

PART A

DISTRICT OVERVIEW

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Heritage Conservation District Concept

A heritage conservation district is a collection of buildings, streets and open spaces that collectively are of special historical and/or architectural significance to the community. The individual elements of a district must combine in such a way as to present a sense of cohesiveness. A heritage district is a place of special character or association with an integrity of its own that distinguishes it from other areas of the community.

Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act RS0 1980, C.337 provides for designation of heritage conservation districts. The parameters of this legislation enables municipalities, through study, to define the areas to be designated and to use development guidelines to assist in the regulation of various types of development within heritage conservation districts in order to ensure that the district's character and viability are maintained and/or enhanced.

It is not the purpose of heritage conservation district designation to make the district a static place where change is prohibited. Rather, the purpose is to guide change so that it contributes to, the district's architectural and historic character.



George Dukes Butcher Shop and House, 195 Main Street Unionville, c.1900

1.0 Introduction

1.2 Background to the District Plan

The Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan has been in development for a number of years. The idea of a heritage district evolved from the efforts and interest of a local citizens group called the Unionville Conservation and Development Society, and Heritage Markham, the Town's Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC).

The provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act allows a local municipality to identify a specific parcel of land as a heritage conservation district study area for future examination. In 1976, the Town of Markham adopted By-law No. 180-76 to define Unionville as a formal Heritage Conservation District Study Area.

In 1978, the Main Street Sub-Committee of the Unionville Conservation and Development Society prepared terms of reference for a special study on the relationship between Unionville's economy and its heritage character. Financed by the Town, the 1979 study was undertaken by A.J. Diamond Planners and the Realty Research Group. The study addressed a number of planning, transportation and urban design matters and recommended that Council designate the Unionville area as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In 1983, Heritage Markham produced a preliminary Heritage Conservation District Plan for the Main Street area extending from Toogood Pond in the north to the Rouge River in the south. In 1984, the Unionville Heritage Conservation District Committee, a sub-committee of Heritage Markham, further refined and enhanced the 1983 Plan.

Between the years 1983 and 1989, both Heritage Markham and Markham's Planning and Development Department continued to work on the Unionville Heritage Plan as time permitted.

During this period, the Town adopted Heritage Conservation District plans for Thornhill Village and Markham Village.

In 1989, the Town retained consultants to prepare a comprehensive land use study for the commercial section of old Unionville. Upon completion of the land use study in 1990, a commitment was made by the Town to complete the Unionville Heritage Plan using internal staff resources.

On November 26, 1996, Council appointed representatives from the Unionville community to work as an advisory committee to the Town on the Unionville Heritage Conservation District Study. The Advisory Committee met during the study process to review the plan and advise staff on local matters, provide a community perspective, and assist during the public participation component of the study. The District Study was undertaken from January to August 1997 and the final plan was presented to Council for adoption in September 1997.



Main Street Unionville, c.1900

1.0 Introduction

1.3 Purpose of the District Study

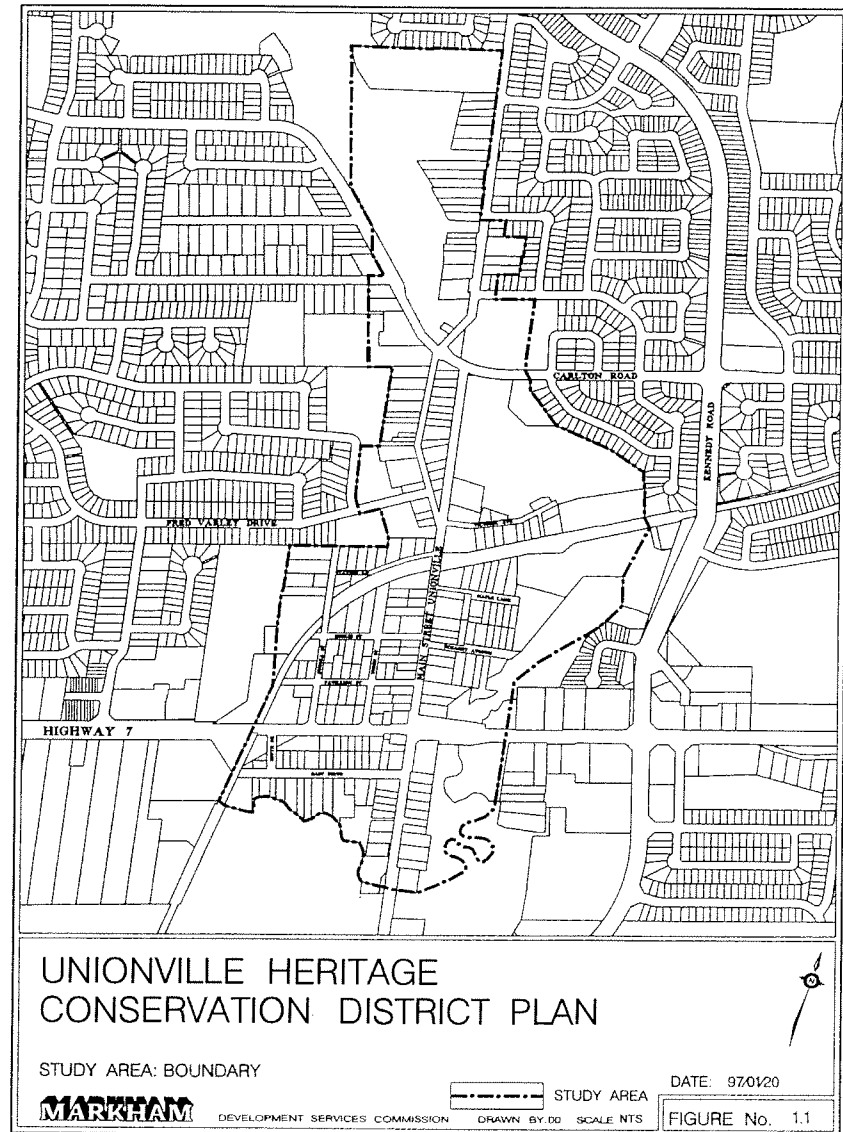
The overall goal of a Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan is to provide a framework to guide development, re-development and alteration of the properties and streetscapes located within the boundaries of the District.

The purpose of the study was as follows:

- 1) to examine the buildings, streets and open spaces within the study area and to determine if, as a group, they are a collective asset to the community and possess a special character or association that distinguish them from the surrounding area;
- 2) to establish a district boundary that encompasses the special character identified through the study;
- 3) to prepare guidelines and criteria that ensure the area's buildings, streets and open spaces are conserved, enhanced or physically altered in an appropriate manner; and
- 4) to encourage the participation and input of local residents in the study processes through the Study Advisory Committee and public information meetings.

1.4 District Study Area Boundaries

The Unionville Heritage Conservation District Study Area was focused on the Main Street area in the old Police Village of Unionville. The Study Area boundaries were established by



1.0 Introduction

1.4 Study Area Boundaries cont'd

By-law No. 180.76 which was adopted by Council on September 14, 1976. (See Figure 1.1). The final District boundary, as approved by Council, is found in Section 2.2.

1.5 Phases of the District Study

The Unionville Heritage Conservation District Study consisted of two phases. The first phase involved the research and documentation of background information and the special characteristics of the Study Area. This included an examination of the area's historical development and context, architecture and other built features, landscape and streetscape conditions, natural environment, land use, traffic and parking, demographic and social character, trends for change, planning controls and municipal policies. A summary of the public participation program is also presented. A recommendation for the boundary to delineate the District completed the first phase. The findings of the first phase are published under separate cover entitled "Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan - District Study" and "Appendix A - Study Area Building Inventory"

The second phase of the study involved the preparation of general design guidelines indicating the type of change considered appropriate for heritage buildings and streetscapes as well as generic design considerations for new construction in the District. This phase also involved policy recommendations associated with District designation and an examination of the approval process. The final product of the second phase is this document.

2.0 Heritage Conservation District Designation

2.1 District Character

The Unionville Heritage Conservation District retains many aspects of a nineteenth century rural Ontario village.

Most buildings date from the latter half of the nineteenth century. There are also some Georgian, Regency, and early twentieth-century buildings and some more recent structures. Historically and architecturally significant buildings of both wood and brick construction survive. The southern portion of the District is predominantly residential. The northern portion contains the typical nineteenth century village features of a blacksmith shop, hotel, train station, a number of stores and three churches.

The crooked main street - a rarity among Ontario's straight line surveys - is lined with a compact arrangement of detached, well-preserved houses and other buildings on deep lots. Many of the houses north of Victoria Avenue have been converted to commercial use. On the east side of Main Street, the properties slope down to the Rouge River flood plain.

Even with conversions and intensification, the commercial section of Main Street retains its former residential scale and ambience which lends much to its attractiveness and character. This is further intensified by the delicate relationship between the buildings and the open space between, behind and particularly in front of the structures.

The flood plain, an important natural resource in the region, is abundantly treed as are some of the District's residential streets. Well-tended gardens and flowering shrubs accent the area's historical architecture. An absence of curbs and gutters along a number of streets, reinforces the village appearance. A complete analysis of the District's history and character can be found in the District Study published under separate cover.



Main Street Unionville, c.1897



Main Street Unionville, 1997

2.0 Heritage Conservation District Designation

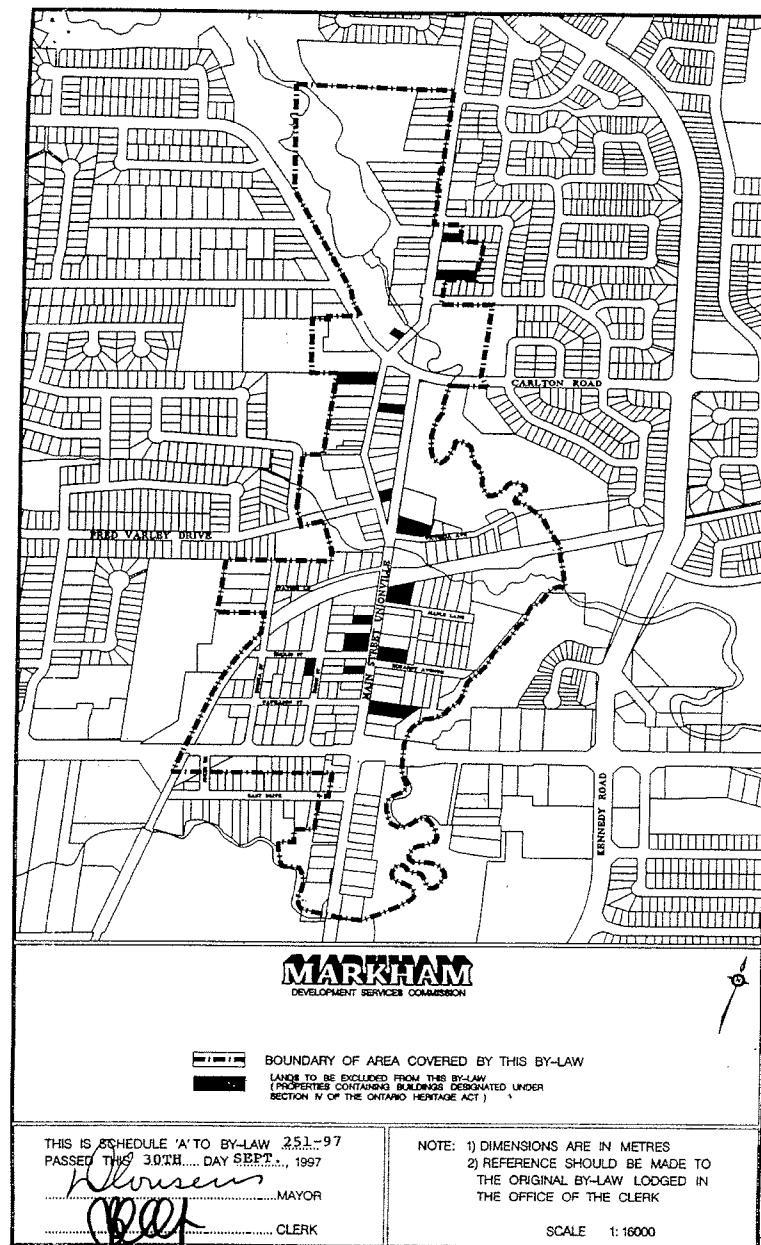
2.2 District Boundary

The Unionville Heritage Conservation District boundary is illustrated on Figure 2-1. The District Boundary includes the historic commercial core of Unionville and the adjacent residential areas. The designation by-law only comes into force when it is approved by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). The OMB is not required to approve a heritage conservation district plan document or any guidelines developed for the proposed District. The OMB is primarily concerned about the boundary delineation.

The OMB approved the district boundary on January 6, 1998 after holding a hearing in the municipality on December 18, 1997.

2.3 Individual Designations within the District

Within the District, there are sixteen properties that have been individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. These properties are not technically included in the District designation. The Ontario Heritage Act stipulates that no property may be designated under both Part IV (individual designation) and Part V (district designation). However the general policies and guidelines of the Plan will apply to those individually designated properties located within the District.



2.0 Heritage Conservation District Designation

2.3 Individual Designations within the District cont'd

The individually designated properties are as follows:

Address	Name of Building/Property	By-law No.
109 Main Street	Lutheran Parsonage	379-86
118 Main Street	Weatherill House	4-78
121 Main Street	Dr. Albert Pingle House	80-90
123 Main Street	Hood House	7-78
124 Main Street	William Eckardt House	4-78
128 Main Street	The Arch Tree House	116-91
137 Main Street	James Eckardt House	298-78
141 Main Street	Harrington House	4-78
145 Main Street	Neil Mckinnon (Eakin) House	187-82
149 Main Street	The Congregational Church	2-95
197 Main Street	Salem Eckardt House	298-78
206 Main Street	Stiver (Philip Eckardt) House	4-78
218 Main Street	St. Philips Anglican Church	118-80
233 Main Street	The Raymer Cheese Factory	79-90
249 Main Street	The Crown Inn	240-86
20 Union Street	Bethesda Lutheran Church	81-90

At the time of individual designation, a detailed designation report identifying the 'reasons for designation' was prepared for each of the above properties. These reports are on file at the Town and are a useful resource when exterior changes are proposed.

2.0 Heritage Conservation District Designation

2.4 Building Classification

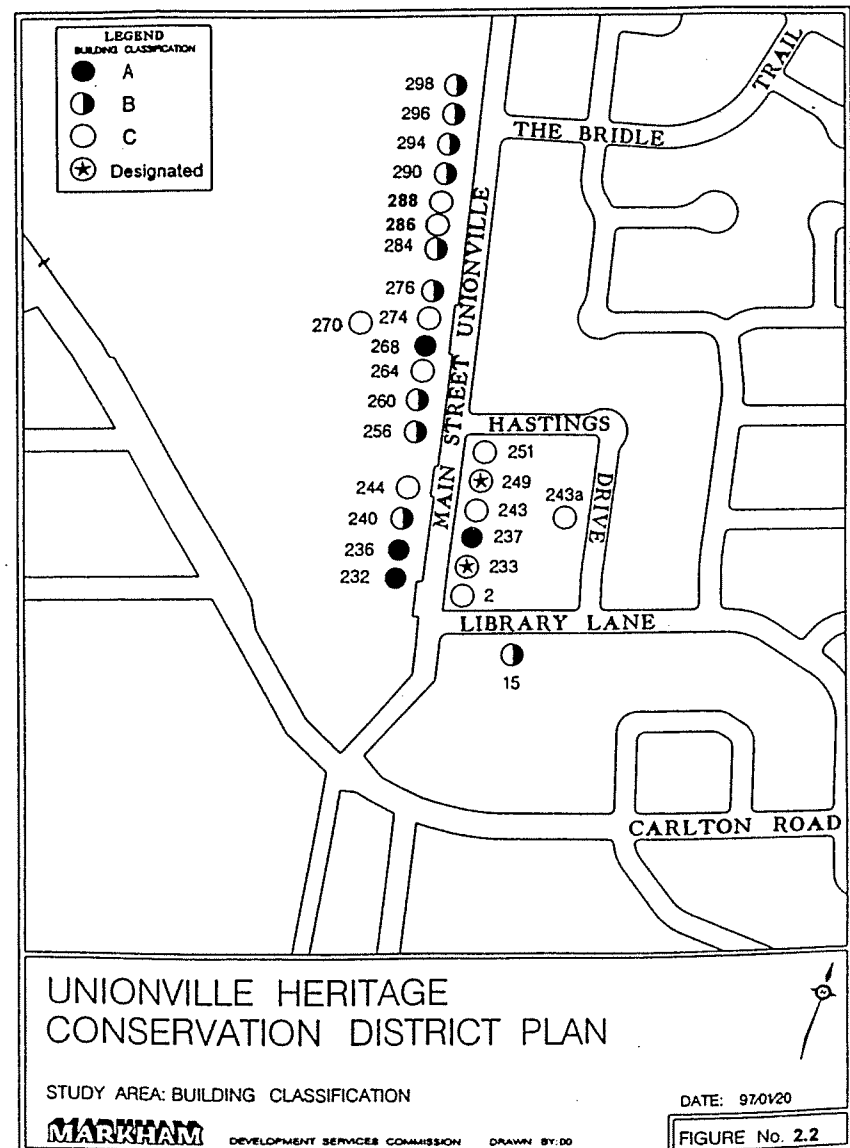
All the buildings within the District have been evaluated with each building being assigned to one of three categories. These classifications are as follows:

- Class 'A' Buildings of major importance to the District
- They have historical and/or architectural value.
 - They are the buildings that maintain the heritage character to the District.
 - Buildings that are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act are also considered to be Class 'A'.

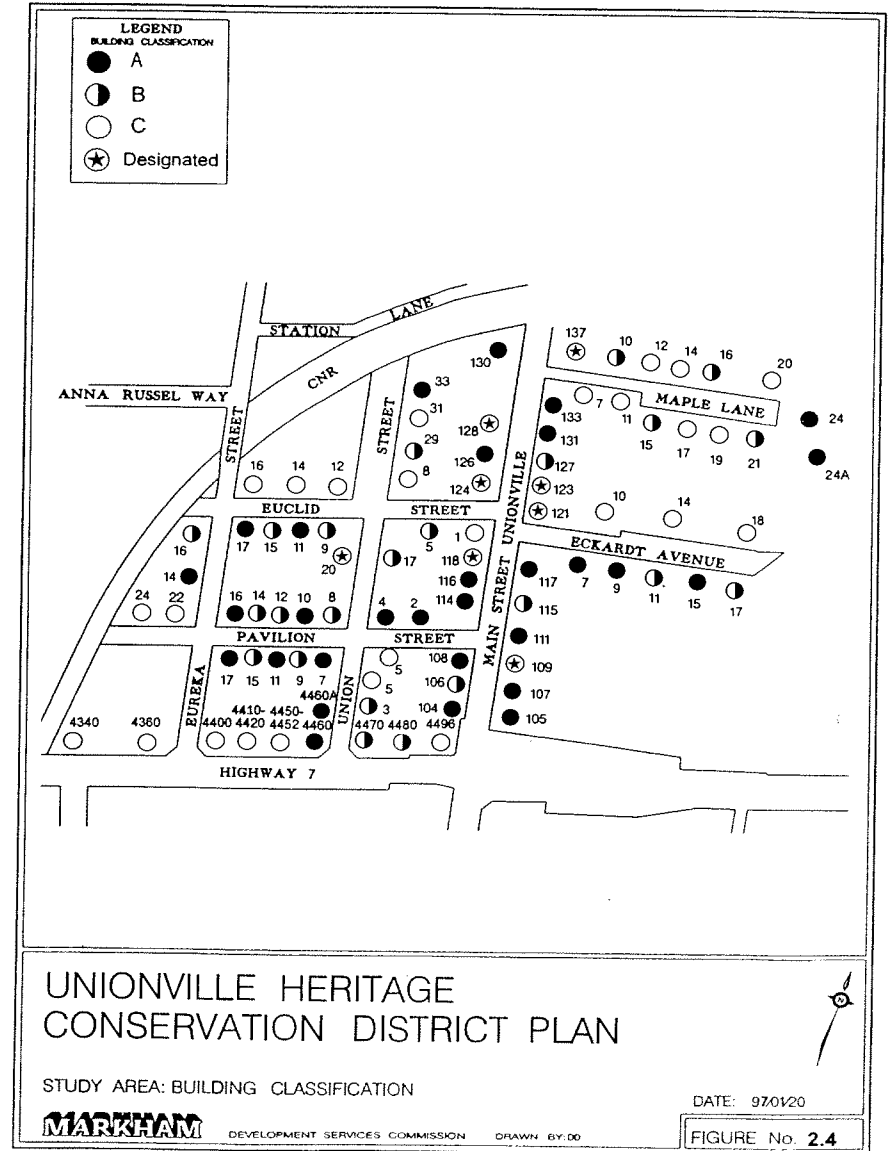
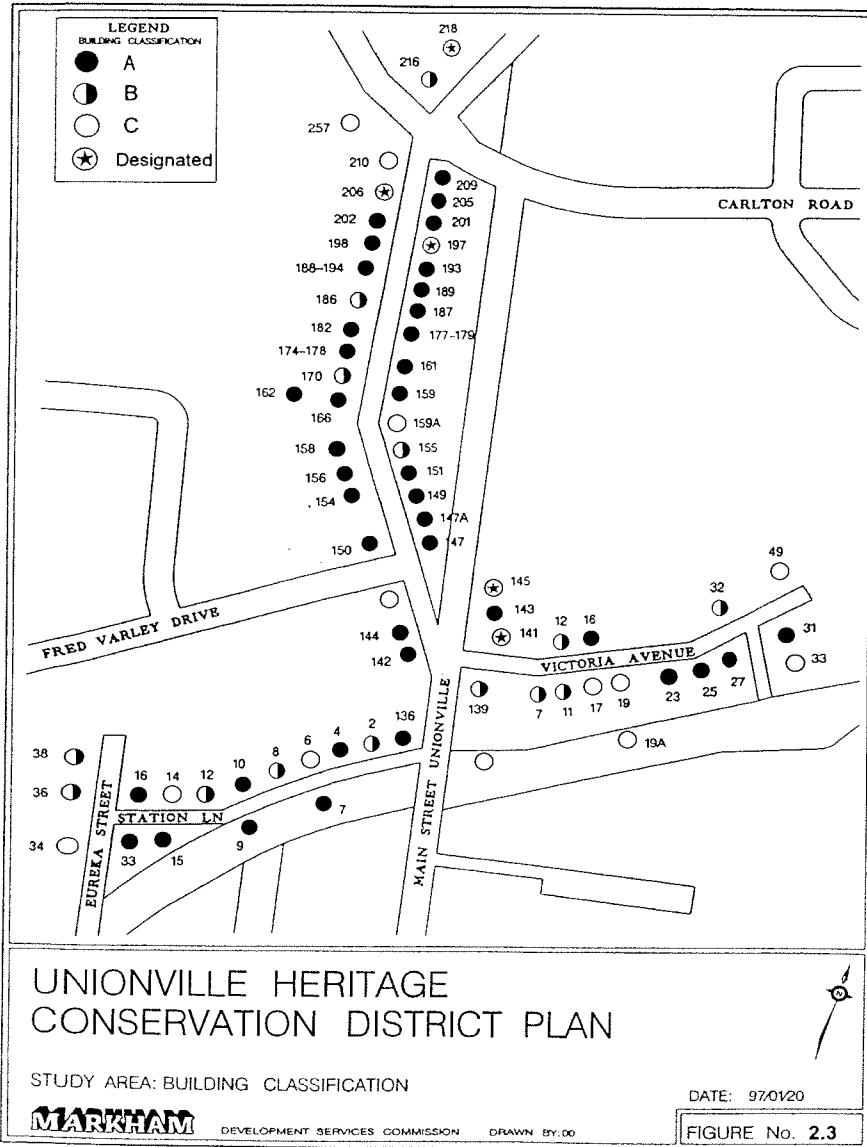
- Class 'B' Buildings that are important in terms of contextual value.
- They may not be of significant historical or architectural value, however they contribute substantially to the visual character of the village landscape.
 - They support and help define the character of the District.

- Class 'C' Buildings that may not relate to the heritage character of the District.
- Infill construction
 - Older buildings that have been altered to an extent that their heritage character is no longer apparent

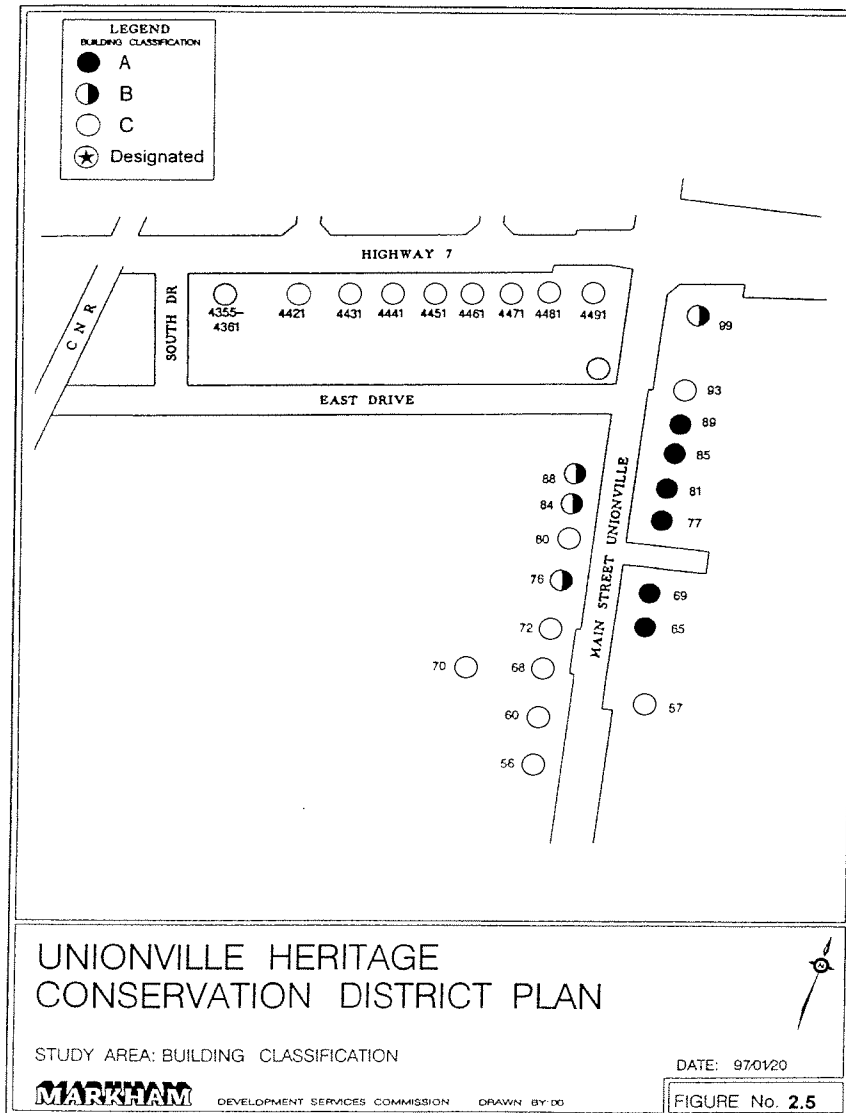
A detailed description of each of the Class 'A' and 'B' properties can be found in Appendix 'A' to the District Study. The classification of each property is illustrated on the attached maps.



2.0 Heritage Conservation District Designation



2.0 Heritage Conservation District Designation



2.5 Review of Activities in the District

The objectives, guidelines and policies of this document will be used to review the following types of activities in the District:

- all construction activity including changes and additions to existing buildings as well as new construction;
- all matters relating to the Markham Official Plan, zoning, site plan control, severances, variances, commercial signage, demolitions, and building relocation;
- all municipal public works such as street and infrastructure improvements, utility locations, lighting, signs, landscaping and tree removal;
- all activities of the regional, provincial and federal governments.

The provisions of the District Plan should be considered within the context of overall municipal objectives, policies and practices.

3.0 Heritage Conservation District Principles

3.1 Overall Goal

To ensure the retention and conservation of the District's heritage resources and to guide change so that it contributes to and does not detract from, the District's architectural, historical and contextual character.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 Heritage Buildings

To retain and conserve the heritage buildings identified in the District Plan.

To encourage the conservation of the distinguishing original qualities or character of heritage buildings and avoid the removal or alteration of any historic or distinctive architectural feature.

To encourage the correction of unsympathetic alterations to heritage buildings.

To encourage the restoration of heritage buildings based on a thorough examination of archival and pictorial evidence, physical evidence and an understanding of the history of the local community

3.2.2 Landscape/ Streetscape

To encourage the introduction of, as well as conservation of, historic landscape treatments in both the public and private realm.

To encourage the preservation of trees and mature vegetation, and encourage the planting of species characteristic to the District.

To encourage the preservation of historic fences and introduce new fences that respect historic patterns while meeting contemporary needs.

To preserve the existing street pattern and refrain from widening existing pavement and road allowances.

To introduce landscape, streetscape and infra-structure improvements that will enhance the heritage character of the District.

3.2.3 New Development

To encourage compatible infill construction that will enhance the District's heritage character and complement the area's village-like, human scale of development.

To guide the design of new development to be sympathetic and compatible with the heritage resources and character of the District while providing for contemporary needs.

3.2.4 Demolition

To promote retention and reuse of heritage buildings and take exceptional measures to prevent their demolition.

3.2.5 Community Support

To foster community support, pride and appreciation of the heritage buildings, landscapes and character of the District, and promote the need to conserve these resources for future generations.

3.0 Heritage Conservation District Principles

3.2.5 Community Support cont'd

To encourage public participation and involvement in the conservation of heritage resources and further development of the District.

To offer assistance and incentives to individual heritage property owners to encourage the use of proper conservation approaches when undertaking improvement projects.

3.2.6 Business / Tourism

To work with owners in the commercial core of the District to maintain a progressive and competitive business environment while at the same time protecting the heritage attributes of the District that make the area a unique and distinctive shopping environment.

To promote and protect the historic character of the District as a basis for economic development elsewhere in the Town.



The Unionville Blacksmith Shop, 166 Main Street, built c.1835