

Protection of Cultural Resources: Built Heritage Features Impact Assessment

As part of the overall analysis of Practical Alternatives for the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study, an assessment of built heritage features and cultural landscapes is being undertaken. Built heritage resources are structures or objects that people have made or modified and that are valued for the contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people. Built heritage assessment is conducted under the overall factor "Protection of Cultural Resources."

Built Heritage Features (BHF)s are generally defined as structures or objects that are 50 years of age or older. **Cultural Landscapes Units (CLU)**s are areas of land that have experienced human modification and that are valued for the contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event or a people.

How the Analysis was Done

As a means of determining the existence of previously identified built heritage features and cultural landscapes within the Area of Continued Analysis (ACA), contact was made with the City of Windsor's Heritage Planner. The Ministry of Culture's Ontario Heritage Properties Database and Parks Canada listing of National Historic Sites were also consulted. Additional information was sought from the residents of Sandwich with respect to locally identified sites of heritage significance.

Historical research was conducted to identify broad agents or themes of historical change and cultural landscape development in this area. Previously identified heritage resources were then categorized according to their heritage protection status and their inclusion on municipal, provincial and federal inventories and heritage designation lists. All heritage sites and heritage sensitive areas were mapped using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data coordinates.

In October 2006, a field review of the ACA was conducted and previously identified features were confirmed. Additional field investigations led to the identification of features of heritage interest, including Built Heritage Features (BHF)s and Cultural Landscape Units (CLU)s that were then added to the inventory. An inventory page was prepared for each above-ground cultural heritage resource and all features of heritage interest were mapped using GIS data co-ordinates.

Findings to Date

Within the ACA there are 20 BHF)s and three CLU)s. Of these, one property is listed on the City of Windsor's heritage inventory and one monument was erected by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to commemorate the Capture of Detroit. The majority of the built heritage features identified in the field were constructed between 1900 and 1930 and are residences of the same general building type and era. These houses represent the first suburban infill of rural agricultural lands in the early twentieth century. The heritage significance of these houses has not been determined but will be confirmed as part of the assessment of Practical Alternatives. At this time, it is known that only three BHF)s pre-date 1900. Also of interest is Branch 594 of the Royal Canadian Legion, which was constructed in the early 1960s. Although the Legion does not meet the 50 year cut off date, it is considered to be of historic importance to the community.

The three CLUs identified within the ACA are:

- a reported tunnel associated with the Underground Railroad in Sandwich (background research has yet to confirm the location of this feature)
- the abandoned Brighton Beach subdivision
- historic Sandwich.

Although only a portion of Sandwich is within the ACA, Sandwich as a whole is a heritage sensitive area and the selection of a new bridge crossing location must take into account any direct or indirect impacts on the adjacent historic community. These impacts may include the introduction of physical, visual, audible or atmospheric elements that are not in keeping with the resources and/or their setting.

For the purposes of this assessment, a heritage feature was considered to be displaced if the proposed right-of-way for the new crossing, plaza or access road passed through the property limits of the heritage feature. A feature was considered disrupted (indirectly affected) if the edge of the proposed right-of-way was within 50 m (164 ft) of the heritage feature.

Practical Alternatives

In total, up to 11 built heritage features will be potentially displaced by the access road alternatives. Of these, two features (a pre-1900 farmhouse and the Royal Canadian Legion) are of potential heritage significance.

Plaza Alternatives

Plaza A will displace two features in the Malden Road area. Both are houses constructed prior to 1940, one of which is on the municipal heritage inventory. Plaza B and Plaza B1 will both displace three houses in the former Brighton Beach area. These features are of indeterminate significance although one is likely a pre-1900 farmhouse.

Crossing Alternatives

Depending on which crossing alternative is selected, between two and five homes constructed before 1954 will be disrupted or displaced. Crossing A does not displace any BHF's but it disrupts three BHF's, Crossing B displaces three BHF's, Crossing C1 will displace five BHF's (including a historic monument) and Crossing C2 will displace three BHF's (including an historic monument).

In addition, the three crossings have the potential to disrupt identified cultural landscapes in this area of the city. Portions of the Brighton Beach area will be affected by all crossing alternatives, while Crossing C will disrupt two additional CLUs - the underground tunnels reported to be in the Chappell/Russell area and the Sandwich vista.

Conclusions

Potentially impacted features are without any recognized heritage status, so all access road alternatives are considered to have a low impact. The two impacted features of greatest potential for heritage

significance (a pre-1900 farmhouse and the Royal Canadian Legion building) are affected by all the access road alternatives. Therefore, there are no significant differences in impacts among the access road alternatives. Crossing C has a higher potential for impacts than other crossing options due its proximity to the historic town of Sandwich. All the plaza alternatives are considered to have equally low impacts to heritage features.

Remaining Activities

An assessment of the impacts to built heritage features associated with the Parkway alternative is not yet complete.

Once a technically and environmentally preferred alternative has been established, construction impacts will be assessed and mitigation measures will be recommended. Further recommendations will be made as required.