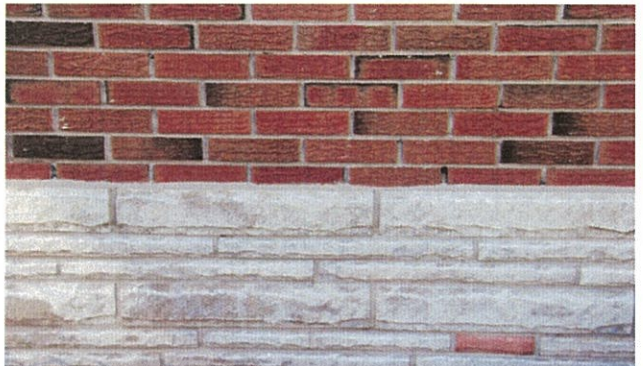
Front (east) side



South side



Rear porch



Masonry detail



## REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS RE DEMOLITION

The first regulatory constraints that we must address are the general prohibitions against demolition of structures within a Designated Heritage District, and the limited conditions under which demolition may be permitted. To summarize these constraints:

### Ontario Heritage Act, Provincial Policy Statement

The province, through the OHA and PPS, creates a regulatory framework under which municipalities can manage heritage designation. The implementation of these policies with respect to specific properties, however, is left to the discretion of individual municipalities.

Both OHA and PPS contain this same statement:

- *“No owner of property designated under section 29 shall demolish or remove a building or structure on the property or permit the demolition or removal of a building or structure on the property unless the owner applies to the Council of the municipality in which the property is situate and receives consent in writing to the demolition or removal”.*

As it is our intention to demolish or remove a building in the East Heritage District, we acknowledge that the burden is upon us to obtain such consent, and that with this CHAI, we intend to obtain Council’s approval.

### Cobourg Official Plan:

The Town’s O.P. does not contain specific provisions regarding the demolition of buildings in Designated Heritage Districts. It does, however, reinforce the OHA and PPS policies by:

- *“requiring a heritage permit if development involves....demolition of buildings or structures”.*

### Cobourg Zoning By-law:

The Zoning By-law, to the best of my knowledge, does not address or regulate the demolition of structures in a Designated Heritage District. The detailed regulation of proposed demolition projects lies with the provisions of the Heritage Master Plan and East Heritage District Plan.

### East Heritage District Guidelines

#### 2.4 Goals and Objectives

- *To ensure the conservation, maintenance, enhancement and protection of the heritage character and cultural heritage attributes of Cobourg’s East District residential neighbourhood.*
- *To discourage the demolition of existing heritage buildings and their replacement by new development.*



## 8.0 Demolition and removal of buildings and structures

- *Building demolition is not prohibited by the Ontario Heritage Act, but it will be actively discouraged within the East Heritage Conservation District. Property owners are encouraged to work with existing heritage buildings, altering and adding to them in a sympathetic manner, rather than demolishing and building anew.*

## 8.1 Demolition of buildings and structures

- *The demolition of buildings and structures that contribute to the architectural or historic character or heritage attributes of the District shall not be permitted. Exceptions may only be considered:*
  - i. *Where there is a greater public interest served, as determined by Council, through the demolition of the building or structure, or*
  - ii. *In extenuating circumstances such as natural disasters (e.g. fire, flood, tornado, and earthquake),*
  - iii. ***Where it is determined through a Heritage Impact Assessment that the building is not a contributing structure to the heritage character of the District.***

## RESPONSE TO REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

The upper tier regulatory bodies delegate demolition approval to the Municipality through the granting of a Heritage Permit. And the granting of such a permit is subject to compliance with Guideline 8.1. So we must address those provisions:

- 8.1 ii This exception does not apply to 277 College Street. There are no physically extenuating circumstances that require or justify its demolition.
- 8.1 iii This exception does directly apply. We believe that through this CHIA we have demonstrated that the existing building on the property is not a contributing structure to the heritage character of the District, and that the replacement structure makes a far more positive contribution to this character.
- 8.1 i We believe that exception i also applies. By replacing the existing dwelling with a new structure which is in far greater compliance with the guidelines, the East heritage District will become a more architecturally cohesive community, and a greater public interest is therefore best served.

The demolition or removal of the existing house on the subject property is indeed justified. This house, while quite adequate in itself, makes a negative contribution to the “*conservation and protection of the heritage character of Cobourg’s East District residential neighbourhood*”.



## PROPOSED INFILL DWELLING



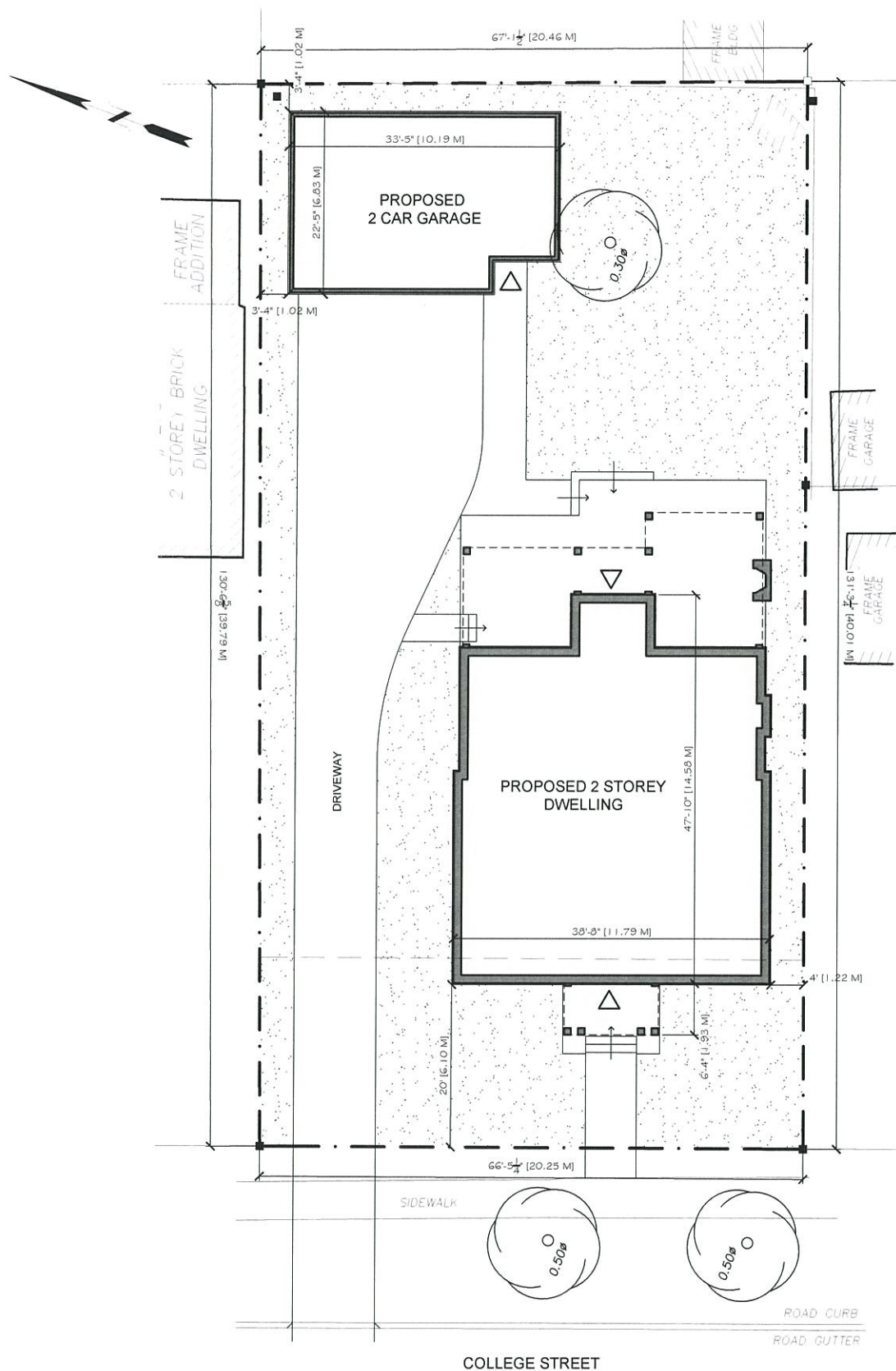
277 College Street – Proposed Front Elevation

The guidelines state that new construction in the District “*may be a contemporary interpretation of a historic form and style*”. We have proposed a generic vernacular form, which is the most dominant typology on the southern portion of College Street, and which lends itself to somewhat smaller scale structures suitable to my client’s requirements. The guidelines also call for new buildings to be “*a product of its own time and not pretend to be historic by incorporating new detail that is inappropriate in contemporary construction*”

Beyond these generalities, the Guidelines call for structures to “*adhere to the character of the surrounding neighbourhood with regards to lot patterns, heights, massing, setback, building scale, roof pitches and exterior material*”. There is sometimes a fine line between creating a new structure which fully embraces these characteristics while at the same time adhering to the policy that new construction shall be a product of its own time and not pretend to be historic. I believe that with the proposed design, we have walked that line.

The street front block is a simple vernacular form, a rectangular mass of one and a half storeys. It has a side gable main roof form with a symmetrical gabled dormer on the street face; one of the more recognized heritage typologies. One and a half storey homes are the second most common type on College Street, and the most common on the southern half of the street. Like many homes of the heritage era, it has single storey additions which extend to the rear, and which do not distract from the ‘public realm’ impact of the principal block. Windows are vertically proportioned, in keeping with the era, but the window surrounds are cleaner and more contemporary, as are eaves, soffits and other exterior trim elements are similarly more contemporary in their detailing. Exterior wall finish will be a light, off-white cast stone in a random ashlar coursing pattern.

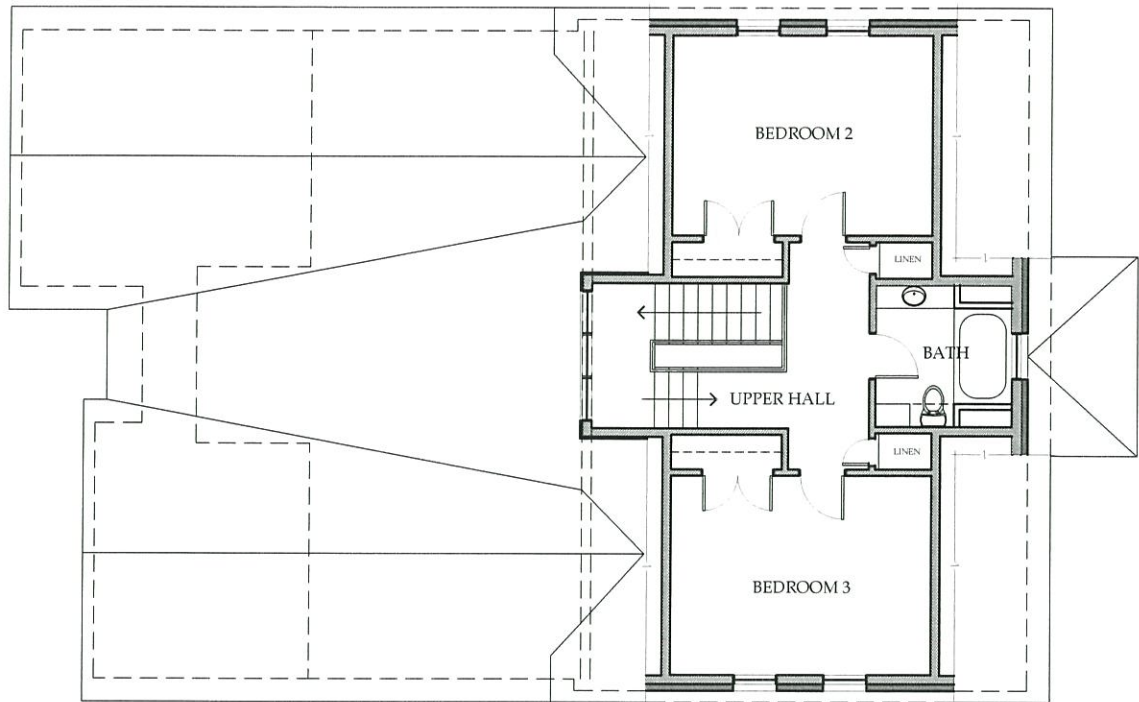




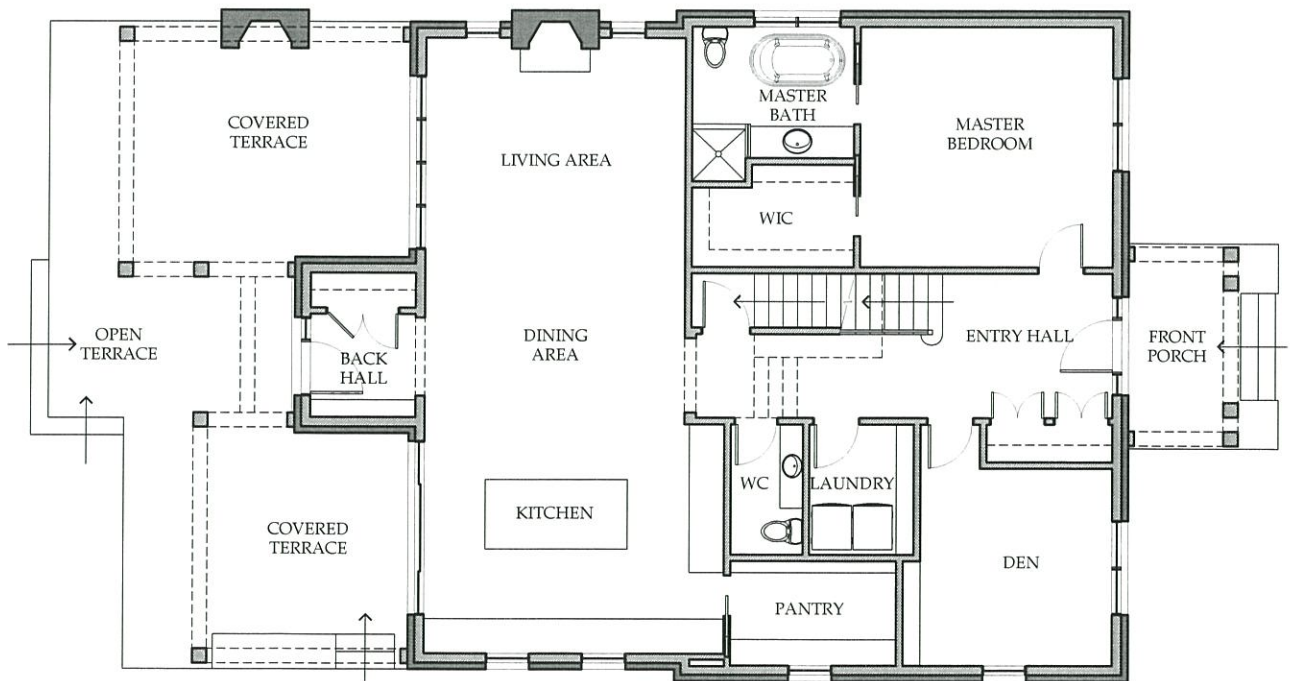
PROPOSED NEW HOUSE AT 277 COLLEGE STREET, COBOURG

SITE PLAN





SECOND FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN





SOUTH SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT (EAST) ELEVATION





NORTH SIDE ELEVATION

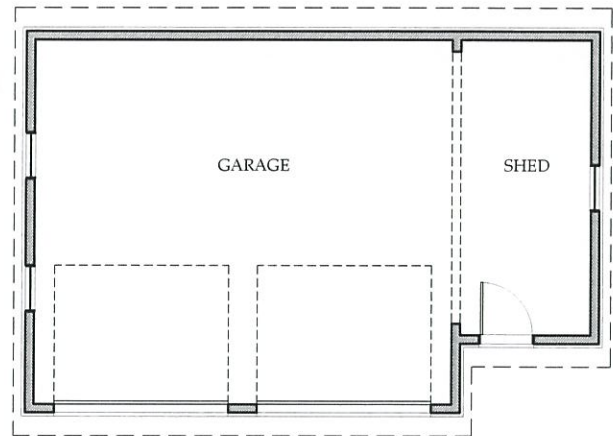


REAR (WEST) ELEVATION

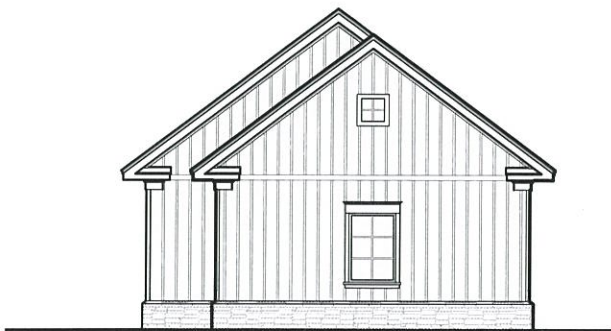




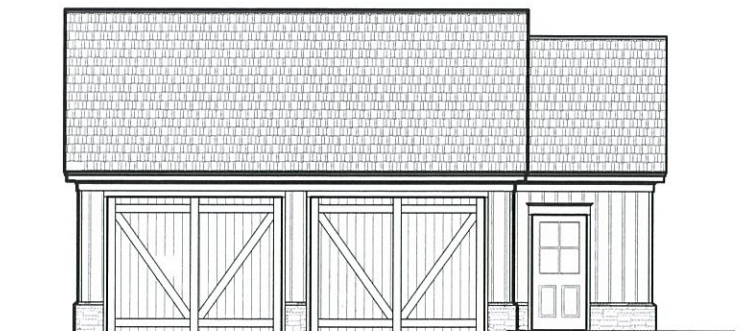
SOUTH ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



NORTH ELEVATION



FRONT (EAST) ELEVATION



## EXTERIOR MATERIAL & COLOUR

Our one notable departure from the distinctive neighbourhood pattern is the matter of exterior colour. My clients want a white brick / off-white / light grey brick house, and I support that wish. We fully acknowledge that white brick is not a heritage material; not in the East Heritage District, and more generally, not in mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century residential architecture in Ontario.

White, in itself, is not an inappropriate heritage colour, as exemplified by many handsome examples of heritage homes clad in white stucco or white painted wood siding. The most distinctive structure in the East Heritage District is the former Victoria College, a stark white landmark that visually anchors the District.

There are other off-white brick buildings in the East Heritage District; notably the St. Peter's Court housing complex to the east of the Church and a house at 117 Queen Street. I'm not suggesting that any of these are great examples of compliance with the heritage guidelines. But the precedent of white brick buildings in the East Heritage District is clearly established.

On the one hand, the Guidelines do require that we must adhere to the neighbourhood character with regard to exterior material, among other things. Brick, which we intend to use, is the most dominant material in the East heritage District; and clearly an acceptable exterior material. White or off-white brick, while not without precedent, is not a material consistent with the heritage character of the neighbourhood

On the other hand, the Heritage Guidelines dictate that "new construction shall be a product of its own time and not pretend to be historic". They do advise that "new design may be a contemporary interpretation of historic forms and styles". The proposed design complies with the guidelines in virtually every respect; massing, scale, height, roof geometry and window pattern. Our one notable difference from the neighbourhood context is the matter of exterior colour, and that is our intended point of departure from the heritage norm, which marks this dwelling as "a product of its own time".



Victoria College: white stucco



348 College Street: white siding



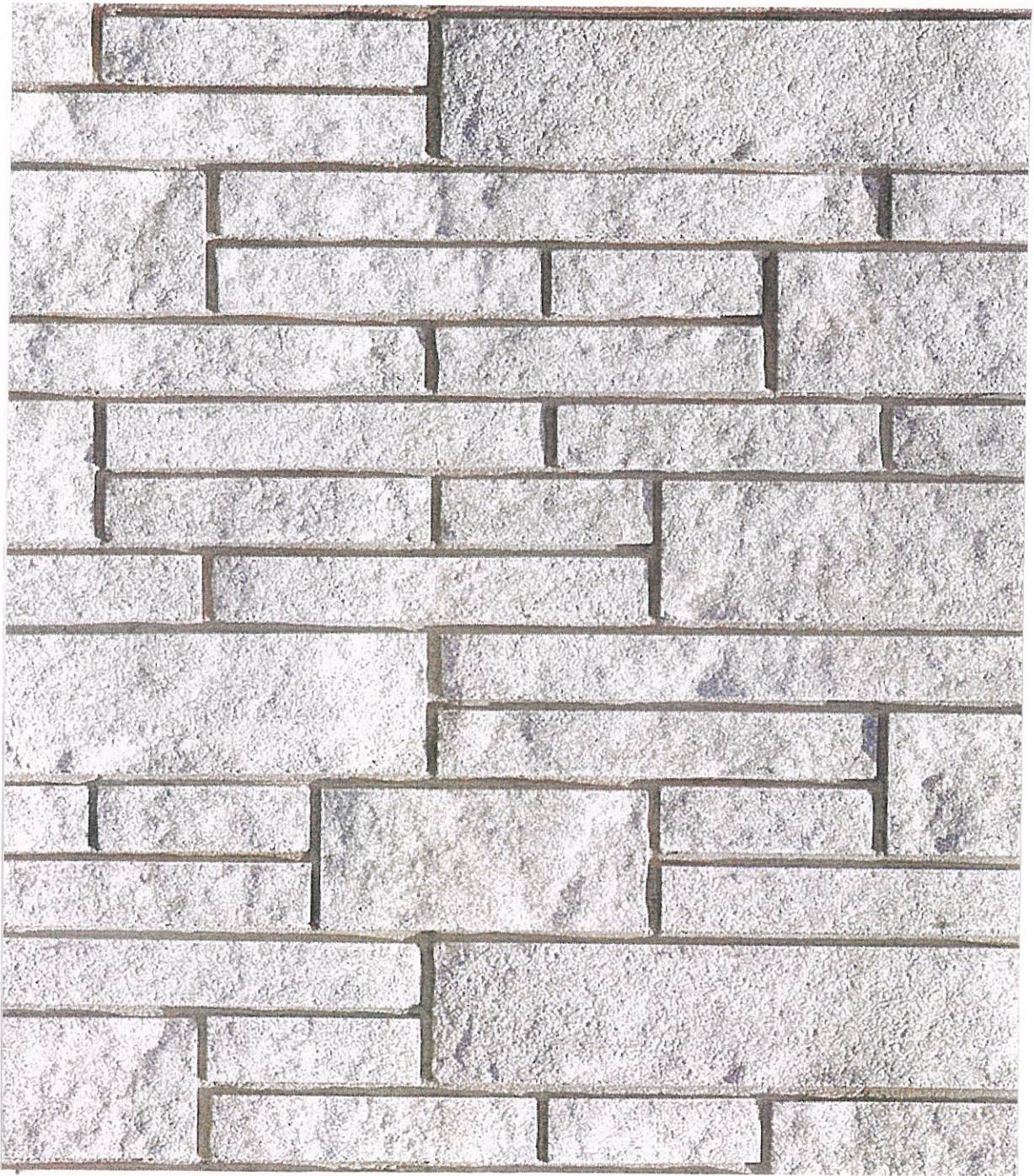
St. Peter's Court: off-white brick



117 Queen Street: off-white Brick



## PROPOSED NEW DWELLING --- EXTERIOR MATERIAL AND COLOUR



The side-gabled front block of the new house will be clad in Shouldice “Smith Stone” in their ‘polar’ colour, an off-white / pale grey colour. This cast stone will be a moderately textured random ashlar pattern, as illustrated above.

Traditionally, when rear additions were added to a house, they were in a different material. Accordingly, the single storey rear wing of the house addition will be in regular coursed brick, in the same polar colour, to create a subtle difference from the front wing.







## REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS FOR NEW INFILL DEVELOPMENT

The second set of constraints contain the policies and guidelines that we must follow in order to obtain a Heritage Permit approval for our proposed new dwelling. These policies include:

### Ontario Heritage Act, Provincial Policy Statement

The province, through the OHA and PPS, creates a regulatory framework under which municipalities can designate heritage properties and manage changes within those designated areas. The implementation of these policies with respect to specific properties, including new construction within Heritage Districts, is left to the discretion of individual municipalities.

### Cobourg Official Plan

The Plan states that Designated Heritage Conservation Districts shall be subject to the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act and the Heritage District Guidelines, ensuring the protection of cultural heritage attributes. It does recognize, however, that new construction will occur within Designated Heritage Districts, and provides that:

- *the scale and massing of new construction shall be consistent with surrounding buildings to ensure a visual connection; and*
- *the general design and style of new construction shall be considered on an individual basis through the site plan approval process recognizing that contemporary styles may be more appropriate in certain cases than emulating turn of the century designs.*

### Cobourg Heritage Master Plan

The Plan makes the valid point that retaining the broader character of the streetscape and neighbourhoods is equally important to conserving individual buildings.

- *“It was recognized that the character of Cobourg comes not only through the individual buildings and properties, but also the overall streetscape character of many of the older areas of the Town”.*

### East Heritage District Guidelines

#### *Conservation Goals & Objectives:*

- *To protect and enhance the existing 19th century residential character of the East Heritage Conservation District.*
- *To conserve the East District’s heritage attributes by allowing only those changes that are compatible with the built form and consistent with the cultural heritage value of the District.*
- *To discourage the demolition of existing heritage buildings and their replacement by new development.*
- *To accommodate new development only where it respects or otherwise complements the prevailing low profile and heritage character of existing buildings and structures within the District and does not adversely affect the cultural heritage character of the District.*



#### Guidelines for managing change:

*There may be locations within the East District where infill development may occur over time, if buildings that do not contribute to the historic or architectural character are demolished or other circumstances arise to allow infill construction. New construction is permitted within the East District, provided it is compatible with the heritage character and conforms to the policies in this section. New infill shall follow other applicable Town of Cobourg guidance regarding site design and urban design.*

#### New freestanding construction policies

- *New freestanding construction will be required to be compatible with the heritage character and attributes of adjacent heritage properties and the cultural heritage value of the District. This means adhering to the character of the surrounding neighbourhood of the District with regards to lot patterns, heights, massing, setback, building scale, roof pitches and exterior materials.*
- *New construction shall be a product of its own time and not pretend to be historic by incorporating historic detail that is inappropriate in contemporary construction. New design may be a contemporary interpretation of historic forms and styles, but replicas of historic buildings are discouraged.*
- *Maintaining the height and rhythm of the existing streetscape will unify the District. Blank façades that face the street or are easily visible from the street are not permitted.*
- *Windows and entrance doors on the primary elevations of new buildings shall be compatible with the character of the neighbourhood, reflecting typical shapes, orientation and composition found within the District.*

#### RESPONSE TO REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

Guidelines for new infill construction are considerably less demanding than guidelines for the renovation of or additions to heritage properties. Nonetheless, these guidelines are critical to the maintenance of the heritage character of the community and should be strictly adhered to.

The proposed new dwelling at 277 College Street will be, in broad terms, a contemporary interpretation of a ubiquitous vernacular form, designed to comply in full with the policies and guidelines of all the applicable regulatory agencies. Not only will it fit within today's guidelines, but it will generally reflect the form of a previous house which likely existed on this property from 1874 onwards, during the height of the heritage era celebrated by the creation of Cobourg's East Heritage District.

Specific responses to the Guidelines, and efforts to ensure compatibility with the heritage character of the community, are found on the following pages.



## IMPACT ON ADJACENT HERITAGE PROPERTIES

For the purposes of this comparative study, I have elected to show the specific impact of the new house at 277 College Street on its immediate neighbours: 265 and 273 College to the south and 285 College to the north. This immediate comparison is reflective of the impact on College Street as a whole.

### HEIGHT & SCALE:

Architecturally, the proposed new dwelling at 277 College Street will be very much in character with its immediate neighbours and with the guidelines for new infill construction in the East Heritage District. It will be 1½ storeys tall on the street frontage with a single storey rear wing. The dwelling two doors to the south, at 265 College, is also 1 ½ storeys, as is the adjacent house to the north at 285. In height and scale, these three houses are similar. The house immediately to the south, at No. 273, is a full two storeys tall, but with a somewhat shallower roof pitch, so it's over-all height is only marginally taller. Also, since it is set back considerably farther from the street, the visual impact of the slightly greater height is negated.

The proposal for No. 277 is approx. 2200 sq. ft, and these others are generally in the same size range. The majority of houses on the southern half of College Street are generally within this storey-and-a-half, mid-scale range, and we have attempted to stay consistently within this range. The scale of houses gradually increases towards the northern half of the street where the large, grander two-and-a-half storey homes predominate.

### MASSING & ROOF GEOMETRY:

The proposed house at 277 College Street intentionally does not replicate any specific existing homes on the street, although it is superficially similar to several symmetrical vernacular homes in the East District. It will have a side gable roof form with a symmetrical gabled front dormer and a centred, projecting front porch. This vernacular style is one of the more ubiquitous house form typologies throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century Ontario domestic architecture. And evidence suggest that it may be similar to the roof form that existed on this property in the late 1800's.

While not identical in roof form, the immediate neighbours at 266, 273 and 279 College are similar in that all have comparable roof pitches, and all are distinguished by a street-facing gable. All but No. 273 have single storey front entry porches. All have similar patterns of vertically proportioned window openings. The proposed dwelling will co-exist very comfortably with these neighbours and with the street as a whole

### STREET SETBACK:

Street front setbacks on both sides of the street are consistently generous, if not precisely uniform, and allow the significant views up and down the street to Victoria College in the north and to Victoria Park in the south. Maintaining this pattern of uniform set-backs is a fundamental requirement. The houses on the block between Chapel and Swayne Streets, including the existing house at 277 College, maintain this set-back pattern. The exception is the house at 273 College, to the immediate south of the subject property which has a far greater front set-back and a clear break in the visual continuity of the street.



The Town's initial Heritage Conservation District Study from 1990 states:

- *New buildings are to have a similar setback as their immediate neighbours. If the neighbouring house has an uncharacteristic setback in the context of the street, the established pattern of the street shall dictate the setback.*

Accordingly, we are proposing that the new building setback reflect the setbacks of No's 265, 285 and the existing house at 277 College Street, ignoring the greater set-back at 273 College.

Heritage guidelines apply most stringently to aspects of the house seen in the public realm. Generally, this means the street frontage as well as the side frontage on corner properties. Because the front setback of 273 College is so significant, it means that the south side elevation of the proposed new house at 277 College is quite visible and very much in the public realm. The existing dwelling presents a single storey, blank brick wall, with no contribution whatever to the heritage character of the district. The proposed house, on the other hand, presents a south side elevation with storey-and-a-half gabled profile with rear addition and rear verandah, far more in keeping in scale and geometry with the heritage guidelines for the District.

## TREES & STREET LANDSCAPING

College Street is a beautiful tree-lined street, with the trees in places forming a full canopy over the road. These funnel the view from the street to it's terminal landmarks: the former Victoria College to the north and Victoria Park to the south. Generous grassed boulevards exist on both side of the street, throughout its entire length. This green corridor must be preserved, according to Guideline 10.8, and it is our intention to do so.

There are no private trees on the frontage of 277 College Street, but there are two mature City-owned trees on the municipal boulevard. One, a linden I believe, sits closer to the northern boundary of our property, and is in excellent condition. This will be protected during construction and preserved for the long term. The other tree, a maple, is centred on the property frontage. It is in very poor condition, having suffered considerable damage. We will of course protect it during construction, but as it is a Town-owned tree, the Town may decide to remove it sometime in the future. In accordance with Guideline 10.7, it's important that this tree be replaced with as large a replacement tree as possible, and as soon as possible. We realize that in some instances, the Town has replaced street trees with decorative / flowering species, but given the unique character of College Street, we recommend that the replacement tree should ideally be a native species such as oak or maple that will grow to a substantial scale in keeping with the feeling of the street, and will contribute to the extensive green canopy.

In order to maintain the green, soft-landscaped street frontage, the driveway at the front will be kept to a minimal single lane width, with the garage and open parking area set to the rear of the lot. There will be no street line or front yard fencing to obstruct the visual sense of openness from the house to the street. It is premature at this time to address detailed front yard landscaping, but we will endeavour to maximize the soft landscaping area with generous lawns and detailed on-site landscaping in character with the rest of the neighbourhood.

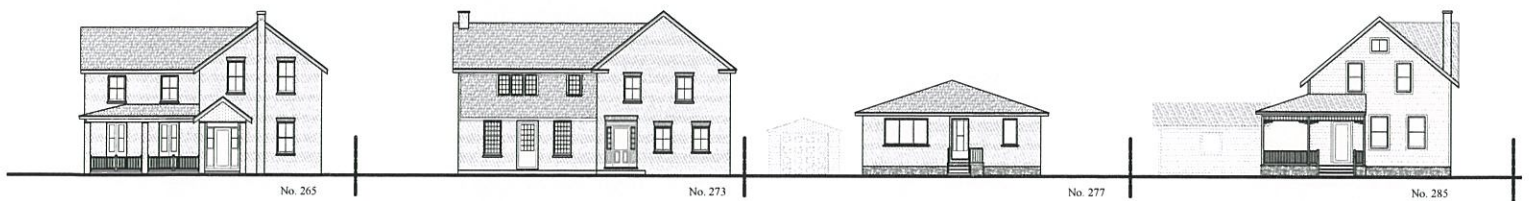




CONTEXT ELEVATION - WITH TREES



CONTEXT ELEVATION - PROPOSED



CONTEXT ELEVATION - EXISTING

## 277 COLLEGE STREET - STREET CONTEXT ELEVATIONS



## CONCLUSION:

There is nothing wrong with the existing house at 277 College Street, when judged in isolation. In a different context, in a different neighbourhood, it would have many years of future existence ahead of it. It cannot, however, be judged simply on its own merits. It is located in the core area of a Designated Heritage District, and it is in the greater public interest that this dwelling be replaced with something more in character; where it is determined that the existing dwelling on the property is not a contributing structure to the heritage character of the District.

I believe that through this Heritage Impact Assessment, we have demonstrated that this is indeed the case. That the existing dwelling on the property fails to comply with virtually all of the guidelines, with the exception of its red brick exterior. Its scale, its height, its architectural style all fail to contribute to the architectural ambience of the neighbourhood.

The proposed new dwelling, on the other hand, presents a vernacular style; classic historic typology. With its side-gable roof form, its symmetrical front dormer, its 1 ½ story height, its single storey rear addition, its window and door proportions, it ideally fits the guidelines for the District.. It will maintain the over-all street set-back alignment, and will make a positive contribution to the character of the street. And quite possible, it is the approximate reincarnation of a dwelling that existed here at the height of the celebrated heritage period.

While we are not preserving the existing building, we are, in fact, preserving the history of the property in a less tangible way. The house was acquired by my client's grandfather in 1971, and was the seat of family gatherings when he was a child. The property has remained in the family ever since, although it has been tenant occupied for the last 10 years or so. He and his family wish to return to College Street, to once again make this a seat of family gatherings with his own grand kids. But their sense of connection to this property rests not so much with the building itself, but with the neighbourhood and sense of community; with the location on a beautiful heritage street and its proximity to Downtown and to Victoria Park.

Notwithstanding the compelling reasons for this house to be replaced with something considerably more consistent with the heritage characteristics of the area, it is still regrettable that a house in reasonable condition, able to provide reasonable accommodation, should be destroyed. My clients, therefore, do not wish to destroy it if it's possible to save it. They would prefer to give it away. House moving is a sometimes awkward but not prohibitive task. They propose to offer it at no cost to not-for-profit organizations like Habitat for Humanity, and if there are no takers from that sector, then offer it to the public at large. My clients could contribute some \$5,000. towards the moving costs, but the balance of costs toward the move would be borne by the recipients of the house.

This scenario, the creation of a more historically compatible house on College Street, and the preservation of a decent home to accommodate a new family, should be seen as an ideal outcome.



APPENDIX No. ONE: PROPERTY OWNERS' LETTER



Lisa & Gary Ferguson  
277 College Street,  
Cobourg, ON  
K9A 3V1

August 18, 2021

Mr. Dave Johnson, Heritage Planner  
Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee

Re: Demolition and New Build - 277 College Street

We are writing in the hopes that we will be successful in obtaining approval from the Town and the Heritage Committee for the demolition and rebuild of both the main house and garage located at 277 College Street.

We purchased the property in September 2008 and it has housed tenants ever since. This property was formerly owned by Gary's grandparents, William (Bill) and Lavigne Halstead, who lived there from 1971 until their passing. Bill passed in November 2003 and Lavigne in January 2008.

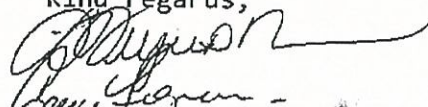
This place used to be quite the gathering place for family and friends after the Santa Clause Parade, Waterfront Festival, Christmas and birthday celebrations. We would enjoy so many wonderful meals and conversations over the years and it's our hope to be able to carry on this tradition and make new memories for our children and grandchildren.

The original house was built around 1958, I believe by Henry Lord who rented the property to Ralph Zarboni (former plant Manager of GE in Cobourg). It is our understanding that prior to the build the property was a vacant piece of land.

As you can see the current home does nothing to enhance the beauty of College Street and does not have any historical features whatsoever. Our plan is to completely transform the property to house a 1 1/2 story home using new construction materials and some heritage flare. We would build a double car garage which would be set back to the rear of the property.

When we were deciding on what we would like to do with this property we wanted to build a home that would not only benefit ourselves but the neighbouring properties as well. It has always been our dream to move to town and to make this house our home. We know that we will make the best neighbours.

Kind regards,



Lisa & Gary Ferguson



APPENDIX No. TWO: HERITAGE CONSULTANT'S RESUME



## CHRISTOPHER WALLACE ARCHITECT - HERITAGE RESUME

Christopher Wallace Architect is a small, sole-proprietor architectural practice based in Port Hope. Chris' experience has included residential design, heritage rehabilitation and design, urban design, and smaller scale commercial and institutional projects.

A particular focus has been on the design of new homes and addition / renovation projects in Part V Designated Heritage Districts. Worth noting is the design of seven new homes and 6 addition / renovation projects in Meadowvale Village, a 19<sup>th</sup> century mill village on the Credit River, which became the first Designated Heritage District in Ontario.

Through a wholly-owned companion company, Chris has extensive experience in the design of traditional conservatories and bespoke garden architecture.

### EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Architecture, University of Toronto

### MEMBERSHIPS

- Ontario Association of Architects
- Royal Architectural Institute of Canada
- Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals
- Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (former Board member)

### PROJECT EXPERIENCE

- Batterwood House, Port Hope  
Schematic design for heritage-appropriate accessory structures to Batterwood House, the extensive estate property built for former Governor General Vincent Massey.
- West Sector, Parliament Hill, Ottawa\*\*  
Conceptual master plan for the revitalization of the West Sector of Parliament Hill. Designed for compliance with existing heritage, urban design and Parliamentary Precinct guidelines.
- Private houses, Meadowvale Village, Mississauga  
Design & working drawings for seven new infill dwellings and six renovation / addition projects in Meadowvale Village, Ontario's first Designated Heritage District.
- Cabbagetown Tavern, Toronto  
Design & working drawings for the conversion of an historic tavern in Toronto's Cabbagetown neighbourhood into eight terraced town house dwelling units.
- Coach House, Rosedale, Toronto  
Design & working drawings for addition / renovation to an historic coach house on Crescent Road, to be converted to a luxury dwelling with extensive landscaping / site works.
- Gooderham Mansion, Meadowvale Village, Mississauga, Ontario  
Design consultancy for the exterior restoration of a landmark structure in Meadowvale Village, a designated historic district of traditional homes. Currently in use as a Montessori School.



- Charles Street Apartments, Toronto  
Design consultant for the exterior of an elegant low-rise apartment structure, to be incorporated into a larger scale condominium development.
- Macdonell Street, Guelph, Ontario  
Schematic design for the conversion of an historic main street commercial building in downtown Guelph to a mixed-use building with 'mews house' dwelling units.
- Beaconsfield Avenue, Toronto  
Design & working drawings for a series of infill dwellings (townhouses, new detached and renovated detached houses) in an historic neighbourhood in west Toronto.
- Trisha Romance Residence, Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Design, working drawings and construction for a new conservatory addition on a well known historic dwelling. Work entailed extensive research into the existing building's fabric.
- Main Street, Humberstone Area, Port Colborne, \*\*  
Member of the design team addressing street improvements and developing heritage-appropriate infill schematics for Islington Avenue, the main street of the Village of Kleinburg
- Shopsy's Restaurant, Toronto  
Renovation design and working drawings for a restaurant in Toronto's historic theater district on King Street West. Work included extensive restoration work to the facade of this historic building. \*
- Essex Park Hotel, Toronto  
Design consultancy for the exterior restoration of a historic hotel in central Toronto, to be incorporated into a larger mixed- use development
- Shepherd's Mill, Brockville  
Design consultancy for the restoration of an historic stone mill structure, to be restored and converted for restaurant / tavern use.
- Crystal Beach Park Amusement, Crystal Beach  
Architectural consultant to a multi-disciplinary team studying long term options for the revitalization of this historic but deteriorating theme park and resort community on the shores of Lake Erie.
- Silver Rail Tavern, Toronto  
Design schematics and feasibility studies for the renovation / restoration of downtown Toronto's oldest restaurant / night club. \*
- Islington Avenue, Kleinburg Ontario\*\*  
Member of the design team addressing street improvements and developing heritage-appropriate infill schematics for Islington Avenue, the Designated Heritage District in the Village of Kleinburg.
- Superior Restaurant, Toronto, Ontario  
Design and working drawings for a restaurant in a renovated historical building in Toronto. The project received an award as part of the Yonge Street Revitalization Program. \*

\* with Hirschberg Design Group, Toronto

\*\* with LANDinc., Toronto