

LAYERS OF HISTORY
A Reflection on Conservation

by
Amanda Parkinson

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The industrial collapse and economic instability of the late twentieth century drastically changed the way many North American towns and cities function. Galt, Ontario is an example of a town that has experienced many changes in the way its buildings are utilized, based on these external forces. During the 19th-Century it was a prosperous place of business, prominent in both agriculture and industry. The citizens of Galt invested heavily in their buildings, some of which still stand today. However, regarded as obsolete, many of the factories and commercial buildings that packed the downtown core and spoke of Galt's success were demolished. Galt was forced to amalgamate with its neighbouring towns to form the new City of Cambridge, further exacerbating the loss of its identity. In response, the City commissioned many heritage plans and design guidelines that analyze and propose strategies to protect what is left of Galt's past, and create a new identity for its future.

While heritage plans and policies tend to place more importance on an ideal aesthetic when identifying what has heritage value, other stakeholders often place more importance on other aspects of the built environment. The identification of what ought to be protected is part of an ongoing debate within the field of heritage conservation. The relationship between an assigned value and the conservation method employed is explored here, through studies on varying building typologies in the downtown core of Galt. These analyses demonstrate how buildings change over time in both use and value, and how their reuse can influence the experience of a place. An understanding of the affect these values have on the places they create can help inform how conservation practice can recognize, enhance, and add to the value of a place, rather than limit it.

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PREFACE



FIGURE 0.01
Layers of History
60 Main Street

Source: Author



60 Main Street

The Righthouse, a former department store, was one of many businesses to occupy the Northwest corner of Main and Ainslie Streets in Galt, Ontario. When I first saw this building all that was left of its retail past was a trace of its name on the corrugated metal façade. I knew little of its history when I first explored the vacant space back in 2011. It was evident that it had been neglected for a while. Its derelict state warranted many questions - not only of its current situation - but of its previous iterations. The renovations it underwent to adapt to a changing society left it in a condition that is not valued in the same way as the heritage buildings across the street. This building was once a part of a whole system of a place - and then it wasn't.

When I revisited this building in the fall of 2017, its metal façade had been removed, revealing more of its fragmented past. The modifications it experienced over the years were now exposed through neglect and decay. With its layered history of insensible alterations and lack of heritage designation this building had become a modern-day ruin. Advertisements for its possible future were placed over the windows, but nothing had come of it. It was a mess and I was all the more intrigued. I began to collect the missing pieces, searching for an answer or understanding as to why this building experienced the mutilation that it did.

I learned of its new owner and the plans that were underway for it to receive yet another transformation. I was able to document this process and experience what was involved in giving this building a new future, while simultaneously trying to understand its past. "The history we inhabit in buildings is no comprehensive archive; it is a patchwork of survivals, a discontinuous and evolving collage".¹ While this building has a history of its own, it only tells part of the story. It does not exist in isolation. The value of this building can only be fully understood in relation to its surroundings.

1. Joel Smith, *The Life and Death of Buildings: On Photography and Time*, (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 2011), 13.



FIGURE 0.02
Traces of the past - 2011.
Source: Author



FIGURE 0.03
Interior views - 2011.
Source: Author



FIGURE 0.04
Northwest corner - 2011.
Source: Author



FIGURE 0.05
Interior front corner - 2011.
Source: Author



FIGURE 0.06
Main floor - 2011.
Source: Author



FIGURE 0.07
Second floor - 2011.
Source: Author



FIGURE 0.08
Traces of the past - 2017.
Source: Author



FIGURE 0.09
Street views - 2017.
Source: Author



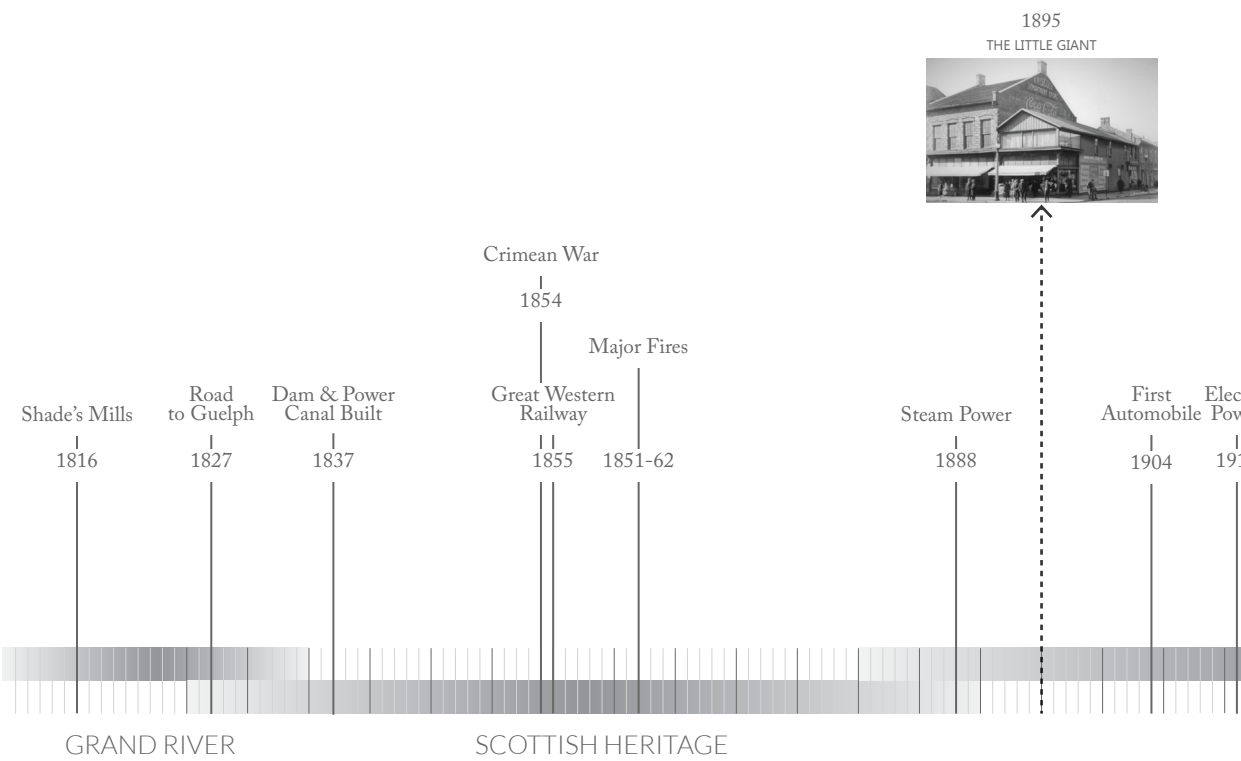
FIGURE 0.10
Leasing opportunities - 2017.
Source: Author



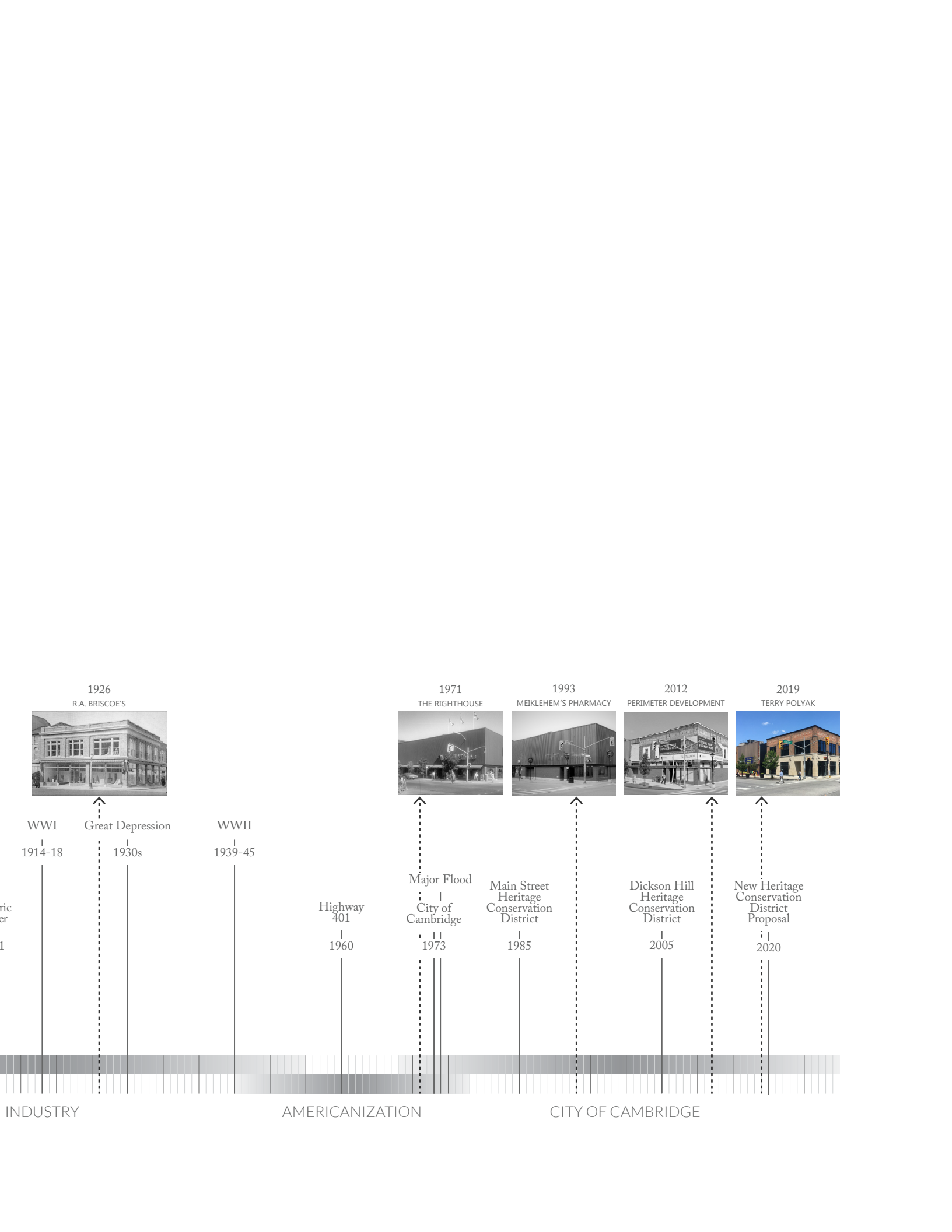
FIGURE 0.11
Vibrant urban culture- 2017.
Source: Author

CHANGES IN HISTORY

FIGURE 1.01
*History of Galt
 Timeline*



Source: Images from City of Cambridge Archives edited by Author



A Local Identity

Cities are not just physical entities defined by size, shape and density, they are also a representation of the knowledge, social systems, leaders and values of those that live there. They evolve together and reflect the times and conditions that exist. This is how and why cities change in the first place. As they grow, their form changes along with changes in society. This transformational progress, however, is not predetermined. It is a result of both structural logic and circumstance.¹ Cities have their history, their reasons for being the way they are, and the effects of what follows from them continue to influence their form.² Even with systems in place to control development, cities are still shaped by external forces that affect the built environment and alter the way buildings are utilized.

Galt, Ontario has a layered history of both places and events that have been altered and interpreted differently by previous generations. Different approaches in development have influenced its local identity and demonstrate how values have shifted over time. Galt's urban fabric has been influenced not only by the physical alterations inflicted upon it, but from the societal changes that have altered the way one functions within it. It is a cultural construct that has been shaped by its location on the Grand River, its growth and prosperity through industry, its eventual decline that came with a change of economies, and its amalgamation into what is now the City of Cambridge. These circumstances and events have allowed for the conditions that currently exist and exemplify how changes in Galt's past have affected its physical form.

GRAND RIVER

Galt has always been closely connected to its river; the fertility of its banks is what initially attracted settlers to the area.³ Previously, the land was owned by the Six Nations Indians.

1. Daniel M. Abramson, *Obsolescence: An Architectural History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 149.

2. Barbara Johnson, translator's introduction to Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), xv.

3. James Young, *Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt: and the Settlement of Dumfries, in the Province of Ontario*, (Toronto: Hunter Rose, 1880), 12.

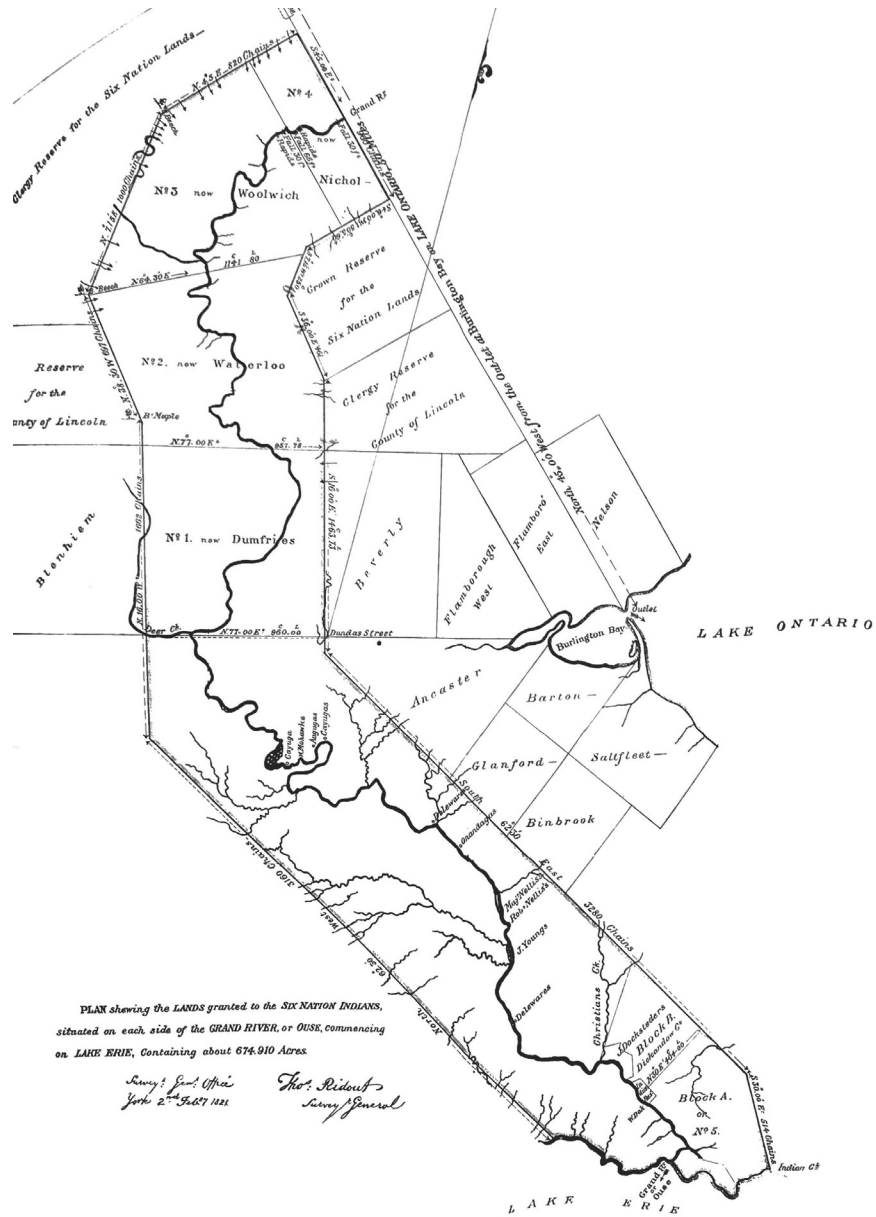


FIGURE 1.02
 Survey of land granted to the Six Nations - 1821.
 Source: Johnston, ed., *The Valley of the Six Nations*.

They used it as their primary hunting grounds due to its abundance in fish, game and fresh water.⁴ It was granted to them in 1784 by the British Crown after the American Revolution in recognition of their loyalty and as compensation for the land they lost in America during the war. They were given a tract of land, six miles on either side of the Grand River, however, its precise limits were not surveyed until a later date, which led to many disputes about the original proclamation.⁵

The distribution of this land to European settlers is also part of a long contested debate. Since the "area was too small to permit the level of hunting required to follow their traditional lifestyle, and too vast and too heavily forested to be used by them for farming",⁶ Chief Joseph Brant, on behalf of the Six Nations, began selling a portion of these lands to settlers, "...actually providing them with rough land titles".⁷ The British government questioned the legality of these transactions and refuted the dispersal of this land without their approval. The British Crown took back control of the land, however, when an investigation was conducted in 1812, it was too late to set aside the deeds that Brant had granted.⁸ What was known as the Township of Dumfries was sold in 1798. It had gone through a succession of owners before it was purchased, in 1816, by a Scottish immigrant named Hon. William Dickson.

Apart from the lands developed by Pennsylvania settlers, the entire area, "including the Township of Dumfries, was unbroken forest".⁹ Dickson did not waste any time and made plans to develop the land right away. He wanted to make a name for himself and create a place that would draw more settlers from his home in Scotland.¹⁰ He hired on Absalom Shade to start building and clearing the area for settlement. They selected a site located at the point where Mill Creek meets the Grand River, due to its sufficient waterpower. This was used to run the mills, which was a primary development needed for a new settlement. There was already a dilapidated old mill on the site, that Shade fixed up and used temporarily to grind grain for food before erecting a proper flour mill.¹¹ In the early days the settlement was known as Shade's Mills.

4. Young, *Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt*, 11.

5. Charles M. Johnston, ed., *The Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 35.

6. Jim Quantrell, *A Part of Our Past: Essays on Cambridge's History*, (Cambridge: City of Cambridge, 1998), 117.

7. Johnston, ed., *The Valley of the Six Nations*, 38.

8. *Ibid*, 40.

9. Young, *Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt*, 21.

10. Kenneth McLaughlin, *Cambridge: The Making of a Canadian City*, (Windsor: Windsor Publications, 1987), 33.

11. Young, *Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt*, 21.

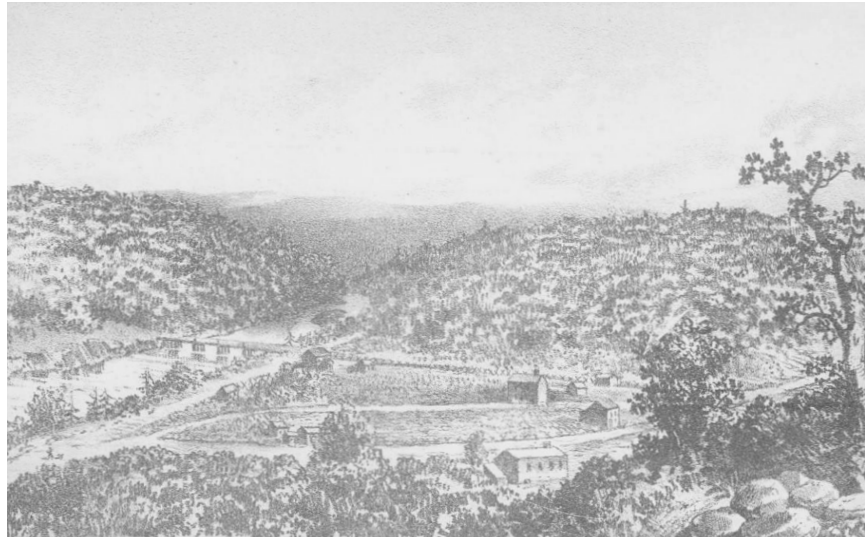


FIGURE 1.03
Early sketch of Shade's Mills.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

In 1820, it consisted of ten buildings.¹² These structures were not elaborate pieces of architecture as they were not intended to be permanent or long lasting. The first buildings sole purpose was to create a place. They were intended to make a home for those that were leaving their own in Scotland and to give the impression of civilization among the dense forest. Development started off slowly, as there were many challenges to overcome and most of the Scots emigrating moved to areas that were more established.¹³ However, with the ingenuity of Dickson and Shade, growth and prosperity eventually found its way to the banks of the Grand.

SCOTTISH SETTLERS

As a Scottish settlement, Galt's character differed from the surrounding towns that were predominantly of Mennonite heritage. Dickson took on personal initiatives to attract more Scots to the area. His Scottish connections proved to be important for the development of Shade's Mills. John Galt, a fellow Scot, came to visit and suggested a road that would connect to his new site in Guelph, the importance of which can be understood by the renaming of the settlement.¹⁴ Since the river was not able to be utilized for transportation and the undeveloped land made the dispersal of goods very difficult, this road, as well as the ones that followed were important in allowing the milling industry to prosper. The river, however, still played its part, and continued to be utilized as a source of power. The dam and canal that was built in 1837, not only provided more power for the mills, it also allowed for new factories and industries to build along the banks of the river. Galt became a place that was well connected, and it was advancements like these that aided in its growth and abundance.

As wealth and development increased, the buildings in Galt became a physical representation of their Scottish identity. It continued to attract Scottish immigrants, as the comfort of emigrating to a place that resembled their home country was an important factor.¹⁵ Dickson's influence also continued to play a part in the character of the town. He was always more than willing to assist newcomers with provisions and cared more about their honesty and laboriousness than their wealth.¹⁶ Galt was incorporated as a village in

12. Paul Dilse, *A Remarkable Heritage: Programmes and Policies for Heritage Conservation in Cambridge, Ontario*, (Cambridge, Ont.: Heritage Cambridge, 1981), 19.

13. McLaughlin, *Cambridge: The Making of a Canadian City*, 32.

14. Ibid, 33

15. Ibid, 35.

16. Ibid, 36.



FIGURE 1.04
Town of Galt - 1867.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

1850 at which time it “had become a diversified industrial centre, building on the skills of its inhabitants”.¹⁷

As these early settlements grew, a need for more manageable governments resulted in the division of the Township of Dumfries. In 1852, Galt became part of the Waterloo County. The political strife that resulted in Berlin (now Kitchener) being named the county town caused Galt's German neighbours to suffer due the influx of immigrants that went to the larger centre.¹⁸ "Most important for Berlin's economic dominance within the German settlements was the extension of the Grand Trunk Railway from Toronto".¹⁹ Galt's citizens were determined to not let this hinder their success and fought to maintain their status as the town of the county. They attracted the Great Western Railway in 1855, which opened up new markets and allowed for economic growth. Other events, such as the Crimean War, played a part in Galt's economic expansion by increasing the price of produce and bringing in lots of wealth. These external forces aided in the growth of its industries. “In addition to the usual mills, there were also two foundries, two axe factories, two woolen factories, two distilleries, and a variety of smaller manufacturing operations”.²⁰ These were prosperous years for Galt. It became known as the Manchester of Canada and was officially established as a town in 1857.

While Galt profited from the expansion of its railways, it was not immune to the other challenges that faced these growing settlements. It suffered three major fires that destroyed the majority of the buildings on Main Street. This, however resulted in a set of bylaws that prohibited wood construction for commercial buildings and contributed to the architectural beauty that still stands today.²¹ The subsequent expansion to the commercial district was more attuned to the architectural styles of the other communities, incorporating brick and limestone with the granite that Scottish masons tended to favour.

INDUSTRY

The citizens of Galt invested heavily in their buildings. They boasted of their success, felt pride in their industries, and believed whole heartedly that this growth and prosperity would continue. Documents such as *The Jubilee of Galt* and *Picturesque and Industrial Galt* record not only the buildings that densely packed the town core, but the value that these

17. Ibid, 37.

18. Ibid, 41.

19. Ibid, 42.

20. Ibid, 37.

21. Ibid, 60.

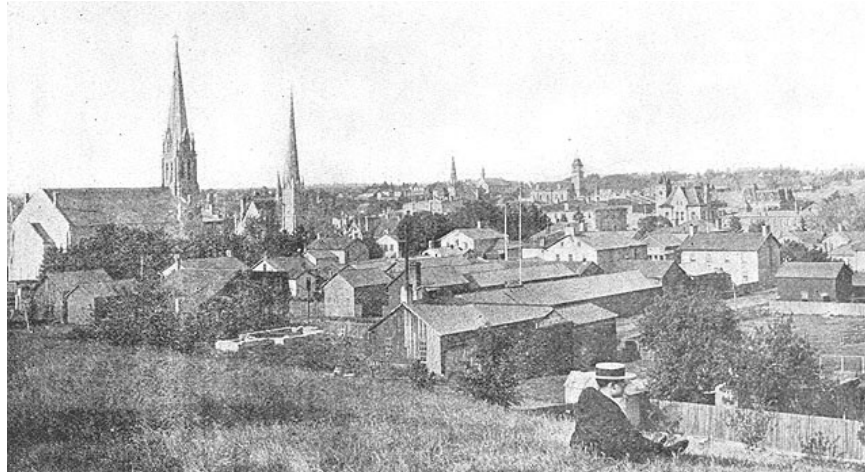


FIGURE 1.05

View of Galt from Dickson Hill - 1897.

Source: Toronto Public Library Digital Archive

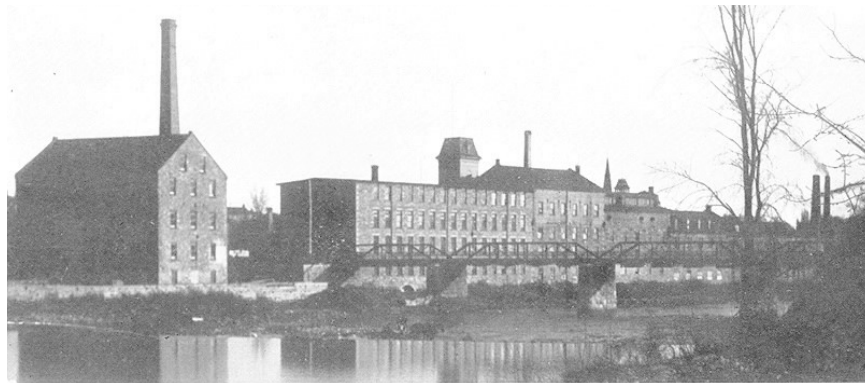


FIGURE 1.06

River scene of factory district - 1902.

Source: Toronto Public Library Digital Archive

buildings had to Galt's citizens. "Along with factory chimneys, church spires dominated the skyline, each pointing heavenward to symbolize the prosperity and progress that had come to characterize the 1890s"²² The solidity of these buildings were a representation of a society that now had permanence and stability.²³

Galt's economic prominence was due to its industries, thus, any development that aided in their efficient operation was encouraged.²⁴ The railways allowed for steam-generated electricity fired by coal, however, this proved to be expensive and inconvenient. In need of a more stable source of power, Galt acquired hydro-electricity from Niagara in 1911. These developments changed the relationship industries had with the river, as they were no longer dependent on water for power. The inundation of buildings along the banks of the Grand had already created problems. While springtime floods were common for Galt, the narrowing of the river channel brought on by its industries increased the damage caused by flooding. The automobile was becoming more common at this time, which further changed the lay of the land. "The impact of the automobile had resulted in much more than merely a rush of asphalt and pavement. In contrast to the railway, which had tended to centralize commercial, industrial, and residential areas, the automobile began to diffuse these functions. City planning and city life would never be the same again, as new subdivisions were created with shops to serve them far from the city's core".²⁵

The outbreak of the Great War in 1914 brought on a consolidation of industry and need for outside management that began to change the form of businesses.²⁶ It also brought in a considerable amount of wealth as the value of industrial production continued to rise.²⁷ The building investments that followed were a clear reflection of this wealth and opulence, however, it was soon contrasted with poverty and despair "as the economic downturn of 1929 developed into the Great Depression of the 1930s".²⁸ It was the outbreak of World War II in 1939 that boosted the economy and gave Galt hope in overcoming the austere conditions of the Depression. War contracts brought Galt an abundance of business, especially with their textile industries.²⁹ However, the naive optimism of Galt's early inhabitants could not

22. Ibid, 70.

23. Ibid.

24. Quantrell, *A Part of Our Past*, 7.

25. McLaughlin, *Cambridge: The Making of a Canadian City*, 84.

26. Ibid, 95.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid, 96.

29. Ibid, 97.



FIGURE 1.07

Flashy Signage on Main Street - 1965.

Source: City of Cambridge Archives

have foreseen the shift in the economies that followed the war. Galt's dependency on their textile industries brought on significant changes as they tried to adapt to the new materials that were becoming more popular.³⁰

AMERICANIZATION

These changes established a need for new technologies and new capital.³¹ American companies started taking over the industries that had been forced into receivership. Galt's Scottish heritage was succeeded by an American presence and the physical form of the city gradually started to change. The style of ownership that Galt was founded on was no longer, and the managerial interests of these industries began to influence the lifestyle of Galt's citizens.³² "American-owned companies [brought] with them a set of values, beliefs and influences, a sort of subculture that encompasses more than technology".³³ These American ideals resulted in a consumerism culture that brought on a new style of development.³⁴

Highways also began replacing railways at this time, fostering a condition of urban sprawl that reduced the viability of Galt's downtown core. The opening of Highway 401 in 1960, connecting to Toronto, created new areas of commercialization. "The development caused a social and economic revolution that was perhaps even more profound than that resulting from the arrival of the Great Western Railway in the 1850s".³⁵ The rural expansion that occurred with these postwar developments, caused Galt to become more closely connected with its surrounding communities. The physical boundaries of these early settlements became blurred and a need for more effective municipal governments eventually made their amalgamation inevitable.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

In 1973, Galt "ceased to exist as a separate political entity"³⁶, when it was forced to join its neighboring towns Preston and Hespeler to form the new City of Cambridge. This loss of its local identity was further exacerbated as Galt's industries continued to decline and the buildings that had once brought so much prosperity were physically removed from the

30. Ibid, 112.

31. Ibid, 115.

32. Ibid, 113.

33. Robert L. Perry, *Galt, U.S.A.: The "American Presence" in a Canadian City*, (Toronto: Maclean-Hunter, 1972), 36.

34. Perry, *Galt, U.S.A.*, 36.

35. McLaughlin, *Cambridge: The Making of a Canadian City*, 115.

36. Quantrell, *A Part of Our Past*, 12.



FIGURE 1.08

Factories along river torn down - 1974.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

landscape. "While there can be no doubt that many of Cambridge's earlier floods caused wide spread disruption, none of them can compare to the flood which swept through Cambridge on May 17, 1974".³⁷ Galt was hit the hardest and experienced over 5 million dollars in damage. The Grand River Conservation Authority began buying and tearing down old mills along the river as a means for flood management, forever changing the urban landscape. The forces of the Grand River that led to Galt's industrial success, also led to the obliteration of its industrial past.

Despite the political, economic, and environmental forces that severely altered the downtown core, Galt still retained much of its architectural beauty. This success was in part due to the decline of its economies which prevented "the architectural devastation that occurred in other Canadian cities".³⁸ The historic core areas of Cambridge were prioritized during the amalgamation and efforts were made by heritage organizations to maintain the community's historical identity.³⁹ Part of these efforts were redeveloping the river system following the aftermath of the 1974 flood which allowed Galt's citizens to rediscover one of the most important features of its historical landscape. However, even with "success in demonstrating the economic and cultural benefits of living in a community that has retained a sense of its past"⁴⁰, heritage conservation strategies continue to be faced with opposition. As a result, the revitalization efforts for the downtown core of Galt are still reflective of a place searching for a new identity.

37. Ibid, 125.

38. McLaughlin, *Cambridge: The Making of a Canadian City*, 128.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

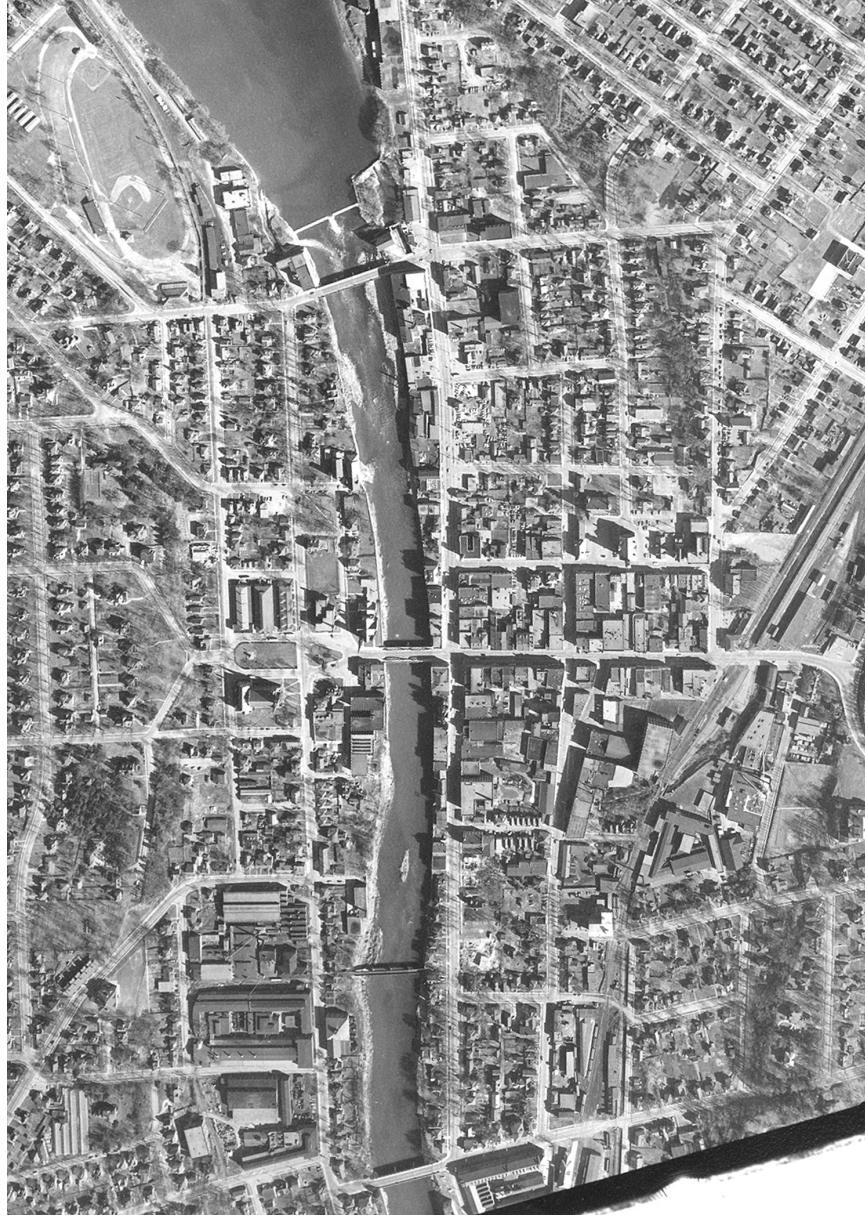


FIGURE 1.09
Aerial view of Galt - 1957.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 1.10
Aerial view of Galt - 2000.
Source: Regional Municipality of Waterloo

Conservation Plans

Throughout history, changes in society have always influenced the way buildings are utilized. Buildings now have value beyond their use, which has resulted in charters and formal documents that provide recommendations and guidelines for their protection and preservation.¹ The City of Cambridge has commissioned many plans and guidelines that analyze and propose strategies for the proper management of its heritage resources. They aim to maintain and protect the heritage character of the core areas, while developing a new identity for the city as a whole. This desire to maintain places that were created in the past while accommodating the changes needed to move into the future exemplify one of the many challenges in conservation and heritage policy.

The changing needs of the community and the many stakeholders who place different values on the outcome of these initiatives add further constraints to their overall success. New plans and guidelines are produced before the previous ones are implemented, further reducing the impact their policies have on revitalization efforts. Each document tends to grow on the previous one introducing new concepts and new values adopted by a changing society. The identification of what ought to be protected and preserved is continuously changing and has led to a fundamental shift in responsibility; "the question of heritage management has thus become one of the key issues in conservation".²

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1. Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 289.
 2. Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, 318.

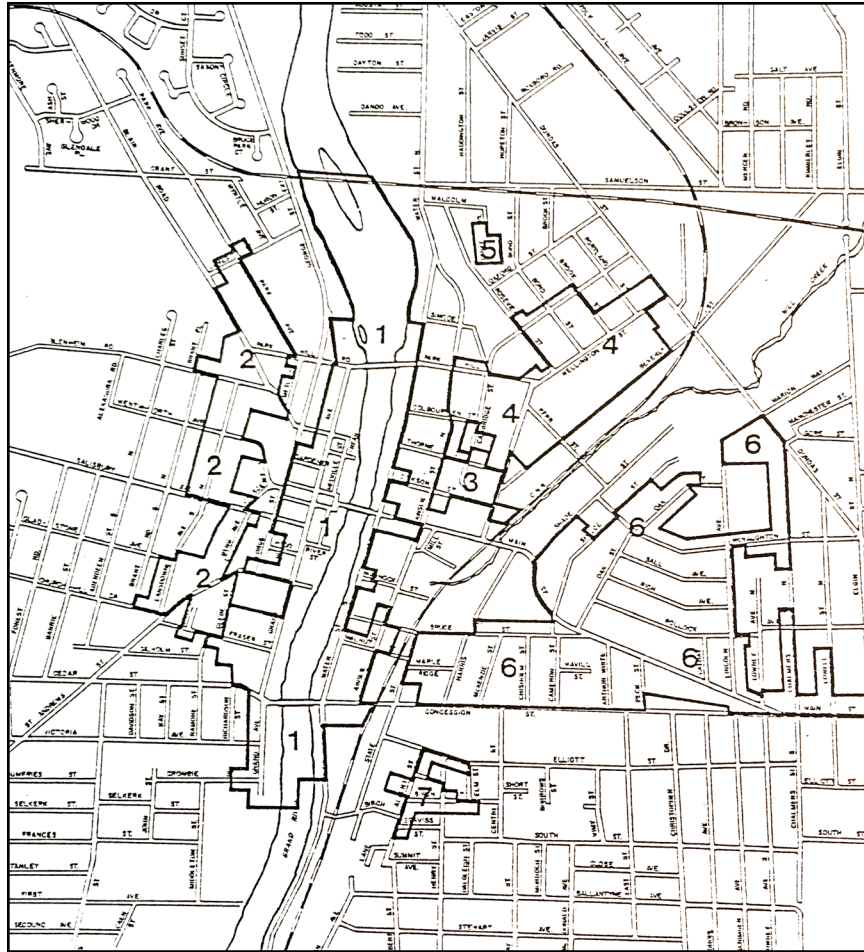


FIGURE 1.11

Galt's heritage conservation recognition areas.
Source: Dilse, A Remarkable Heritage, 70.

The first heritage conservation study for Cambridge, was done in 1981, at a time when demolition still posed a major threat to the built environment due to flood management.¹ It addressed the need for conservation and advised that this be done by increasing the number of designated buildings and prioritizing area conservation through designated districts.² "If Cambridge wants heritage conservation to have a realistic impact on physical planning, the City will need to increase substantially the number of individual designations and/or turn its attention to area conservation".³ This programme defines the parameters to determine the historic and architectural value of a property and outlines the significant buildings and areas in each of the downtown cores based on this criteria. It states that a comprehensive list of heritage properties should be completed and sets a goal of 300 properties to be designated in twenty years.⁴

The rehabilitation of buildings in Galt's core is acknowledged as a positive step towards heritage conservation, but the rough approach in adaptive reuse has not been conducive to the aesthetic desired.⁵ "While intentions no doubt have been good, misguided renovations have coloured the outcome; careful architectural research and planning seem to be lacking".⁶ Thus, this programme advocates for the designation of heritage buildings and significant areas as a form of management and control. Through designation, the city has a "right to monitor alterations for a property and the right to delay the issue of a demolition permit".⁷ It is also suggested that a proper study and plan be conducted prior to the designation of a Heritage Conservation District, which has since become mandatory.⁸

1. Paul Dilse, *A Remarkable Heritage: Programmes and Policies for Heritage Conservation in Cambridge, Ontario*, (Cambridge, Ont.: Heritage Cambridge, 1981), 71.

2. Dilse, *A Remarkable Heritage*, 124.

3. Ibid, 122.

4. Ibid, 125.

5. Ibid, 71.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid, 121.

8. Ibid, 136.

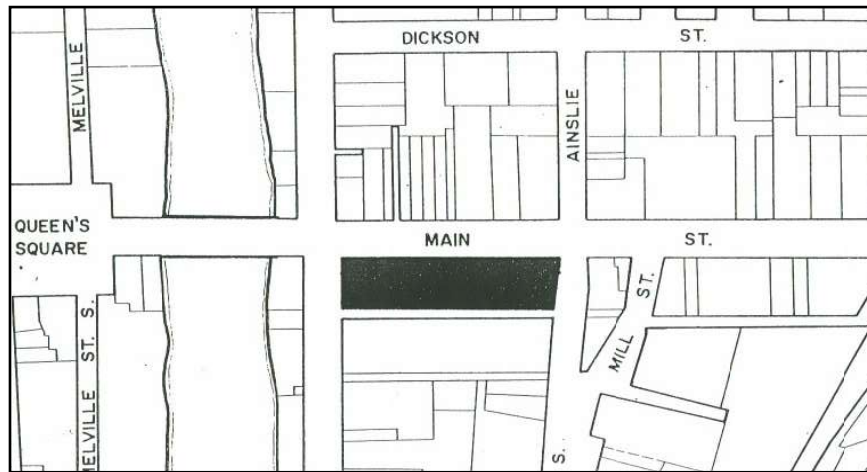


FIGURE 1.12

Main Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD).
Source: Hill, A Heritage Conservation District Plan, 2.

A HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PLAN

FOR THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE (GALT)
PREPARED BY NICHOLAS HILL
1984

Following the recommendations of the previous study, a Heritage Conservation District that encompasses the block of commercial buildings on the south side of Main Street was proposed, and formally implemented in 1985. The streetscape is known for its 19th century architecture and valued for its variation of style and detail.¹ However, it is the visual unity of the block collectively that warrants this selection of buildings a district designation, while the buildings across the street are excluded. "The subject block is one of the most significant architectural compositions in the City of Cambridge. Its central location in the downtown, comparatively large size and architectural presence provides it with an unparalleled stature of architectural and historical importance".²

The main objectives of this plan were to conserve the buildings, restore their façades, strengthen their economic viability, rehabilitate upper floors and provide financial assistance to the owners.³ The majority of the owners, however, do not live or work within the district which has hindered the implementation of this plan. The lack of commitment to maintain the historic block is demonstrated by its underuse and poor upkeep.⁴ The research also concluded with concerns that the renovations "would simply not pay a return economically"⁵ The intention of this plan was not only to "secure the long-term conservation of the subject district"⁶, but to also serve as a catalyst for subsequent district plans to follow. Today, however, there is only one other Heritage Conservation District in Galt.

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1. Nicholas Hill, *A Heritage Conservation District Plan: For the City of Cambridge (Galt)*, (Cambridge, Ontario, 1984), 1.
 2. Hill, *A Heritage Conservation District Plan*, 8.
 3. *Ibid*, 1.
 4. *Ibid*, 31.
 5. *Ibid*, 2.
 6. *Ibid*, 1.



FIGURE 1.13
Main Street HCD facade plan.
Source: Hill, A Building Facade Plan, 24.

A BUILDING FACADE PLAN

CAMBRIDGE (GALT)
PREPARED BY NICHOLAS HILL
1987

The Building Façade Plan followed shortly after the Heritage Conservation District Plan, as part of the "ongoing program to strengthen and improve the downtown".¹ It gives further detail on the restoration treatment intended for the façade and reiterates the physical, economic, and social objectives of the district plan. The physical objectives aim to restore architectural detail, historic compatibility and overall appearance.² The economic objectives aim to create a profitable commercial entity through improvement programmes, financial assistance and individual incentives.³ The social objectives aim to maintain a local atmosphere and promote façade improvement.⁴

The district is comprised of five adjacent buildings that can be identified by their individual styles and divided by their upper and lower facades. The upper facades are to be restored to their original fabric and the lower facades, having undergone considerable changes, are to follow traditional sign recommendations in order to give them a higher design quality.⁵ The plan is intended for the business owners and thus, addresses each storefront individually. The facade improvements emphasize the upper facade, signage and storefront cornices and advise that a "co-ordinated approach be adopted to achieve an effective result".⁶

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1. Nicholas Hill, *A Building Façade Plan: For the City of Cambridge (Galt)*, (Cambridge, Ontario, 1987), 1.
 2. Hill, *A Building Façade Plan*, 2.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid, 4.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.

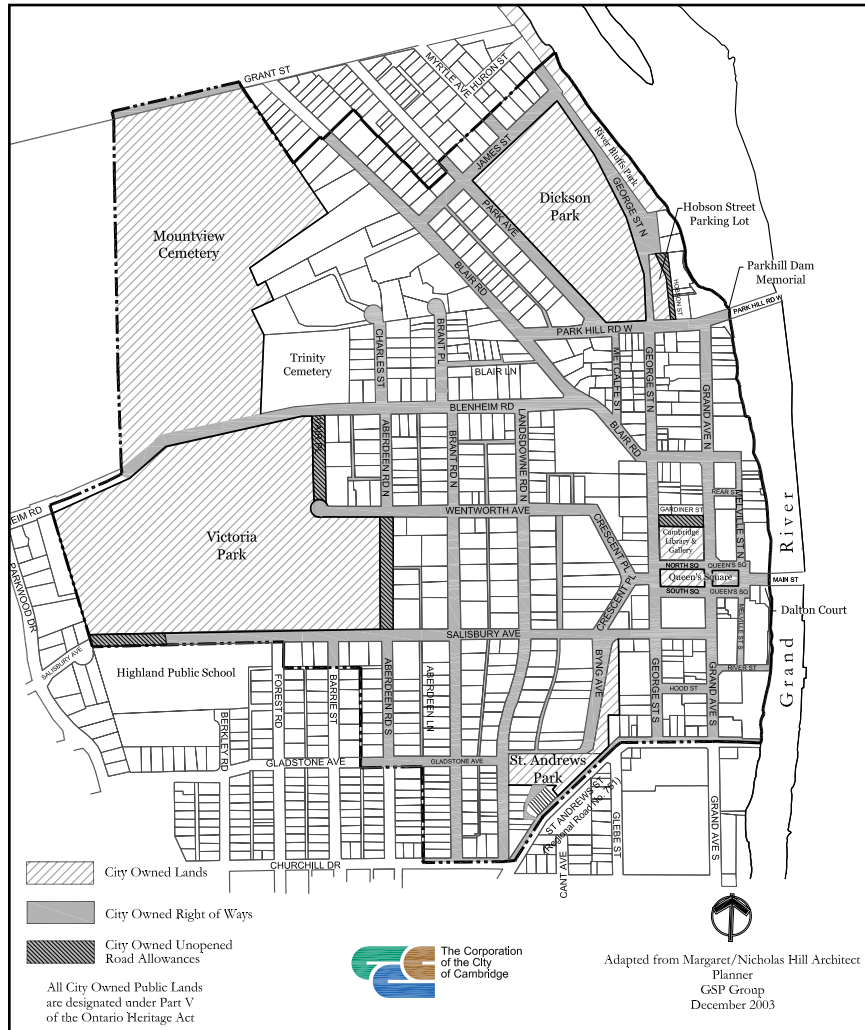


FIGURE 1.14
Dickson Hill Heritage Conservation District (HCD).
 Source: GSP Planning Consultants, Dickson Hill Conservation District, 9.

DICKSON HILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PLAN

FOR CITY OWNED LANDS
PREPARED BY GREEN SCHEELS PIDGEON PLANNING CONSULTANTS
2005

In 2005, Dickson Hill was formally designated and is currently the only other Heritage Conservation District in Galt. This neighbourhood is valued for its Late Victorian character and the cultural significance of its public spaces. It had been well maintained through a number of planning initiatives, even prior to it becoming a district and is acknowledged as one of “the most unique communities in the City of Cambridge”.¹ The background study for this designation began in 1998,² after a plan to redevelop the land surrounding one of the 19th century homes was proposed.³ This never reached fruition, but the district designation was still opposed by residents living in the area. The City instead, created a conservation strategy for the City-owned land that prioritizes the preservation of its public parks and tree lined streets.

Due to the “subdivision and residential construction processes by which it was developed”,⁴ a lot of the heritage homes occupy more than one lot, which creates opportunities for new developments. The district plan outlines that a heritage impact assessment will be required in any instance where “a development proposal potentially impacts a built heritage resource as stipulated in the Cambridge Official Plan”.⁵ This policy, however, does not impose the same level of control that a district designation would and as a result, the original proposal for development that initially resulted in the reaction of this heritage district plan, has resurfaced and is currently under construction.

1. Green Scheels Pidgeon Planning Consultants, *Dickson Hill Heritage Conservation District Plan for City Owned Lands*, (Cambridge, Ontario: 2005), 2, <https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/resources/Dickson-Hill-HCD-Plan.pdf>.

2. Green Scheels Pidgeon Planning Consultants, *Dickson Hill Heritage Conservation District Plan*, 1.

3. Author Unknown, “Revisiting Heritage District in Galt,” *Cambridge Times*, June 13th, 2011. <https://www.cambridgetimes.ca/news-story/3367065-revisiting-heritage-district-in-galt/>.

4. John Hagopian, “Galt’s ‘Dickson’s Hill’: The Evolution of a Late-Victorian Neighbourhood in an Ontarian Town,” *Urban History Review* 27, no. 2 (March 1999): 25–43, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016580ar>.

5. Green Scheels Pidgeon Planning Consultants, *Dickson Hill Heritage Conservation District Plan*, 8.

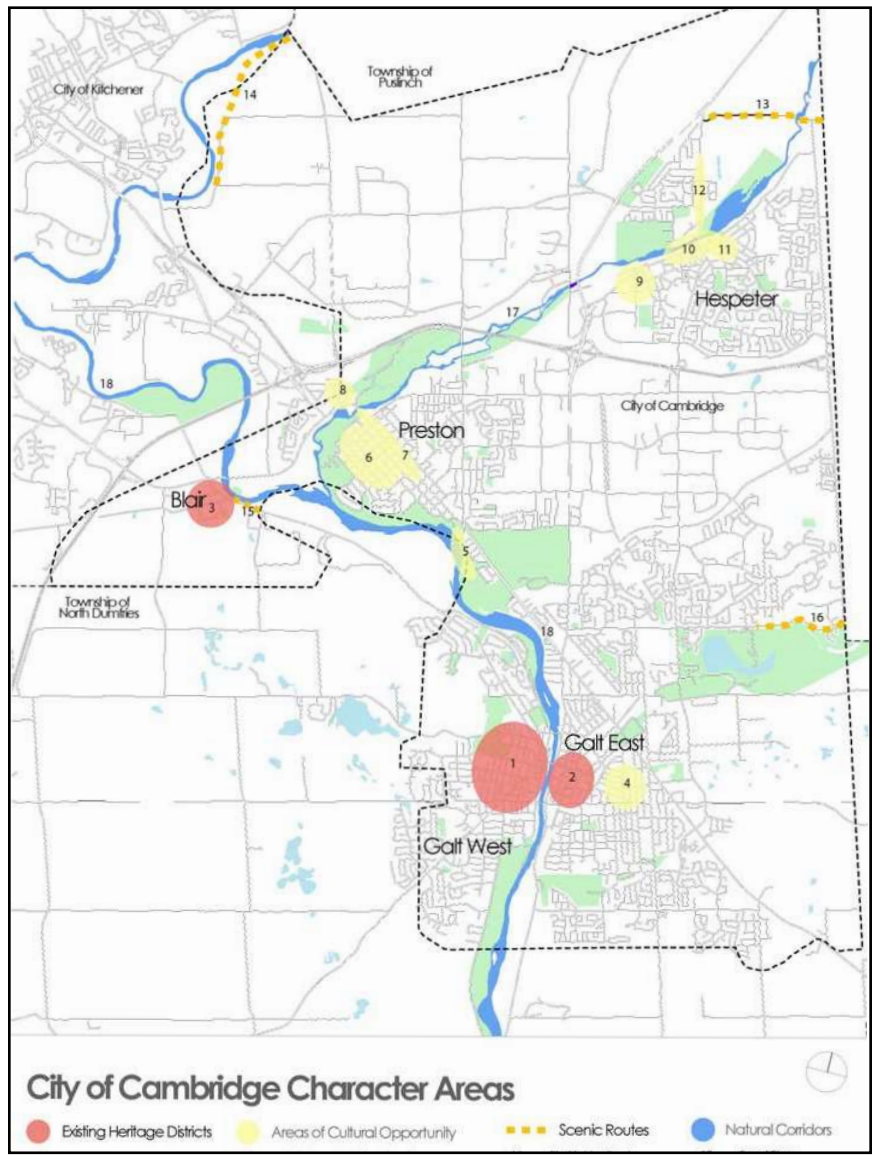


FIGURE 1.15
Cambridge Master Plan character areas.
 Source: BRAY Heritage, Cambridge Heritage Master Plan, 105.

CAMBRIDGE HERITAGE MASTER PLAN

FINAL REPORT FOR THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
PREPARED BY BRAY HERITAGE
2008

In 2008, a Heritage Master Plan was done for the entire City of Cambridge. It serves as both a vision document to help establish heritage values and a policy document to guide decision making.¹ It defines a Heritage Master Plan as “a new approach to current issues surrounding the management of heritage places”.² It is a modified and updated version of previous studies that responds to the current challenges in conservation.³ It addresses the lack of information on heritage resources and the need for public consensus on heritage values.⁴ It also presents a series of studies that have been done to establish what the community views these values to be. This plan demonstrates the beginning of a shift in heritage conservation, as it goes beyond the designation of buildings that have heritage value and acknowledges the value of the place itself.

The Master Plan recognizes that "heritage-based development has the potential to substantially improve the local economy and quality of life."⁵ It also, however, addresses the complications that arise when conflict, disorganization, lack of co-ordination and poor management are prominent in heritage planning practices.⁶ The lack of funding and staff to conserve manage and promote heritage resources results in the city taking on a more a reactive approach to heritage conservation. Strategies for improvement include a series of initiatives and policies which address the need for community involvement, more awareness and better management systems. It is advised to focus on character areas and set modest goals while prioritizing the City's inventory of heritage resources. This process has been slow moving and the needs addressed in this document are still relevant today.

1. BRAY Heritage, *Cambridge Heritage Master Plan: Final Report*, (Cambridge, Ontario, 2008), 19, <https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/resources/Cambridge-Heritage-Master-Plan.pdf>.

2. BRAY Heritage, *Cambridge Heritage Master Plan*, 9.

3. Ibid, 10.

4. Ibid, 11.

5. Ibid, 189.

6. Ibid.

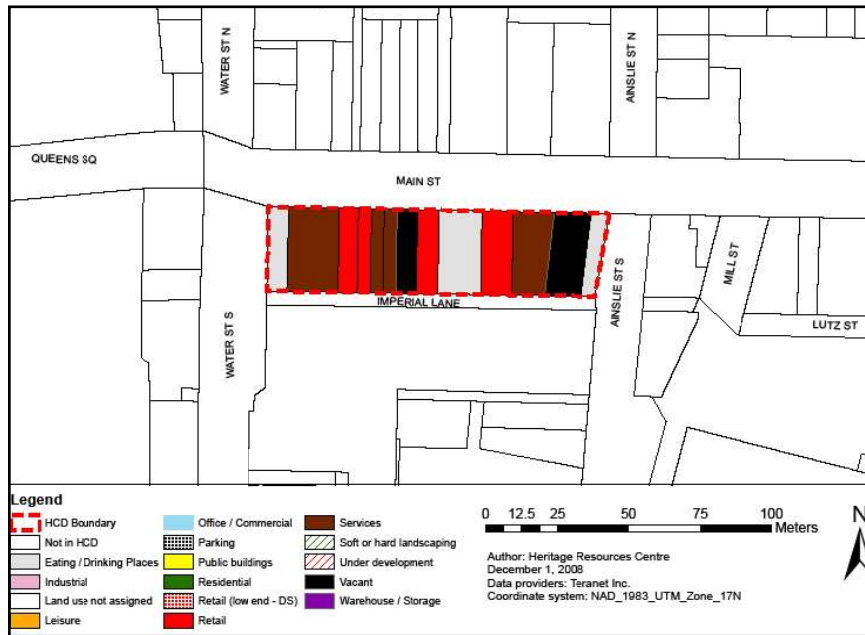


FIGURE 1.16
Main Street HCD study area.
 Source: ACO, *Heritage Conservation District Study*, 21.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY

GALT - CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
PREPARED BY ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY OF ONTARIO
2009

This study was conducted by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario in 2009 as part of an analysis on the overall success of Heritage Conservation Districts in Ontario.¹ It is not a plan that was commissioned by the City, but is a review of the aesthetic, economic, and social objectives that were addressed in the 1984 Heritage Conservation Plan. Its findings showed that the commercial buildings in the district were able to maintain their economic viability but were less successful in improving their overall appearance.² The aesthetic objectives to restore the historic elements of the buildings have not been addressed and “the area has not been maintained visually”.³

While this study concludes that the economic and social objectives have been met, it does make mention of the high turnover rate and two vacant properties that may impact the district economically.⁴ Issues acknowledged in this plan are the absentee landlords which have made the area difficult to manage.⁵ Residents also mentioned that the district is too small and should include the buildings across the street – which may also help even out rent prices.⁶ This suggestion still has not been implemented and the conditions on Main Street have worsened over the years with higher vacancy rates and a greater need for revitalization.

1. Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, *Heritage Conservation District Study: Galt - City of Cambridge*, (North Waterloo: Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, 2009), 1, https://uwaterloo.ca/heritage-resources-centre/sites/ca.heritage-resources-centre/files/uploads/files/Galt_HCD_Cambridge.pdf.

2. Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, *Heritage Conservation District Study*, 7.

3. *Ibid*, 7.

4. *Ibid*.

5. *Ibid*, 8.

6. *Ibid*



FIGURE 1.17

Downtown Urban Design Guidelines study area.

Source: BrookMcIlroy, Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, 6.

DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO
PREPARED BY BROOKMCLILORY
2013

The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines were commissioned in 2013 and address the core area of Downtown Galt. They provide recommendations for the treatment of heritage buildings and infill projects, as well as design strategies for building signage and streetscaping.¹ These guidelines are intended to “identify heritage preservation priorities and revitalization opportunities”² and serve as a “comprehensive and implementable vision”³ for the downtown core. The plan is based on the character of the existing Heritage Conservation District and is to be used as a guide for new development in order to enhance its heritage qualities.⁴

This plan essentially addresses the visual quality of the buildings in the downtown core. It outlines the typical heritage facade composition which are to guide both the treatment of heritage buildings and future developments. "Remaining consistent with the existing articulation found within the heritage buildings along Galt's streets will help to promote the area's fine-grained heritage character by maintaining a rhythm of openings, recesses, projections and vertical and horizontal demarcations".⁵ The historic nature of the downtown core was oriented around the pedestrian, and as such these guidelines aim to make it more pedestrian friendly.⁶ The pedestrian areas are one of the few things from this plan that have implemented. Main Street has been repaved with new sidewalks, lined with trees and streetscape elements such as benches and trash receptacles which aim to make the area more aesthetically appealing.

1. BrookMcIlroy, *Downtown Urban Design Guidelines: Cambridge Ontario*, (Toronto: BrookMcIlroy, 2013), 3, <https://www.cambridge.ca/en/build-invest-grow/resources/Downtown-Urban-Design-Guidelines.pdf>.

2. BrookMcIlroy, *Downtown Urban Design Guidelines*, 3.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid, 14.

5. Ibid, 25.

6. Ibid, 37.

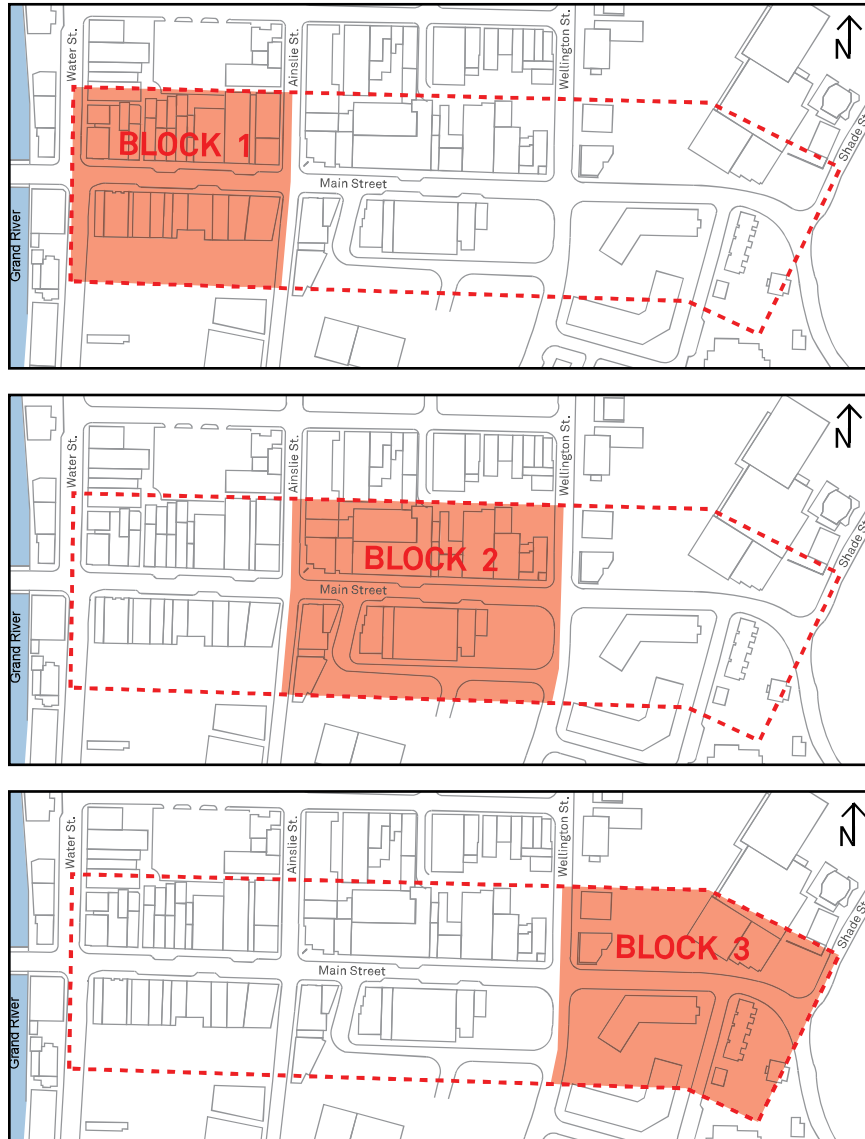


FIGURE 1.18
Main Street Urban Design Guidelines study area.
Source: BrookMcIlroy, Main Street Urban Design Guidelines, 6.

MAIN STREET URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO
PREPARED BY BROOKMCILOYRY
2013

The Main Street Urban Design Guidelines are a continuation of the previous plan and aim to unify the overall character of the street. The study area is broken up into three blocks and “...includes properties with frontage along Main Street from the Grand River in the West, which is an important and defining feature of the downtown, to Shade Street in the East”.¹ This document includes the same recommendations as the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines as well as a Streetscape Master Plan. It is advised that the current Heritage Conservation District be expanded to include at the very least, the North side of Block 1, and consider including Block 2. Despite the variance of style and design of these areas it still has “a general feeling of classic 19th century main street”.² These buildings together are what creates a sense of place, which is something that is now acknowledged as valuable in heritage conservation.

Other than the recommended streetscape improvements, these design guidelines have not been realized. The Heritage Conservation District on Main Street has not been expanded and recent developments have not utilized the recommendations in this plan, which has further diluted the overall historic character that is claimed to be valued. This plan, as well as the many that have preceded it, suggests that a detailed inventory should be compiled of the historic buildings in the downtown core area. The Heritage Master Plan for Cambridge provided strategies to improve this inventory where it states that, “Cambridge needs to be able to set priorities for conservation and for change; to do so, it needs a better system of identifying and evaluating its heritage resources”.³

1. BrookMcIlroy, *Main Street Urban Design Guidelines: Cambridge Ontario*, (Toronto: BrookMcIlroy, 2013), 2, <https://www.cambridge.ca/en/build-invest-grow/resources/Main-Street-Urban-Design-Guidelines.pdf>

2. BrookMcIlroy, *Main Street Urban Design Guidelines*, 10.

3. BRAY Heritage, *Cambridge Heritage Master Plan: Final Report*, (Cambridge, Ontario: 2008), 142, <https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/resources/Cambridge-Heritage-Master-Plan.pdf>.

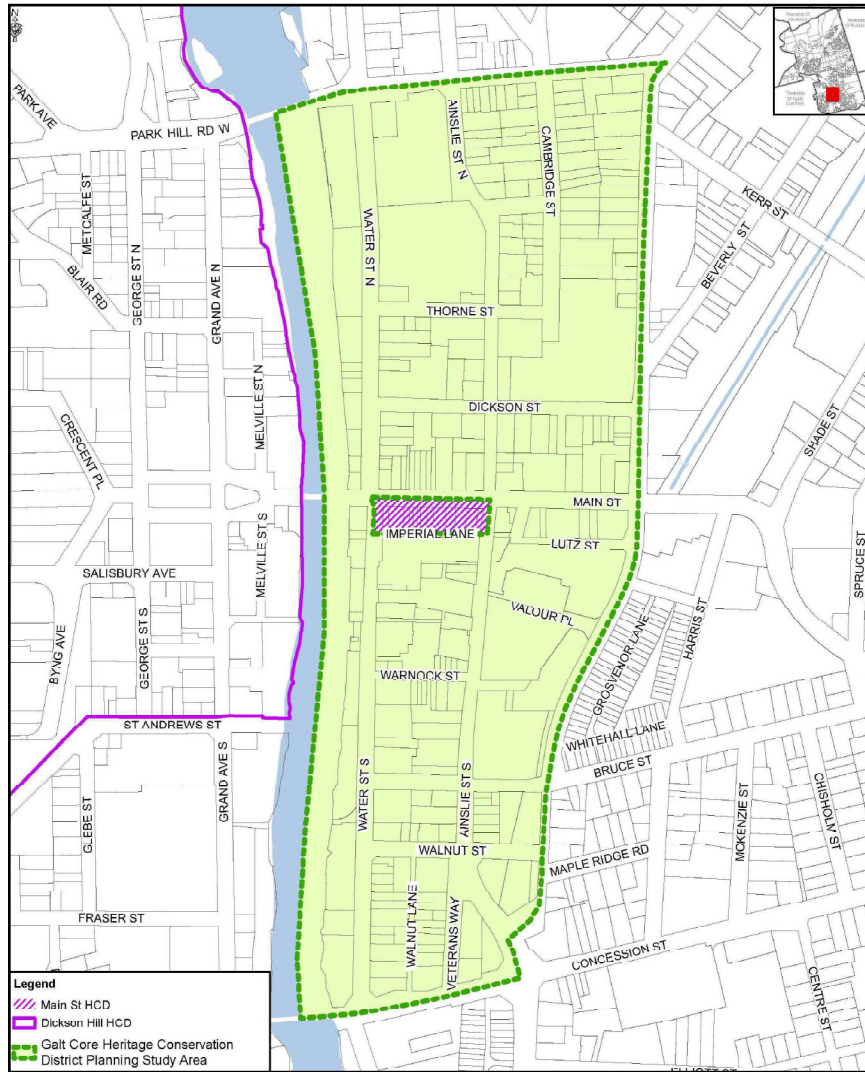


FIGURE 1.19
Galt Core Heritage Conservation District proposal area.
 Source: Senior Heritage Planner, Galt Core HCD Planning Study, 107.

GALT CORE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PLANNING STUDY

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
PREPARED BY HERITAGE PLANNER
2018

In 2017, one of the brick buildings facing the river was covered with metal siding. The brick was deteriorating and in need of repairs and the owner decided to cover it up rather than repoint it. Likely a cheaper option for him, but much to the dismay of the City and citizens of Galt, who are still lamenting the loss of their historic riverfront. This building is a property of interest but is not designated, therefore did not need a building permit to receive these alterations. In an attempt to protect more of Galt's heritage and impose more limitations on the treatment of its buildings, a new Heritage Conservation District Boundary is now being proposed. It is to include the majority of the downtown core on the east side of the river, and due to its size, "the Study is estimated to cost \$100,000 to hire a heritage consultant and facilitator to conduct it".¹

The proposal for this boundary claims that the 2013 Main Street Design Guidelines "recommended that Council conduct a study to explore expanding the Main Street Heritage Conservation District...to include more of the downtown commercial core".² However, these guidelines actually, only recommend that it expand to include more of Main Street. This new district boundary is being set in motion based on a desire to preserve the historic character of downtown Galt, where the value placed on the aesthetic of its buildings continues to be prioritized. It is an attempt for the City to implement a new form of control in the management of its heritage resources. While this designation would give the city a way to direct development, the variance of building types and areas included in the boundary may make it difficult to establish a clear set of values.

1. Senior Heritage Planner to the Planning and Development Committee, October, 9th, 2018, *Galt Core Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Planning Study Recommendations*, 104, <https://calendar.cambridge.ca/Council/Detail/2018-10-09-1900-Planning-and-Development-Committee/bd3a22f3-83c9-4f19-9d7e-a96f00ea81a0>.

2. Senior Heritage Planner, *Galt Core Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Planning Study Recommendations*, 102.

RELATING TO HISTORY

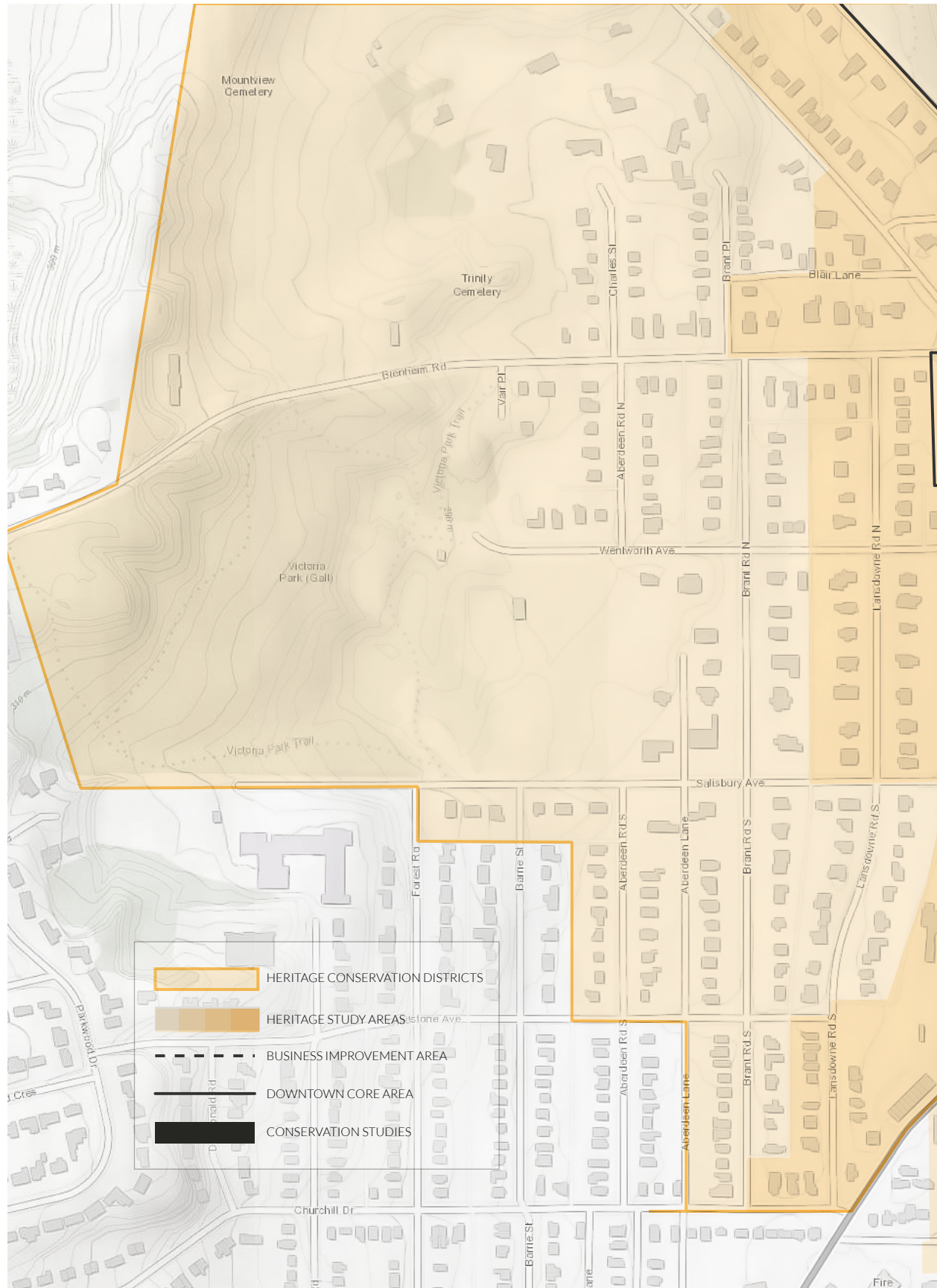
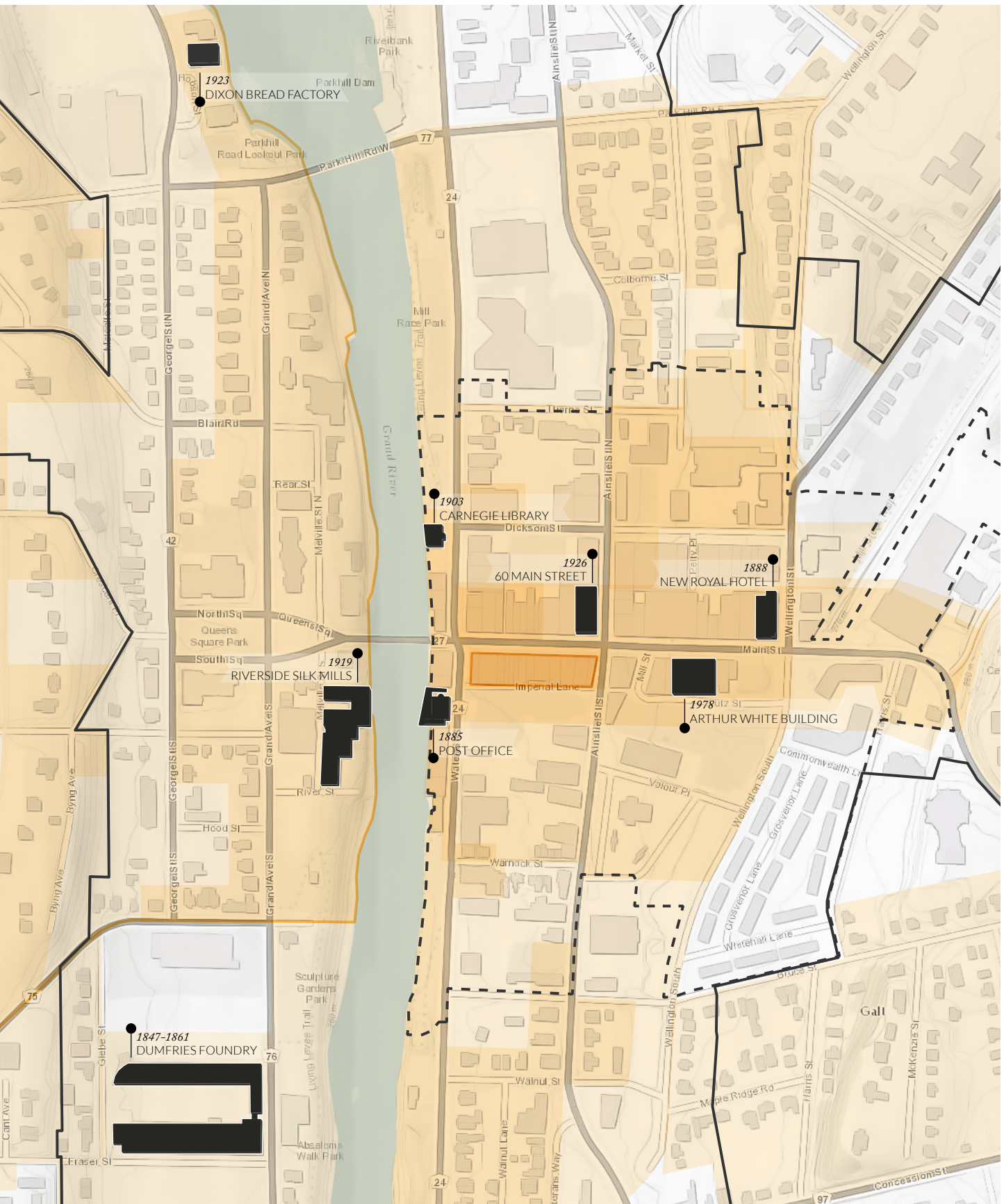


FIGURE 2.01
*Downtown Galt
 Map*

Source: Author



1923
DIXON BREAD FACTORY

1903
CARNEGIE LIBRARY

1926
60 MAIN STREET

1888
NEW ROYAL HOTEL

1978
ARTHUR WHITE BUILDING

1885
POST OFFICE

1919
RIVERSIDE SILK MILLS

1847-1861
DUMFRIES FOUNDRY

A Question of Value

The break from tradition and cultural trends that emerged with modernism changed the way society relates to the past. The identification of buildings as historic objects led to new approaches in maintenance and repair, where their authenticity and integrity became a primary concern.¹ As a result, the approach to conservation shifted from an artistic perspective to “a critical process for the definition of what is to be conserved and how”.² This was a heavily debated topic between two important theorists of the 19th century – John Ruskin and Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc – who held contrasting views on architectural restoration.³ While they both prioritized the historical importance of a building, they differed in their interpretation of what this was and how conservation practice should respond.

Art historian, Alois Riegl, in his essay *A Modern Cult of Monuments*, dissected these theories further by looking to the value that they implied rather than the material composition that they constructed. In his analysis, he discusses how an assigned value not only determines the fate of a building and how it is maintained but also the effect this has on the users experience of it.⁴ What Riegl then brings into the conversation are present-day values, which he separates from commemorative values, as they are temporal and continuously changing.⁵ His careful classification demonstrates how different values conflict with one another, and require different conservation strategies.

AESTHETIC VALUE

Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc's theories demonstrate the relationship that exists between an aesthetic value and the conservation treatment used. Ruskin, an artist, values the authenticity of a building and believes they should age naturally. Intervention should

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1. Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 295.
 2. Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, 303.
 3. David Spurr, *Architecture and Modern Literature*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 142.
 4. Thordis Arrhenius, *The Fragile Monument: On Conservation and Modernity*, (London: Artifice Books, 2012), 10.
 5. Harold Kalman, *Heritage Planning: Principles and Process*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 200.



FIGURE 2.02
60 Main Street, aesthetic value - 1930s.
Source: LAW Photography

only take place in the form of maintenance and preservation. Viollet-le-Duc, however, an architect and practitioner, values the stylistic integrity of a building and believes that their historic significance lies in their uniform aesthetic, thus should be restored and adapted to their ideal form. Both of these approaches, however, are an abstraction from any historical reality.⁶ The stylistic unity sought with restorations are merely a representation of a building's origins, while the disunity of a building that has aged is a clear separation from them.⁷ Ruskin's suggested method of preservation values the marks of time, while the restorations of Viollet-le-Duc seek to erase them.⁸

An examination into their theories demonstrate "the importance that both of them attach to a certain notion of truth in architecture."⁹ This notion suggests that the history of a place is captured in its actual structure and physical representation.¹⁰ The original form of the building, is thus, intrinsically linked to both its aesthetic significance and its historical importance. For Viollet-le-Duc the building was an object of knowledge "that was to be revealed through a methodical analysis of its construction".¹¹ He believed the building was symbolic of a nations history and it's visual representation should contribute to its national identity. Ruskin, too saw the building as a historical document, but for him it was one that had an ethical responsibility. He saw the building as a narrative of the past rather than a symbol of it.

The rational thought of Viollet-le-Duc is evident in his careful studies, while Ruskin's ability to express subtle qualities and how justly he felt demonstrate the emotional thought that grounded his theories.¹² Viollet-le-Duc kept a certain distance and perspectival approach in order for the building itself to offer a narrative on "the history of the Nation".¹³ However, Ruskin's approach to the buildings and their weathered surfaces incite a more intimate relationship where the experience becomes one of sentiment rather than knowledge.¹⁴ This spatial dynamic between object and beholder demonstrates how these aesthetic values may elicit different reactions from the user.

6. Spurr, *Architecture and Modern Literature*, 144.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid, 146.

9. Ibid, 147.

10. Arrhenius, *The Fragile Monument*, 50.

11. Ibid, 51.

12. Nikolaus Pevsner, *Ruskin and Viollet-Le-Duc: Englishness and Frenchness in the Appreciation of Gothic Architecture*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969), 24.

13. Arrhenius, *The Fragile Monument*, 51.

14. Ibid, 83.



FIGURE 2.03
60 Main Street, current value - 1971.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

While the theories of Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc are focused on the object themselves, Riegl focuses on the values applied to them. He identifies these values in his essay, which was originally written as an introduction to a new law on conservation that addressed the ongoing debate between scholars and their growing appreciation for the past. While this law was never accepted, Riegl's analysis was important for the development of conservation as it acknowledges the current value of an historic object. This goes beyond its commemoration to include both its use and aesthetic enjoyment. The use value of a building is indifferent to the type of treatment it receives, as long as its practical function is maintained.¹⁵ The aesthetic that Riegl refers to is a buildings newness value and art value.

Newness value is a modern perception that gains "its quality specifically by differentiating itself from the old".¹⁶ A building that is new is viewed as disturbing if it reveals signs of decay, its value is therefore based on the completeness of the building. It is through restoration that an old building can once again give the appearance of a newly created work. Since it is simply based on an unbroken form, it is something that can be appreciated by everyone. Riegl identifies art value as "relative and changing as well as specific to every period and culture in history".¹⁷ Since there is no criteria for the evaluation of works of art, the art value of a building is appreciated so far as it corresponds to the current views of society.¹⁸ The progress or evolution of art or fashion in architecture is revealed through the practices and styles of different generations.

Art value is also based on the completeness of a building, but since its character is achieved by its relation with the particular conditions and requirements of each period and culture, some knowledge is required to understand the value it had at the time it was created.¹⁹ As styles continuously change, the art value diminishes if it does not "represent especially striking stages in the development of a particular branch of human activity".²⁰ A building only regains its value as a work of art if it is identified as significant and irreplaceable. Therefore, the art value of a building or place is often neglected in pursuit of an ideal aesthetic that only prioritizes a certain time in history.

15. Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development," In *Historic Preservation: an Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice*, 69–83, (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 79.

16. Arrhenius, *The Fragile Monument*, 102.

17. *Ibid*, 101.

18. Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, 216.

19. *Ibid*, 215.

20. Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments", 70.



FIGURE 2.04
60 Main Street, memory value - 2017.
Source: Author

The concept of memory and its relationship with historical architecture has remained fundamental to the development of conservation methods. Riegl differentiates these memory values as deliberate commemorative value, historical value and age value. These values are subjective, as they are visually orientated. It is the user that defines them based on the aesthetic that is desired. Deliberate commemorative value is most closely linked to the current value of a building as it aims to prevent it from becoming history.²¹ Its fundamental requirement is restoration as it prioritizes the appearance of a unified whole.

This conflicts with age value which is "based solely on decay".²² It is easy to recognize and has a strong emotional appeal. However, Riegl mentions that the evocative feeling of age value becomes disturbing when a building on a well-traveled street fails to provide its familiar use. When a building is abandoned by people it becomes alienated from the life and function of the city. In this sense the use value of a building contrasts with that of age value, where its decay and degradation make it unsafe for human occupation. Buildings are often subject to manipulations, whether it is through the natural effects of time or intentional reconfiguration. This causes controversy for historical value which is dependent on a clear recognition of the original form and aims for the best possible preservation of the building in its present state.²³

While these values all focus on the memory of a building or place, they are still influenced by current values, "in the choices of what gets preserved, how it is preserved and interpreted, and who makes the decisions".²⁴ As demonstrated by Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc, no matter how methodical or justified one is in their conservation approach, their perception of the past will always be subjective.²⁵ Values are socially constructed and depend on the memories, ideas, and social motivations of the interested communities.²⁶ A lot of the time these conflict with one another and often pose challenges for revitalization efforts to meet the needs of the 21st Century. Buildings need to be valued not only for what they were but for what they can become.

21. Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments", 77.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid, 76.

24. Kalman, *Heritage Planning*, 207.

25. Ibid, 207.

26. Ibid, 207.

Conservation Studies

The City of Cambridge uses heritage plans and guidelines in an effort to mobilize their values and ideals – but they are essentially left in the hands of developers and property owners who are financially responsible for implementing them. This poses challenges on how buildings are reused and can hinder the quality of a project and affect the overall identity of a place. In Galt, there is a disconnect between the areas that have been prioritized in the heritage plans and the revitalization efforts currently taking place. Part of the reason that these policies and programmes are not always implemented is because the treatment of buildings are also influenced by social and economic realities. The diverse influences that determine the outcome of a building "add to the difficulty of interpreting conservation policies in practice"¹

Buildings are continuously retired or reshaped by changes in style and cultural demands.² Their new form is determined not only by the technology and money that is available at the time of their renovation, but also by the value assigned to them.³ A selection of buildings in the downtown core that have recently been repurposed exemplify how an architectural typology and associated value can influence the conservation method employed. These analyses demonstrate how buildings change over time in both use and value and how their reuse influences the experience of a place. While each project is addressed individually, their assigned value and ability to accommodate a new use have larger implications on the surrounding community.

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1. Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 304.
 2. Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 2.
 3. Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, 5.



FIGURE 2.05
Galt Post Office - 1912.
Source: *City of Cambridge Archives*



FIGURE 2.06
Abandoned Post Office - 2014.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Galt_Old_Post_Office.jpg

GALT POST OFFICE

PUBLIC BUILDING (1885)
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE & HERITAGE DESIGNATED (1983)
REPURPOSED AS A DIGITAL LIBRARY (2018)

The former Galt Post Office was built in 1885, at a time when the federal government was trying to "establish a more recognizable presence across Canada".¹ The construction of the Romanesque style building was a symbol that the government believed in the importance and prosperity of Galt.² It functioned as a Post Office until 1936 and continued as the Customs Office until 1963.³ At this time, it became vacant and the City bought it with plans to tear it down and create a parking lot.⁴ This was opposed by heritage conservationists and the building was instead rezoned and renovated for commercial use. It operated as various restaurants and bars until 2007 when it became vacant and eventually fell to ruin.

It was officially designated in 1982 under the Ontario Heritage Act and listed as a National Historic Site. In 2014, the City realized the value of this building and invested 13 million dollars to repurpose it as Canada's first 'bookless library'. Due to its architectural prominence, careful consideration went into the restoration of the historic building. It was then covered up with a flashy addition that seems to be an attempt to further embellish it as a monument. The value placed on making an architectural statement to emphasize the importance of knowledge and ideas – as was done with the classical design of 19th century libraries⁵ – has taken away from the quality of the design itself.

The intention of the glass extension is to reconnect the building with the Grand River, which is accomplished through the views offered from the angled glass façade stretching out over the water below. This has not only altered the historic aesthetic along the river – similar to the metal clad building next to it – but has hindered the organization of the program which has left some areas underutilized. Its new use as a digital library, however, has still added to the building's value by allowing this former cultural monument to regain its status as a public building.

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1. Nicole Benbow, "More Than Just Mail," in *Idea Exchange Magazine*, Summer 2018, 8.
 2. Benbow, "More Than Just Mail," 8.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Jim Quantrell, *A Part of Our Past: Essays on Cambridge's History*, (Cambridge: City of Cambridge, 1998), 213.
 5. Paula Pintos, "Idea Exchange Old Post Office Library/RDHA," *archdaily.com*, <https://www.archdaily.com/918530/idea-exchange-old-post-office-community-center-rdha> (accessed June 6, 2019).



FIGURE 2.07
Galt Post Office - 2018.
Source: Author

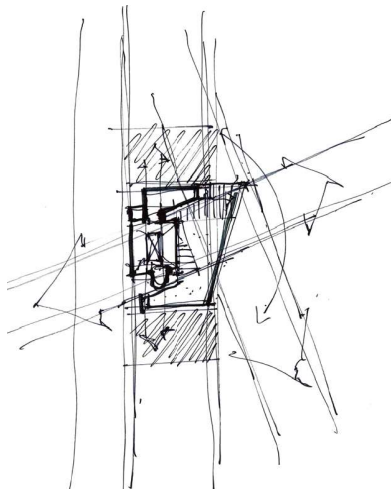


FIGURE 2.08
Design diagram.
Source: RDHA



FIGURE 2.09
View from glass addition.
Source: Author

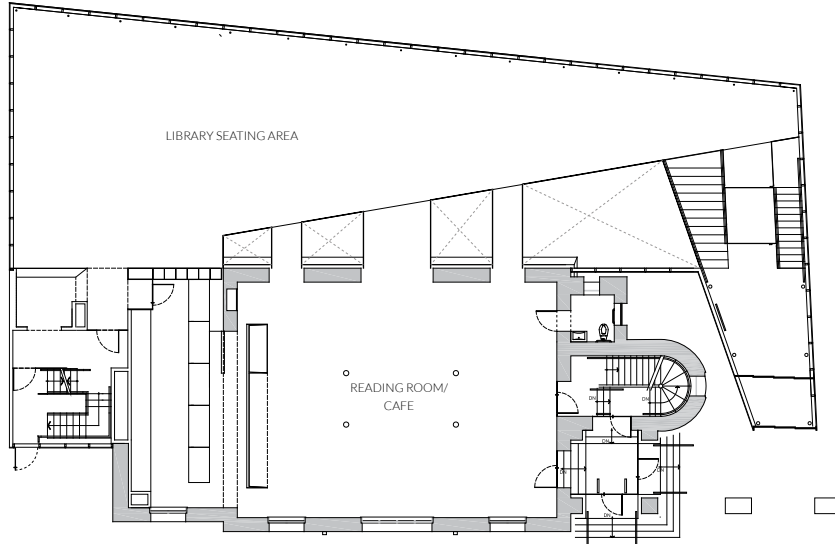


FIGURE 2.10
Digital library floorplan - Level 1.
 Source: RDHA

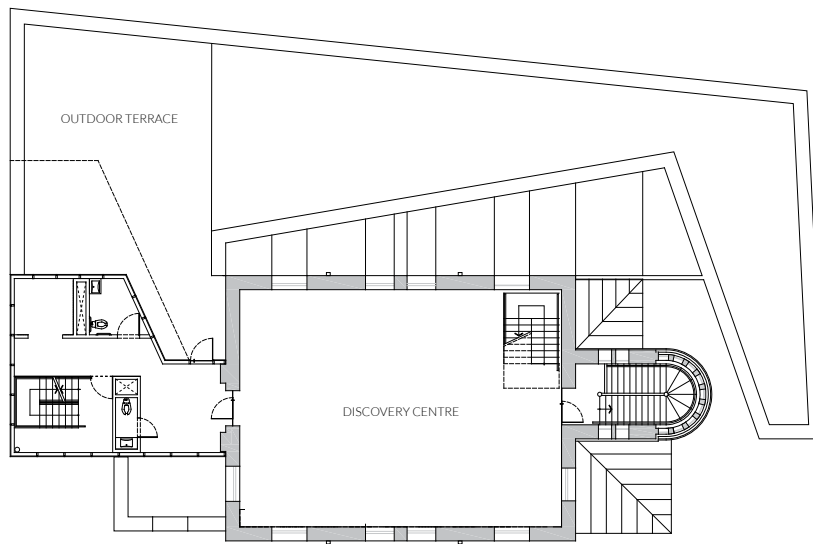


FIGURE 2.11
Digital library floorplan - Level 2.
 Source: RDHA



FIGURE 2.12
Carnegie Library - 1905.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 2.13
View along the river - 1957.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

GALT CARNEGIE LIBRARY

PUBLIC BUILDING (1903)
HERITAGE DESIGNATED (1981)
REPURPOSED AS OFFICE SPACE (2018)

The former Public Library was funded by a Carnegie Grant and built in 1903. The Beau-Arts Classical style building stands at the foot of Dickson Street and backs onto the Grand River. It functioned as a library until 1969, at which time a larger facility was needed. Its location on the river prevented opportunities for it to expand. Instead, a new library was built, and the former Carnegie Library was converted into office space.

Carnegie libraries come with their own significance in both cultural history and architectural heritage.¹ They are viewed as a monument to learning and culture which is expressed through the classical detailing of pediments and columns.² The original floorplan was divided by columns and archways, with classical capitals and decorative moldings. It's high ceilings and simple functions created an environment which was sympathetic to the monumentality of the exterior and allowed the unity of design to carry throughout the building.³ In 1981, the exterior of the Galt Carnegie Library was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act due to its architectural value and historical significance.

The interior, however, was not conserved in the same way and it underwent significant changes. The former archways are now solid walls, the once open floorplan is now segregated into offices and cubicles and the high ceilings are now truncated to maximize the use of space. The offices on the second floor of this building are currently in use, but the main floor still remains vacant and the doors are kept locked throughout the day. Despite this monument being preserved and it's exterior protected through designation, this building's heritage value as a public building and cultural symbol has been neglected. Despite the efforts made to maintain the public nature of other significant buildings in Galt, such as the Old Post Office, City Hall and Fire Hall, the Carnegie Library now simply stands as a monument to the past with its grand entrance closed off to the public.

1. Margaret Beckman, Stephen Langmead, and John B. Black, *The Best Gift: A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1984), 6.

2. Beckman, *The Best Gift*, 117.

3. *Ibid*, 134.



FIGURE 2.14
Interior view of upper level - 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 2.15
Interior view of office space - 2018.
Source: Author

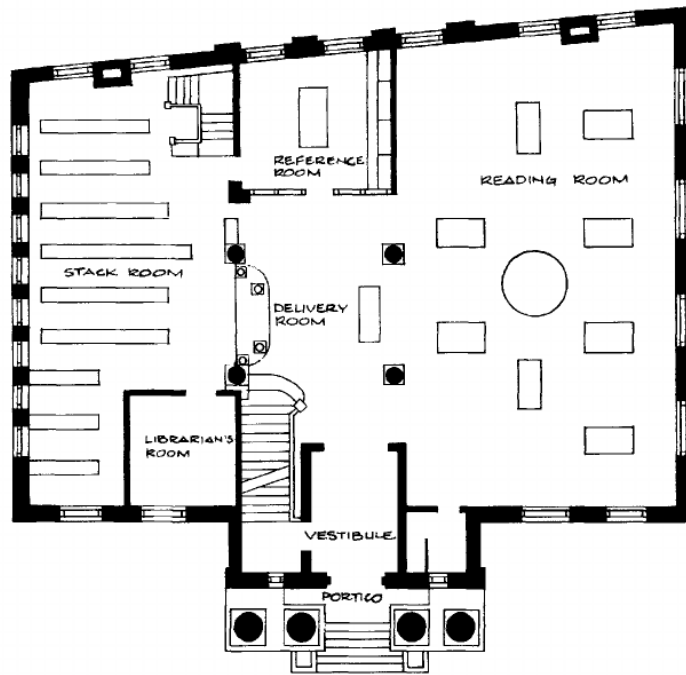


FIGURE 2.16

Original main floorplan - 1912.

Source: Margaret Beckman, Galt Carnegie Library, in The Best Gift, 111

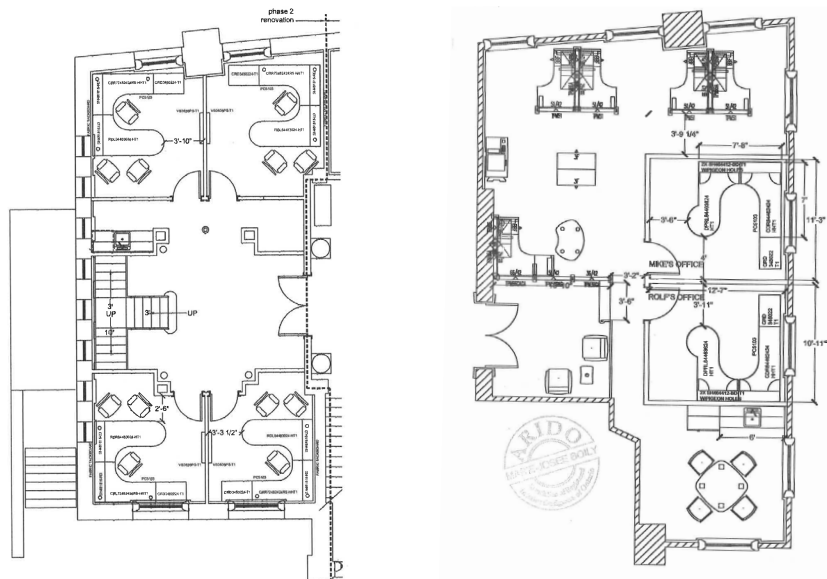


FIGURE 2.17

Repurposed main floorplan - 2002.

Source: Pinnacle Consultants

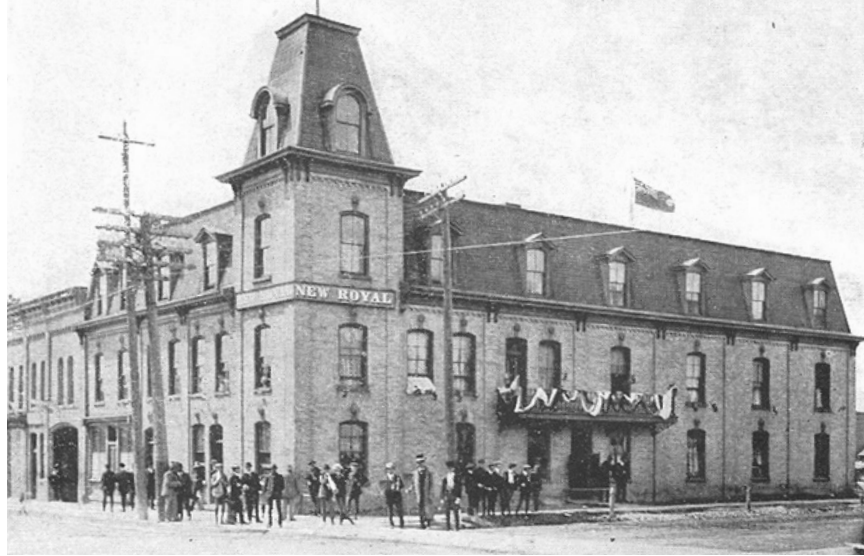


FIGURE 2.18
New Royal Hotel - 1902.
Source: Toronto Public Library Digital Archive



FIGURE 2.19
New Royal Hotel facade changes - 2005.
Source: City of Cambridge Planning Services

NEW ROYAL HOTEL

MAIN STREET BUILDING (1888)
HERITAGE DESIGNATED (2005)
REPURPOSED AS RESIDENTIAL SUITES & CAFÉ (2008 & 2010)

The New Royal Hotel was built in 1888 to serve those traveling to industrial Galt for business.¹ It replaced the Royal Excelsior Hotel which had been on this site since 1850.² The building underwent some alterations over the years but remained essentially intact and continued to function as a hotel and bar. It had, however, declined over the years and became a "haven for drugs and other illegal activities".³ The century old hotel was eventually shutdown, as the owner was unable to make the changes that were needed to pass a fire inspection.⁴ The city then purchased the building and sold it to a developer who eventually converted it into an upscale coffee shop with residential suites on the upper floors.

The building was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 2005. It is recognized as an important landmark and is valued as a good example of Second Empire architectural style.⁵ The exterior of the building has been restored to its original form with a few embellishments and new signage. The alterations that had been made to the building over the years were removed and replaced with brick made to match that of the original. The new windows now reflect their former pattern with an extra entrance for the above apartments.

While this change of use has ended a long history of this building functioning as a hotel, it has helped to revitalize the area and is a vast improvement from its previous state. The coffee shop and retail at street level provide new amenities for the community and the upper levels provide 12 newly renovated condominium apartments for the downtown core. Its restoration has elongated the life of this historic landmark and helped to maintain the heritage quality of Main Street, as envisioned in the plans and guidelines.

1. Author Unknown, "Seedy Royal Hotel Reborn as an Upscale Coffee Shop," *The Record*, June 4th, 2011, <https://www.therecord.com/news-story/2579857-seedy-royal-hotel-reborn-as-an-upscale-coffee-shop-offices-and-condominiums/>.

2. Jim Quantrell, *Time Frames: Historical Chronologies of Galt, Preston, Hespeler, Blair and Cambridge*, (Cambridge: City of Cambridge, 1998), 25.

3. Author Unknown, "Coffee and Culture at Former Hotel," *Cambridge Times*, August 2nd, 2011, <https://www.cambridgetimes.ca/news-story/3366573-coffee-and-culture-at-former-hotel/>.

4. Author Unknown, *The Record*.

5. Heritage Planner On Behalf of MHAC to Council, October, 26th, 2005, *Request for the Designation of 138 Main Street - The Royal Hotel - Architectural Assessment*, 2.



FIGURE 2.20
Facade restoration - 2015.
Source: Google Street View



FIGURE 2.21
Interior view of cafe.
Source: Google Maps Images

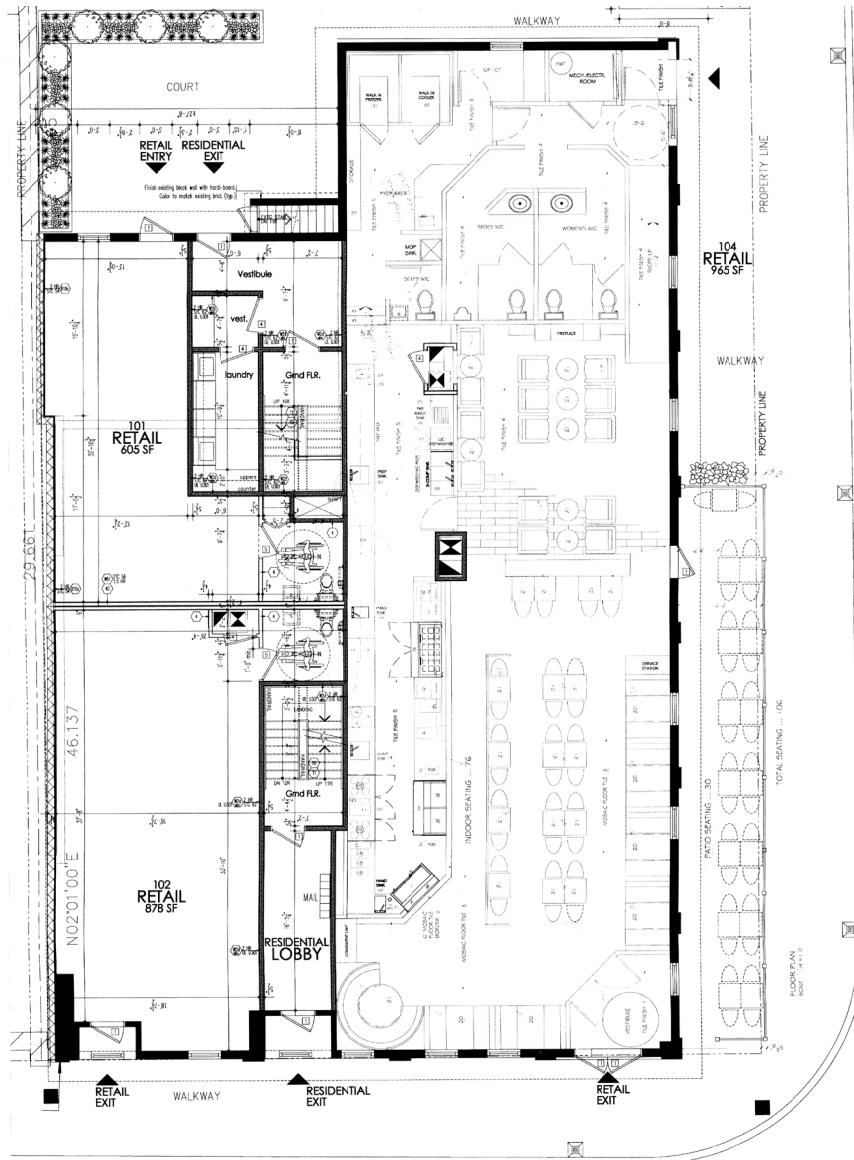


FIGURE 2.22
Cafe floorplan.
 Source: City of Cambridge Planning Services



FIGURE 2.23
Willard's Block - 1957.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 2.24
Arthur White Building - 1984.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

ARTHUR WHITE BUILDING - PROVINCIAL COURTHOUSE

MAIN STREET BUILDING (1978)
NO DESIGNATION
REPURPOSED AS GYM & RETAIL SPACE (2016)

The Arthur White Building was built in 1978, after a fire destroyed the Main Street buildings that previously stood on this lot. It was home to the Provincial Courts and served as the Cambridge courthouse until 2013. The region, then, consolidated their services and moved to a new facility in Kitchener. This move was objected by many employees and local residents, however, the sentiment towards the courthouse was more so about convenience of location than of the building itself.¹

Its brutalist style is a good representation of the architecture of its time but is not a building that is typically acknowledged as heritage. As a result, it underwent extensive renovations that changed the face of the building completely. In 2015, it was bought by a group of investors. The roof and the entire front facade were replaced in order to accommodate the new tenants and update the facilities. The new façade, however, does not create an engaging streetscape and does not follow the recommendations of the 2013 Main Street Design Guidelines. These outline that “new developments and renovations will be required to reinforce the existing heritage massing and siting of buildings that inform that primary character of the block”.²

The new design features a full height curtain wall separated by stonework giving the appearance of a brand-new building rather than a renovated one. This has created a nice bright and open facility for a gym on the second floor – which is a type of program that previously did not exist in the downtown core. The new retail spaces offer large updated facilities that can accommodate a lot more than the neighboring historic shops down the street, however, there is a disconnect between their form and the rhythm of the front façade. The gradual slope across the site is also not accounted for in the design, further limiting the approachability of these storefronts. While this rehabilitation has helped to create a space for services that are valuable to the downtown core and its revitalization, it has not added value to the overall character and heritage quality of Main Street, which is prioritized in the plans and guidelines.

1. Author Unknown, "Doors Forever Locked on Cambridge Courthouse," *Cambridge Times*, April 18th, 2013, <https://www.cambridgetimes.ca/news-story/3365359-doors-forever-locked-on-cambridge-courthouse/>.

2. BrookMcIlroy, *Main Street Urban Design Guidelines: Cambridge Ontario*, (Toronto: BrookMcIlroy, 2013), 11, <https://www.cambridge.ca/en/build-invest-grow/resources/Main-Street-Urban-Design-Guidelines.pdf>



FIGURE 2.25
New facade - 2016.
Source: Rego Realty

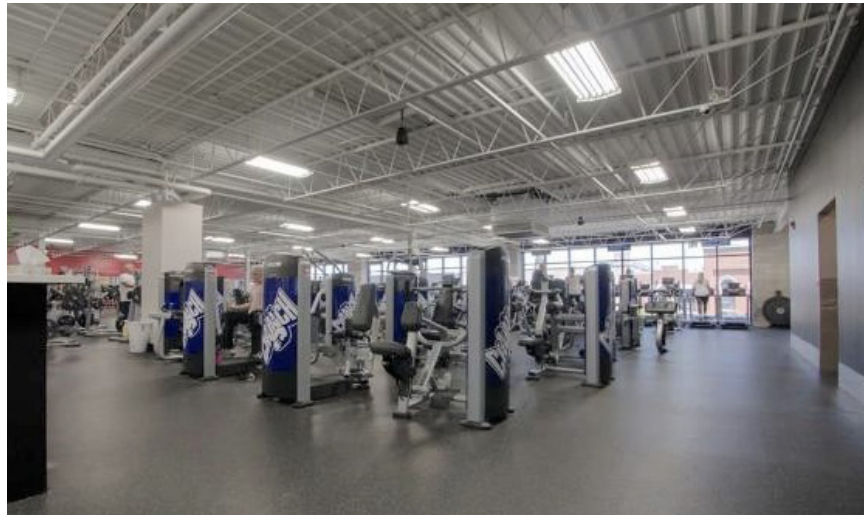


FIGURE 2.26
Second floor gym.
Source: Rego Realty

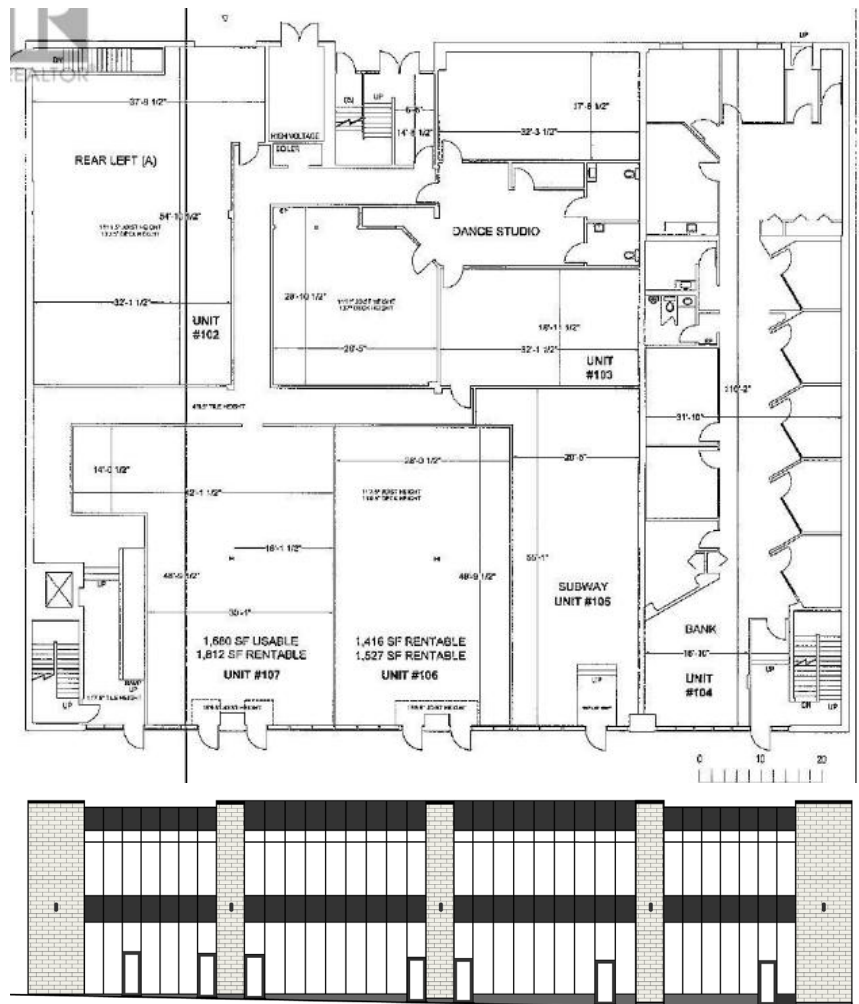


FIGURE 2.27
Floorplan and facade relationship at street level.
 Source: Rego Realty & Author

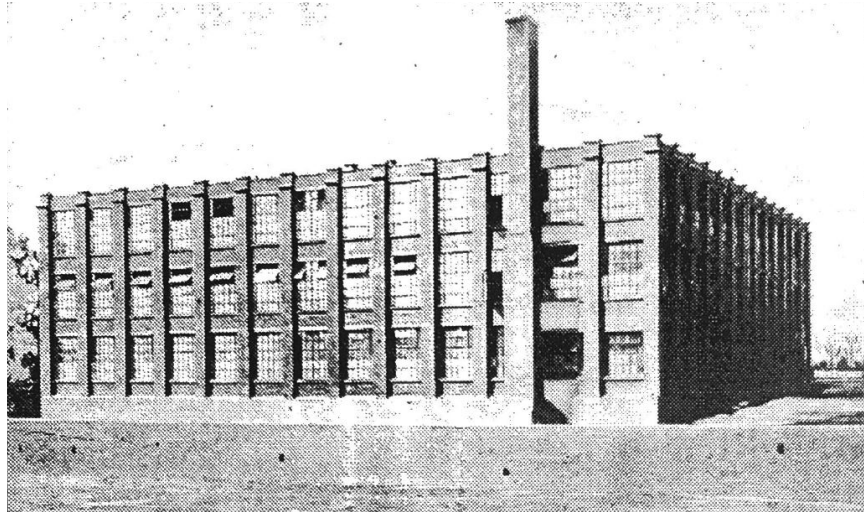


FIGURE 2.28
Riverside Silk Mills - 1919.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 2.29
Flooding - 1927.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

RIVERSIDE SILK MILLS

FACTORY BUILDING (1919)

NO DESIGNATION

REPURPOSED AS A SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE (2004)

The McCormick brothers that founded Riverside Silk Mills purchased the lot on Melville Street in 1918 and in the following year built a three-story brick building on the east side of the Grand River. As their business grew, they continued to expand the building, adding two more wings in the same style.¹ In 1946, the two brothers sold their business, as they found the building could no longer accommodate the manufacturing of new materials that emerged after the war.² Under new ownership, the building continued to operate as a production plant until 1975. Its vacancy and location along the river, at that time, made it a prime target for demolition. The Grand River Conservation Authority were buying and tearing down old mills to reduce flood risk, but they ran out of money and were not able to purchase this building.³

It continued to be used by small retail and manufacturing companies until 2000. The solid structure and open floor plan of this factory style building allow for a lot of flexibility in its reuse. While it is not designated as a heritage building, it is valued for its age and aesthetic. The high ceilings, exposed brick, and wood floors add to its appeal. There were a few proposals to convert the building into upscale loft apartments, but nothing ever came of it. Instead, the University of Waterloo put forward to the City of Cambridge that the School of Architecture relocate and move its program into the former Riverside Silk Mills.

The project quickly moved forward and in 2004, the University opened a satellite campus in downtown Galt. The new design took on a minimal approach to preserve as much of the existing building as possible and utilized the open floorplan to create flexible spaces. Part of relocating this program to Galt was also to aid in revitalization efforts and serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development. While this building may have only survived by chance and not because it was valued for any particular reason, in its reuse, it has become an integral part of the downtown core. It is valued, not only by those that use the facility, but by business and homeowners that benefit as a result of the influx of students that now live downtown.

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1. Author Unknown, "Riverside Silk Mills Ltd," *City of Cambridge Archives*, accessed October 2nd, 2018.
 2. Robert Jan van Pelt, "Riverside Silk Mills," *Unpublished Text*, received August 16th, 2018.
 3. Robert Jan van Pelt, *Unpublished Text*.



FIGURE 2.30
School of Architecture - 2004.
Source: LGA Architectural Partners



FIGURE 2.31
Interior views - 2004.
Source: LGA Architectural Partners

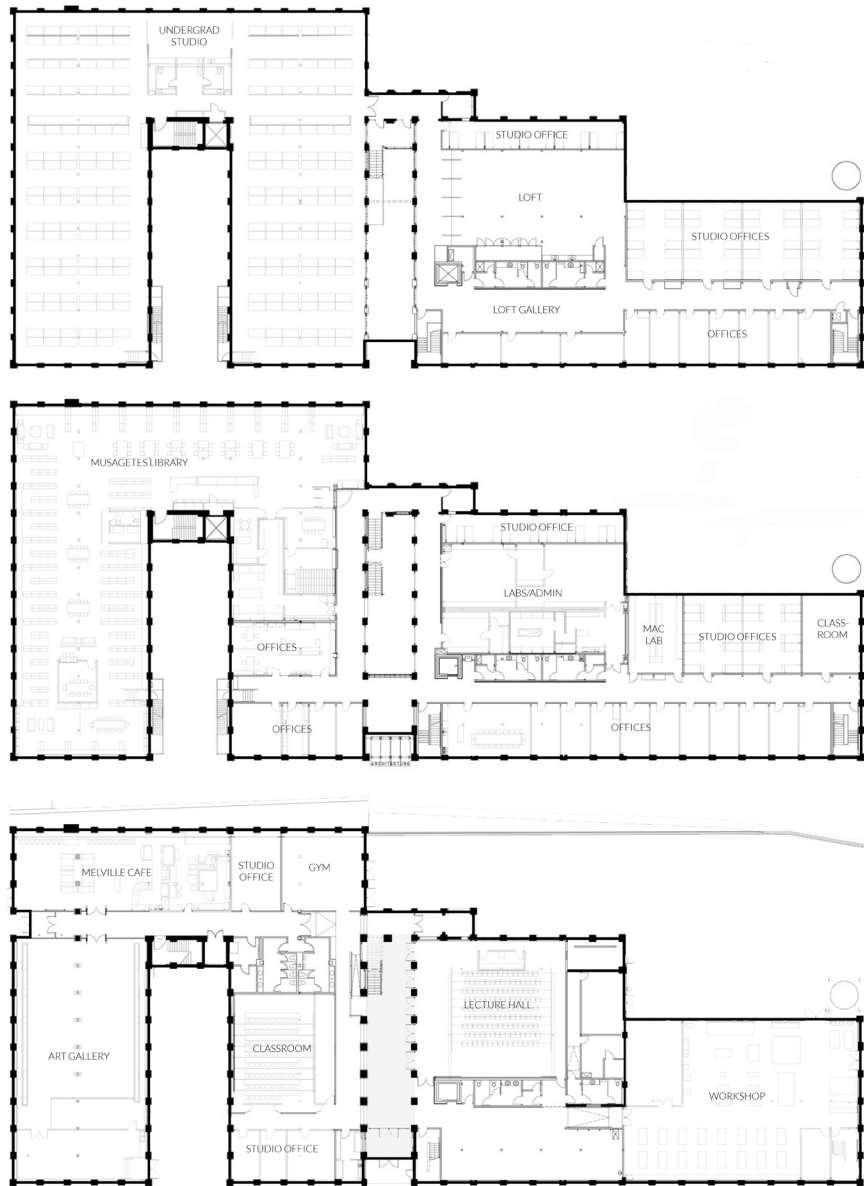


FIGURE 2.32
School of Architecture floorplans.
Source: ArchDaily edited by author

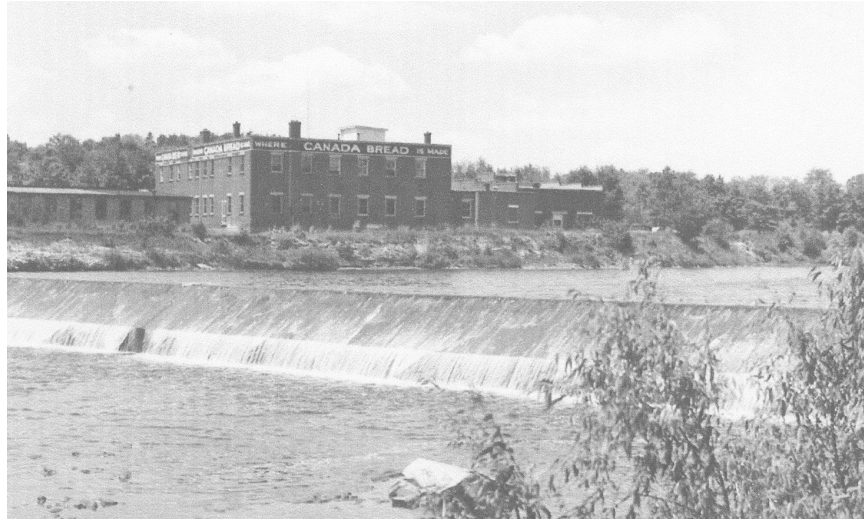


FIGURE 2.33
View from river - 1940.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 2.34
Canada Bread Company - 1950.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

DIXON BREAD FACTORY

FACTORY BUILDING (1923)

NO DESIGNATION

REPURPOSED AS A CO-OPERATIVE WORKSPACE & CAFÉ (2018)

The Dixon Bread Factory was built in 1923 and is also located in close proximity to the river. Its exterior has been well maintained, and the faded signs on its façade are really the only indication of its other uses over the years. It continued to function as a bakery until 1961, under the ownership of the Canada Bread Company.¹ It was then bought by the South Waterloo Agricultural Society, who remained on the site until 2000.² In the years proceeding it went through a succession of different uses, including a dance club and event space.³

The former Dixon Bread Factory is one of the few buildings left along the east side of the river. It is located a bit farther from the downtown core and is included in the Dickson Hill Conservation District. Since its rehabilitation, it has also been proposed that it receive its own heritage designation. Similar to the Riverside Silk Mills, the open floor plan and the aesthetic of the old building are part of its charm – so much so that the most recent renovations have been made to look old as well.

In 2018, this building was re-purposed as a cooperative space for small businesses, startups, freelance professionals, creatives and the community.⁴ The second-floor houses multiple private offices and the main floor is divided into flexible working spaces available for rent on a short-term basis, as well as a public café. There is a high demand for these types of properties and something like this previously did not exist in Cambridge. This building is another good example of the value factory style buildings have in their ability to accommodate unique programs and create new places that still reveal the buildings history.

1. Ray Martin, "New Plan Repurposes Old Galt Landmark," *Cambridge Times*, May 10th, 2017, <https://www.cambridgetimes.ca/news-story/7307598-new-plan-repurposes-old-galt-landmark/>.

2. Ray Martin, *Cambridge Times*.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Galt Collective, "Homepage," <https://galtcollective.ca/> (accessed March 5th, 2019).



FIGURE 2.35
Blackwing Cafe and Galt Collective - 2018.
Source: Google Street View



FIGURE 2.36
Co-operative workspace.
Source: Galt Collective



FIGURE 2.37
Blackwing Cafe.
Source: Dfy Studio

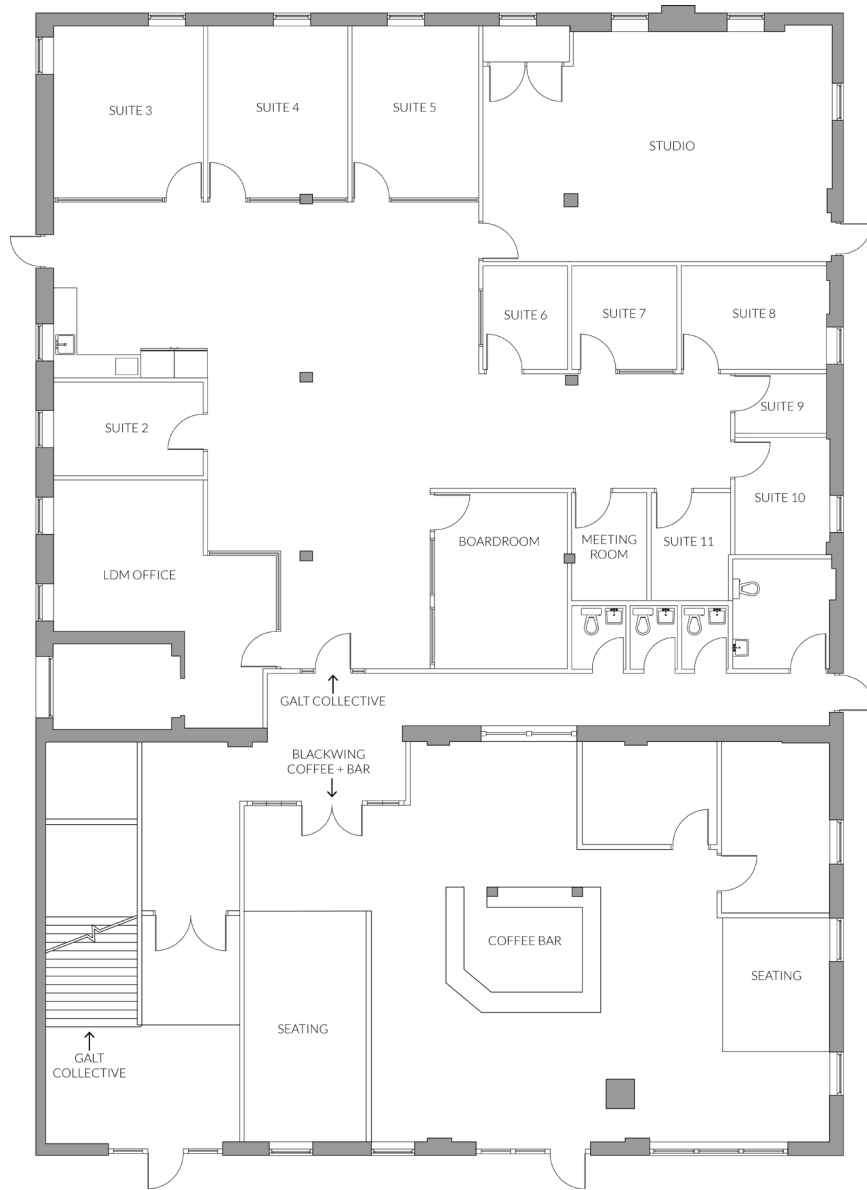


FIGURE 2.38
Blackwing Cafe and Galt Collective floorplan.
 Source: Galt Collective edited by author

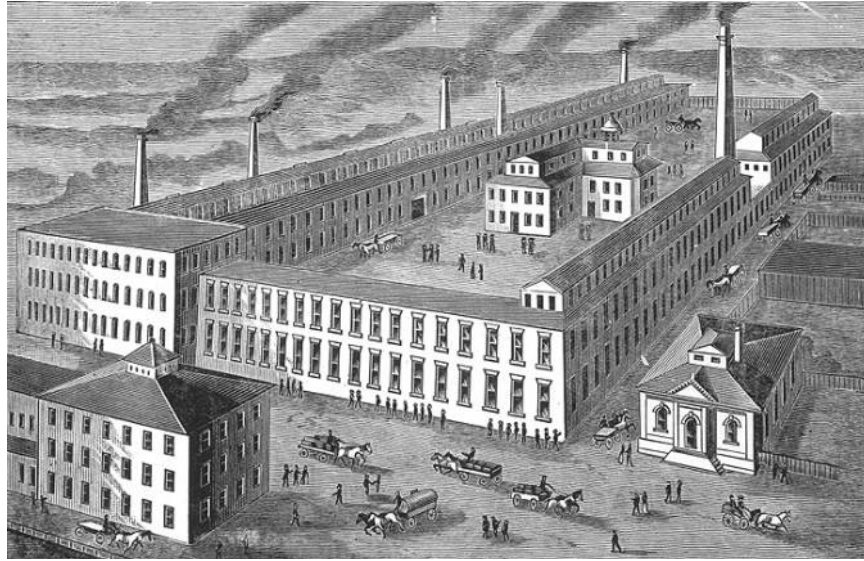


FIGURE 2.39
Goldie McCulloch Foundry - 1902.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 2.40
Aerial view - 1957.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

DUMFRIES FOUNDRY

INDUSTRIAL SITE (1888- 1918)

NO DESIGNATION

REPURPOSED AS THE GASLIGHT DISTRICT & CONDOMINIUMS (2020)

This site has been integral to the history of Galt for more than one hundred years. Originally it was the location of the Dumfries Foundry, which moved to the site in 1847.¹ In 1859, two Scottish employees, John Goldie and Hugh McCulloch, bought the company from James Crombie who had taken over the Dumfries Foundry.² Under the name Goldie & McCulloch, the company continued to grow, and more buildings were built as their manufacturing expanded. In 1923, it merged with Babcock & Wilcox – an American Company – and remained in operation as an industrial site until 1987.³ Most recently the site was used as an outlet and antique mall, which closed to the public in 2017, when the property was purchased by a development company.

The buildings on this site are not designated but are listed as a property of interest. They are now being repurposed to become what will be known as the Gaslight District, which will include two condominium towers. The initial proposal was praised by the City as a much-needed economic boost for the community, however, it was contested by heritage advocates due to the height of the towers and the partial demolition of the historic buildings.⁴ These buildings have not been given much attention in the plans and guidelines but are now being assigned value simply because their existence is threatened.

The Gaslight District is intended to be a place that supports the arts and culture community in Galt. It will house a market, restaurants, studio space, and will create a place for people to work and live near the downtown core. Part of the historic buildings will still be removed, however, what remains will be restored and rehabilitated – receiving substantial work to bring them up to code. They will be designated following construction, which will protect them from further degradation or alterations. While part of these building's history will be lost in the process, their new use as a cultural hub will extend their physical life and hopefully retain their heritage value as a site that fosters prosperity for Galt.

1. Author Unknown, "Life at the Intersection of Yesterday and Tomorrow" *The Gaslight Condominiums*, <http://www.thegaslightcondos.ca/life-at-the-intersection-of-yesterday-tomorrow/> (accessed April 15th, 2019).

2. Author Unknown, *The Gaslight Condominiums*.

3. Ibid.

4. Anam Latif, "Gaslight District Gets Green Light," *The Record*, June 7th, 2017, <https://www.therecord.com/news-story/7359378-gaslight-district-gets-green-light-from-cambridge-planning-committee/>.



FIGURE 2.41
Aerial view of remaining buildings - 2016.
Source: Google Maps



FIGURE 2.42
Render of Gaslight District proposal.
Source: <https://www.thegaslightcondos.ca/>

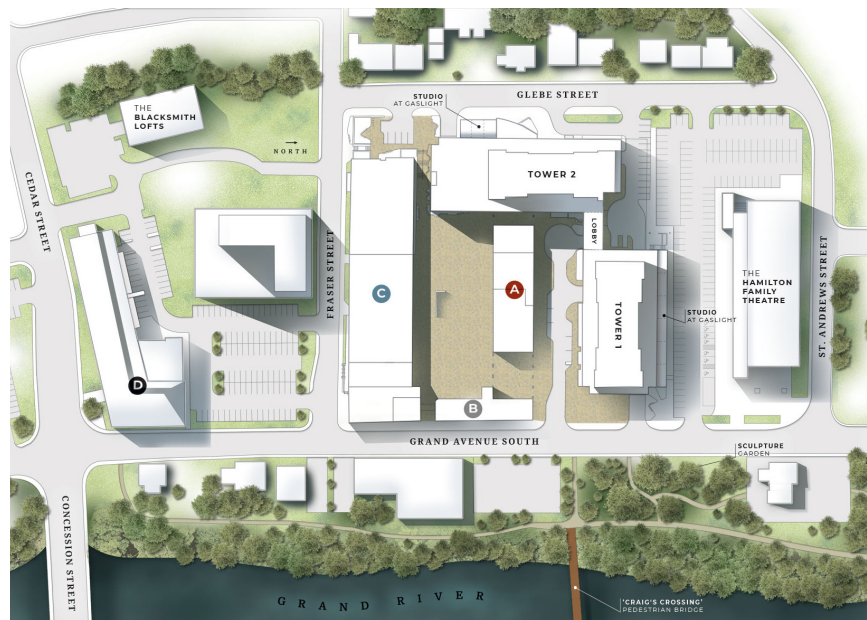


FIGURE 2.43

Gaslight District site plan.

Source: <https://www.thegaslightcondos.ca/the-district/>

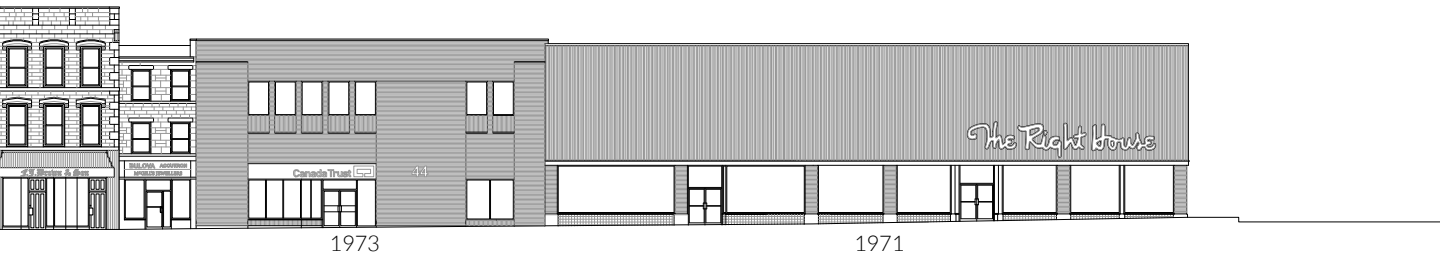
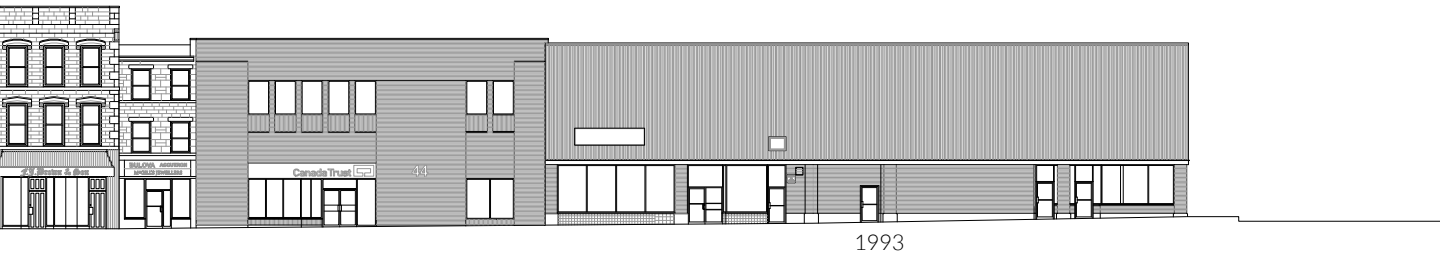
DESIGNING WITH HISTORY



1919

FIGURE 3.01
Main Street North
Elevations

Source: Author



A Heritage District

Main Street has had an important role in the history of Galt and continues to contribute to the overall character of the downtown core with the quality of buildings that remain. However, to value these buildings for what they were at a certain point in history when the conditions that allowed them to exist in that form are no longer, hinders their ability to contribute to modern society. There are many different values that are assigned to buildings that contribute to their adaptability and reuse. While heritage plans and policies tend to place more importance on an ideal aesthetic, other stakeholders often place more importance on other aspects of the built environment. Developers and building owners are typically financially responsible for implementing changes and, as such, their approach is often based on individual interest, where current value is prioritized. The North side of Main street has been subject to these types of developments over the years.

The Heritage Conservation District on the South side of Main Street was designated in 1985 based on its visual unity and variation of style.¹ This area has been prioritized in the heritage plans and design guidelines, but the recommendations have not been fully implemented. These buildings are valued for their architectural and historical importance, but the economic circumstances in Galt have affected their ability to maintain an active commercial district. The physical constraints of the individual buildings and selective heritage designation have created a unique set of challenges that have further hindered their revitalization. As a commercial district, the buildings on Main Street are always needing to adapt to advancements that occur in any industry, they are forever metamorphic.² Main Street is a dynamic district that has "evolved over a long period of time, where the process of evolution is ongoing".³

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1. Nicholas Hill, *A Heritage Conservation District Plan*, (Cambridge, Ontario: 1984), 1.
 2. Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens after They're Built*. (New York: Phoenix Illustrated, 1997), 7.
 3. Ontario Heritage Trust, *Heritage Conservation Districts*, (Toronto: Ministry of Culture, 2006), 11, http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/Heritage_Tool_Kit_HCD_English.pdf.



FIGURE 3.02
Main Street looking West - 1899.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 3.03
Main Street looking East - 1911.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

Main Street is located in "the heart of the town where it originated, grew and changed over the years".⁴ It consists of three blocks that are defined by their location in the valley. "The river and associated natural environment, the treed valley edge and the changing levels of the terrain provide a richly diverse townscape composition".⁵ It is this picturesque setting where Absalom Shade built the first log frame building that was both used as his house and a store on the corner of Main and Water Streets. Main Street was thus established as a place of commerce before Galt was even established as a town. As Galt prospered with the expansion of its industries, the quality of buildings improved. Galt was described as the Granite City, as the Scottish masons favoured granite stone to other materials. As Galt continued to grow, other styles were incorporated, resulting in the variation of architecture that now lines the street.

In Galt, Main Street refers to a specific location, but the name itself also defines a specific building type. A typical 19th-Century Main Street is lined with adjacent buildings, forming a cohesive facade that frames the street. Collectively they create what would have been the main commercial district of a 19th-Century town. Every Main Street is shaped by complex historical forces, geographical conditions and the demands of function.⁶ As businesses grew, they relocated or expanded the building to accommodate. As a result, the nature of Main Street was continuously changing and adapting to the conditions and circumstances of the town. At any given point, it was a unique expression of time and place.⁷

Main Streets typically followed a consistent pattern. They were a dominant axis in a grid, "both a stopping place and a corridor, a pedestrian space and a through road".⁸ A major intersection was usually the focus, therefore the corner lots became prime real estate, and were usually claimed by banks. The main corner in Galt - at Main and Water Streets - had a bank on every corner. This famous intersection was completed in 1919, when one of the typical Main Street style buildings was replaced by a more prominent structure that housed the Merchants Bank of Canada. This was the first of many changes that altered the style of the 19th-Century buildings on the North side of Main Street.

4. Hill, *A Heritage Conservation District Plan*, Research, 6.

5. Ibid.

6. Carole Rifkind, *Main Street: The Face of Urban America*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 81.

7. Rifkind, *Main Street: The Face of Urban America*, 81.

8. Ibid.



FIGURE 3.04
19th Century Main Street South Elevation.
Source: Author





FIGURE 3.05
19th Century Main Street North Elevation.
Source: Author





FIGURE 3.06
60 Main Street Elevation - 1895.
Source: Author



FIGURE 3.07
60 Main Street - 1910.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

The other corner lot on the North side of Main Street has a more complex history. The frame building was once home to the Galt Subscription and Circulating Library. It was the last of the wood frame buildings on this block of Main Street. A series of fires had destroyed the others, which resulted in a bylaw prohibiting this type of construction. By the late 19th-Century, Galt had become well established and was one of the largest towns in the area. At this time, Absalom Shade's mercantile monopoly had dissipated and Main Street housed a variety of businesses.

Reuben Alfred Briscoe was a successful retailer who had a store on Main Street. In 1895 he relocated his business to a prime location on the corner of Main and Ainslie Streets. He ran his shop known as The Little Giant out of the wood frame building. He became quite prominent in Galt, known for his business acumen.⁹ He believed in small profits and quick returns.¹⁰ His store offered dry goods, boots and shoes, clothing, furnishings, and furs. Advertising played an important role in the growth of his business. One of his best ventures was a wagon that traveled to other counties, it sold goods, took orders and invited people to come visit the store.¹¹

In 1906, R.A. Briscoe purchased the rest of the property on the corner lot. He paid a grand total of \$25,000.¹² This purchase included the two buildings on the Ainslie Street side which were occupied by the Galt Real Estate and Loan Company and the Department of Agriculture.¹³ It also allowed him to expand his business to the adjacent building on Main Street. He made alterations to the front facade and adopted the new title Briscoe's Department Store.

9. Jim Quantrell, "*The History of Main Street Galt*," (History Talk, BOX 12 Art Show, Cambridge, ON, November 17th, 2012).

10. Quantrell, "*The History of Main Street Galt*," November 17th, 2012.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.



FIGURE 3.08
60 Main Street Elevation - 1926.
Source: Author



FIGURE 3.09
60 Main Street - 1926.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

In 1926 a contract for alterations and additions to Briscoe's Department Store was awarded to the firm Geo. H. Thomas and Son Ltd.¹⁴ The extent of these renovations are undocumented, but the new facade gives the appearance of a new building altogether. The roof was replaced and the buildings were altered and added to, creating a uniform height throughout. Briscoe kept his store open during the renovations and offered special sales each week to keep customers coming to the store during construction.¹⁵

The separation of the upper and lower facade of the new building is consistent with the typical Main Street typology. However, the spatial organization of the building in its single use differs from the smaller shops that line the rest of the street. In the years that followed, the style of commercialization on Main Street began to change as businesses expanded and required more space.

By 1928 Briscoe had added a large well lit basement bargain section which gained a lot of popularity with his customers.¹⁶ After three years in his new store, he retired and sold the business to the Carswell Bros.¹⁷ When they went out of business he once again took over the store and remained associated with the business until the time of his death in 1938.¹⁸ His business had continued to show steady progress and stayed open under new management following his death.¹⁹

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

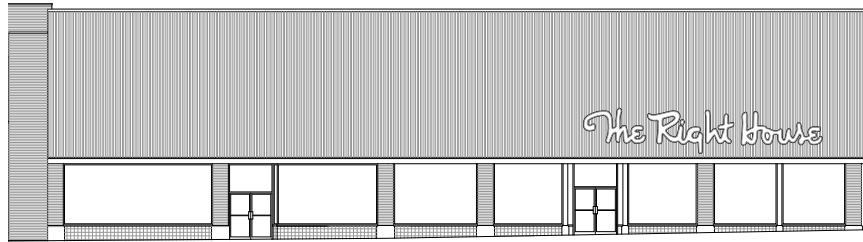


FIGURE 3.10
60 Main Street Elevation - 1971.
Source: Author



FIGURE 3.11
60 Main Street - 1971.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

In 1952 Briscoe's Department Store began to introduce The Right House in the store ads. The store put on a large sale as they transitioned into new management.²⁰ The new store became quite popular. In 1966 the first escalator in the city was installed. These changes in management and new technologies were reflective of other big changes that had followed the war. Textile industries were adapting to the new materials that were more in demand and industrial productions were in need of new capital to manage these changes. American companies began to buy out businesses and their presence in Galt influenced a new style of commercialization.

The Right House was one of the first stores in the downtown core to take advantage of this increase in consumerism. The store did well under new management and in 1971 they expanded to include the two adjacent buildings on Main Street that were formerly occupied by F. W. Woolworth Co. and Reid's Nuts and Candies. At this time, the walls separating the buildings were removed to increase floor space, the floors were adjusted to the same height and the entire store front was covered with corrugated metal to give the appearance of a common facade.²¹ The new store was 35,000 square feet and at the time, it was the largest department store in the city providing employment for 32 people.²²

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.



FIGURE 3.12
Main Street looking West - 1985.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 3.13
Main Street looking East - 1985.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives

In 1985, when the South side of Main Street was designated as a Heritage Conservation District, the North side had experienced significant alterations from the 19th-Century architecture that once occupied the site. The North side of Main Street was thus excluded from the district, where the buildings were valued for their visual unity. The buildings included in this district were built between 1851 and 1895. They provide a rich variety of architectural style – from the stone Granite Block to the High Victorian Osborne Block.²³ "It is this subtle variation of detail and style within the discipline of the streetscape as a whole that makes the district worthy of long term conservation and enhancement".²⁴

The designation of a building or area gives a municipality the right to monitor alterations. It is intended to protect and enhance the heritage character of an entire area. It ultimately simplifies the management of heritage resources, which is why it was the main recommendation for the City to move forward with in order to conserve its heritage buildings.²⁵ The district boundary on the South side of Main Street was selected based on the aesthetic quality of these buildings, while other aspects that contribute to making a district successful were not considered. The focus on the form and spatial configurations of the buildings have further segregated the two sides of the street. Excluding the buildings on the North side does not negate their existence and drawing a line around the buildings on the South side does not isolate them from their surrounding context.

While these buildings have not been valued in the same way, they are experienced together. Collectively they create a place. This is not to say that some buildings do not exude more prominence than others, but simply that they do not exist in isolation. To expect a boundary to frame a building like a work of art, hinders its ability to function in modern society. The ideal seldom becomes a reality. The accumulation of layers on Main Street buildings demonstrates their need to adjust to the changing needs of the community. When the Heritage Conservation District plan placed more importance on aesthetic values, the very nature of what made Main Street successful became unfashionable. The buildings that continuously adapted to new forms of development and commercialization are now required to stand still.

23. Hill, *A Heritage Conservation District Plan*, 1.

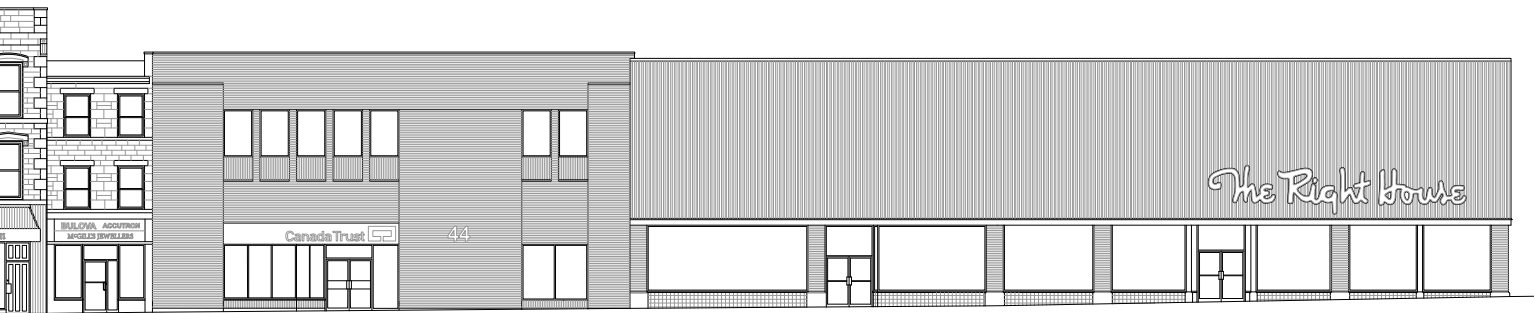
24. Ibid.

25. Dilse, *A Remarkable Heritage*, 121.





FIGURE 3.15
1985 Main Street North Elevation.
Source: Author



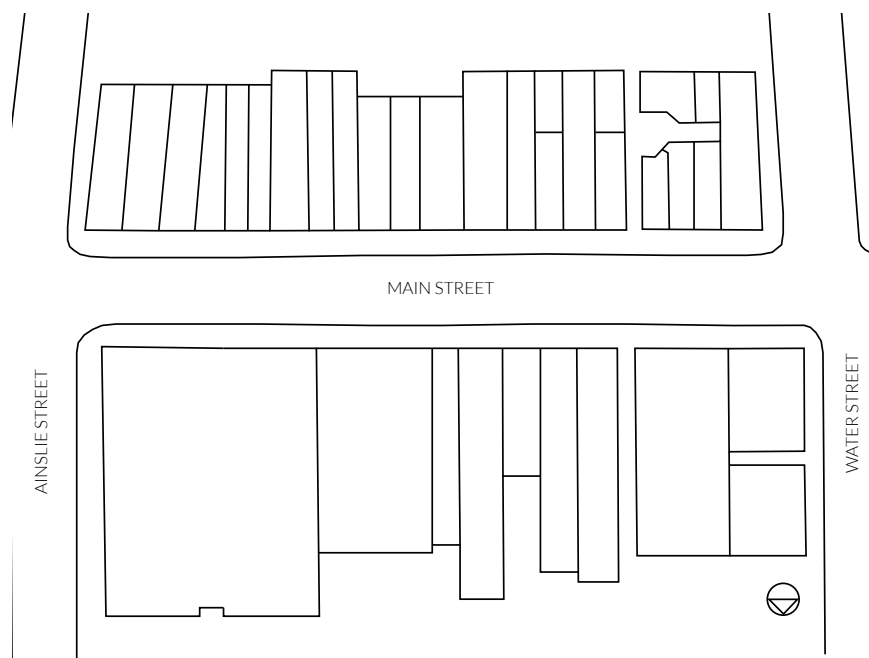


FIGURE 3.17

Plan of Main Street - 1985.

Source: Hill, A Heritage Conservation District Plan, 2, edited by Author

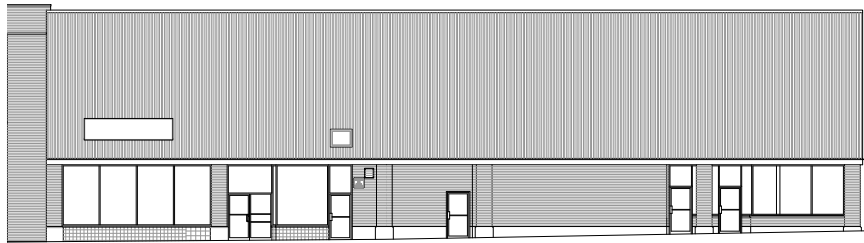


FIGURE 3.18
60 Main Street Elevation - 1993.
Source: Author



FIGURE 3.19
60 Main Street - 2011.
Source: Author

By 1989 The Right House had outgrown the 35,000 square feet available at the downtown location. They moved to the John Galt Centre, which is now known as the Cambridge Centre, where they acquired an additional 22,000 square feet.²⁶ The store remained largely vacant after their move. It was put up for sale for \$975,000 and also made available for rent.²⁷ While a portion of the building had been leased out to various tenants, the majority of the building remained empty. Urban development had changed the function of the downtown core and the size of the building was no longer a viable investment for businesses. As a result, subsequent renovations were needed.

The building was separated into two different stores. These renovations began in 1993 for the tenancy of Meikleham's Big V Pharmacy which would be moving into the window-lined corner section of the building.²⁸ The section at the back, the second floor and the basement, however, would remain unoccupied. The costs for repairs to the building were estimated at \$200,000 but that was without the upgrades that further altered the facade of the building.²⁹ The lower façade which was the only portion of the 1926 building that had not been altered, was now bricked in to accommodate the new tenants. Meikleham's was eventually bought out by Shoppers Drug Mart which operated out of this building until 2004 when they moved to their stand alone store on Water Street.³⁰

26. Quantrell, "*The History of Main Street Galt*," November 17th, 2012.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.



FIGURE 3.20
60 Main Street Elevation - 2012.
Source: Author



FIGURE 3.21
60 Main Street - 2012.
Source: Author

In the following years, the building remained mostly vacant, with only temporary occupants making use of the space. It was bought by Perimeter Development - a development company out of Kitchener that owns other properties along Main Street. They restored one of the buildings on the South side of Main Street and have boasted of their plans to renovate the others. Images of buildings that host a "vibrant urban culture" with advertisements for leasing opportunities are plastered on the façades of derelict properties in the hopes of gaining the interest of businesses. Smaller businesses attempt to open around them, but with little support from the surrounding area, they don't survive for long.³¹

In 2012, Perimeter Development removed the corrugated metal façade from the corner building on Main and Ainslie Streets. Likely an attempt to reveal the original character of the former department store, but instead revealed the decrepit state that this building was in. For unknown reasons, this development company no longer focuses their investments in Galt. They owned many of the buildings on Main Street, but did nothing with them, while gaining tax breaks annually.³² Development on Main Street once again was controlled by a mercantile monopoly, the difference being that this time, most of the properties sit vacant.

31. Kevin Lewis, "Property Owners Cashing in at Taxpayer Expense," *Cambridge Times*, May 11, 2018. <https://www.cambridgetimes.ca/opinion-story/8601952-property-owners-cashing-in-at-taxpayer-expense/>.

32. Lewis, "Property Owners Cashing in at Taxpayer Expense."



FIGURE 3.22
60 Main Street Elevation - 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 3.23
60 Main Street - 2019.
Source: Author

In 2017 Perimeter Development sold this building to Terry Polyak, the owner of Milestone Marketing, who was interested in jumping in the downtown real estate game. The agency announced that they will be relocating their office to downtown Galt following the completion of a substantial renovation.³³ Construction began promptly. Terry bought the building as a sort of package deal which included the development plans for the building that Perimeter Development was proposing. He was given grants from the city to help with costs as "the rundown corner had been a burden on the city - both an eyesore and a source of frequent complaints from local residents".³⁴

Terry worked primarily with a contractor and interior designer to make his vision a reality. The previous renovations left a mismatch of brick that had degraded over the years. The windows needed replacing, floors needed to be leveled and the roof needed an upgrade. The building was in need of a substantial amount of work to once again be given a new use. New materials were used to cover the intermittent construction on the lower facade while the original brick that had been hidden for so many years was preserved. Terry's company, Milestone Marketing, now occupies the upper floor of the building. The lower level tenants are to be determined in a later development phase.

33. Author Unknown, "Iconic Corner in Downtown Galt Set to Welcome Facelift," *Cambridge Economic Development*, November 24, 2017. <https://www.investcambridge.ca/Modules/News/index>.

34. Author Unknown, "Iconic Corner in Downtown Galt Set to Welcome Facelift."



FIGURE 3.24
Main Street looking West - 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 3.25
Main Street looking East - 2019.
Source: Author

Societal changes have altered how Main Street buildings are utilized as a commercial centre. The dominance of the vehicle has not only led to the dispersal of commercialization but it has changed the pedestrian orientated downtown. The image of a 19th-Century Main street with its dominant axis, and familiar sequence of function and activity is now simply that - an image. The conditions have changed and as such, the equilibrium of what makes Main Street thrive as an urban centre no longer exists.³⁵ While this type of change is inevitable, different building typologies and the spaces they create adapt in different ways, this is in part due to the value assigned to them.

While the most recent renovation to the derelict building on the corner of Main and Ainslie Streets is a positive step forward for the overall condition of Main Street, the condition of the other buildings continue to detract from it being a viable center. The stylistic unity desired by the city is not a sentiment shared by the tenants and owners, as is shown by the diminishing state of repair of some of these buildings. The value placed on them for their architectural qualities and historic representation have left them frozen in time, unable to adapt to modern society. The 19th-Century architecture in Galt that is viewed as significant is illustrative of a once successful town, yet, the current conditions of this commercial district seem to only exemplify loss.

The value of a place is not only expressed in its physical and historical values, but also in the way its design responds to its associative and contextual values.³⁶ Designation strategies should assess both the heritage value and potential value of a place by addressing the individual features of each building as well as their collective significance. It is the varying and changing combinations of values and the contexts they create that give heritage districts their overall character.³⁷ When identifying what values and attributes of a place should be considered in establishing a district boundary, "it is important to understand that "the value of the district as a whole is always greater than the sum of its parts".³⁸

35. Rifkind, *Main Street: The Face of Urban America*, 73.

36. Ontario Heritage Trust, *Heritage Conservation Districts*, 10.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

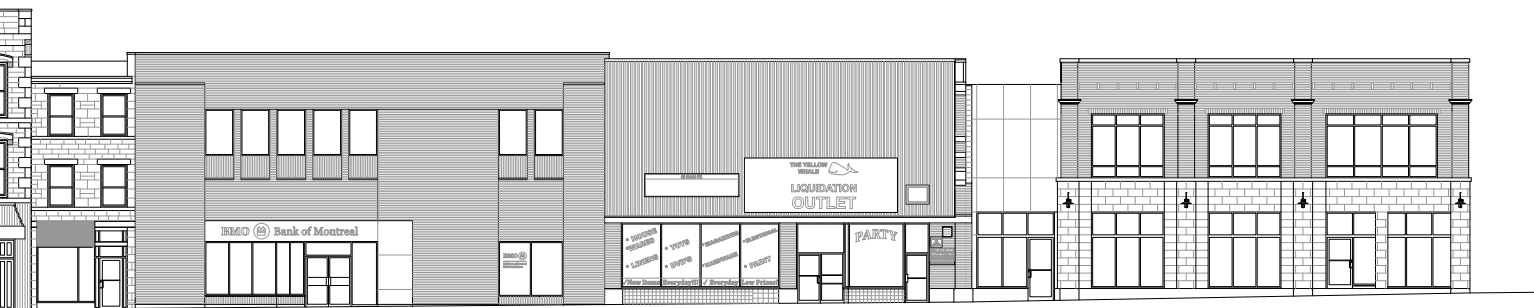


FIGURE 3.26
2019 Main Street South Elevation.
Source: Author





FIGURE 3.27
2019 Main Street North Elevation.
Source: Author



Conservation Practice

Conservation is defined as "all actions or processes aimed at safeguarding the character-defining elements of an historic place to retain its heritage value and extend its physical life".¹ Despite the changes in heritage values - as seen throughout the succession of plans conducted for the City of Cambridge - the prioritization of an ideal aesthetic remains prominent in heritage policies. The term heritage, when applied to buildings is often associated with a certain quality of architecture and the designation of a heritage building is often based on these tangible qualities. Less consideration is typically given to less significant structures, where their "route to authenticity is through directness, not time and continuity: Mess with the building as needed until it works".² There is, however, more to continuity than just the physical appearance of a building or place. Old buildings still embody history, no matter what their condition is.

The places buildings create contribute to their historical significance and maintain a link with the past, enhancing a sense of place and strengthening local identity. A building that may not be deemed worthy of heritage designation still has heritage value, which is informed by its condition, evolution over time, and past and current importance to its community.³ While the South side of Main Street is valued for its stylistic unity, the North side of Main Street tells a colourful story of the past that should be valued in its own right. The focus on an ideal aesthetic when identifying the heritage value of Main Street contradicts with the significance of the place itself. Understanding the value buildings have within their contextual surroundings can help to inform how conservation practice can recognize, enhance, and add to the value of a place, rather than limit it.

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1. *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada: a Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration*, (Canada: Canada's Historic Places, 2010), 15.
 2. Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens after They're Built*. (New York: Phoenix Illustrated, 1997), 7.
 3. *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, 3.



FIGURE 3.28
Main Street North looking East - 1957.
Source: City of Cambridge Archives



FIGURE 3.29
Main Street North looking East - 2017.
Source: Author

60 MAIN STREET

MAIN STREET SITE (1888- 1918)
NO DESIGNATION
REPURPOSED AS OFFICE SPACE (2019)

The building at 60 Main Street does not have the same architectural significance as the heritage buildings that make up its surroundings. As a result, it has continuously been added to and altered over the years based on the needs of its occupants. Each iteration was reflective of the style of architecture that was popular at the time of its renovation. Its continued use and ability to meet the demands of function have always been prioritized over its value as a historic object. These alterations have significantly altered the character of the building and destroyed its historical authenticity.

This building, however, still embodies history. It is a physical representation of the changes in Galt's past and is now able to be a part of its future. Its most recent renovation has extended the physical life of the building while preserving part of its past. Its new use as an office now brings more people to the downtown core. It is once again able to contribute to modern society and is no longer a detriment to the overall condition of Main Street.

The continued use of a building is always the best way to conserve its structure and ensure its longevity. The upgrades this building received are an improvement from the derelict building that previously graced the corner. But not necessarily an improvement from the original building built in 1926. While this building has changed dramatically over the years, the most significant changes haven't so much improved it as they have maintained it.¹

1. Andy Crouch, *Culture Making Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 54.

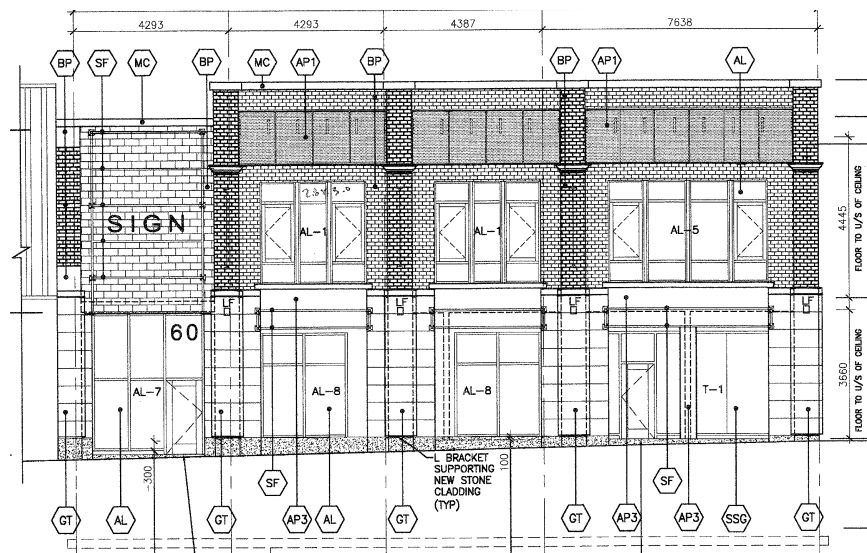


FIGURE 3.30
Development proposal.
 Source: *Perimeter Development*

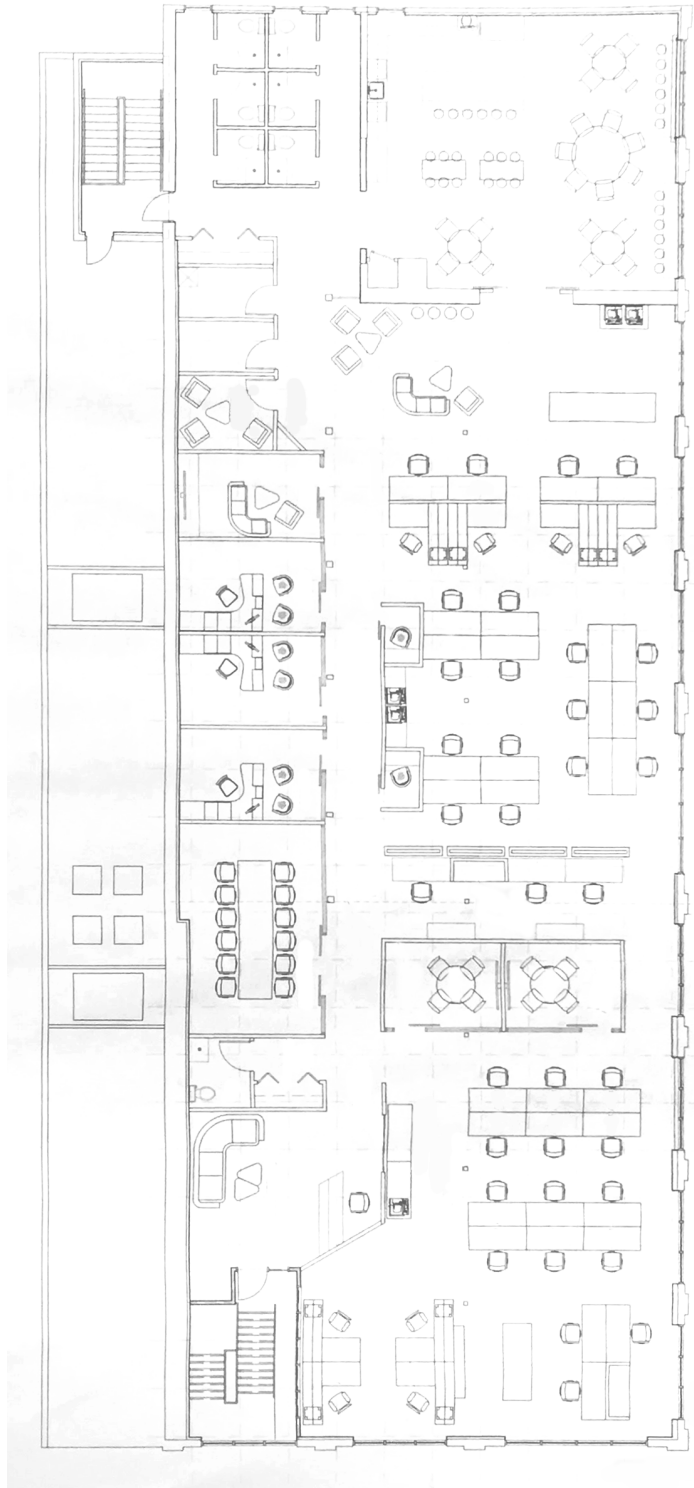


FIGURE 3.31
Office floorplan.
Source: Dfy Studio

REFLECTION



FIGURE 4.01
Layers of History
60 Main Street

Source: Author



Ainslie St.

AINSLIE

Layers of History

Galt's history demonstrates how economic forces have influenced changes in architectural styles and urban development. The industrialization of Galt was made possible through its economic success and its architecture became a reflection of that prosperity. New technologies influenced new styles of development, "at the same time that they responded more adequately to the aims of investments".¹ As society continues to evolve, the physical form of cities will continue to change, as will the systems that are in place to manage these changes. While many of the plans and guidelines for the conservation and revitalization of downtown Galt address the aesthetic qualities of these historic structures, the policies in place do not always benefit their economic viability. These aesthetic ideals rarely exist in reality because the external forces that have shaped the city into what it is now continue to influence its form. In conservation practice there is a need for "a series of mediations between the economic and the aesthetic".²

The building at 60 Main Street was altered based on the needs of its occupants and demands of function. The stylistic choices were based on what was fashionable at the time of their renovation rather than any historical sensitivity. Prior to the emergence of conservation as a practice, buildings were adapted and altered as needed. While it is easy to look back at the previous iterations and condemn them for their lack of foresight, each renovation was an example of the changing times and values that were prominent in Galt at that time. While the architecture of the building itself is not an authentic representation of a 19th-Century building, it still contributes to the character of Main Street as a whole. It has value because it has settled into the landscape and surrounding area. Its conservation and careful rehabilitation allow this building and its layers of history to once again be a part of a place.

1. Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn*, (London: Verso, 1998), 164.

2. Jameson, *The Cultural Turn*, 164.



FIGURE 4.02
Layers - January 19, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.03
Layers - January 19, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.04
Main floor - February 6, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.05
Second floor - March 15, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.06
Leveling the second floor - May 30, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.07
Second floor - June 27, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.08
Moving a column - June 27, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.09
Interior view - June 27, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.10
Exterior wall assembly - September 18, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.11
Exterior view - September 18, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.12
Main floor - September 18, 2018.
Source: Author

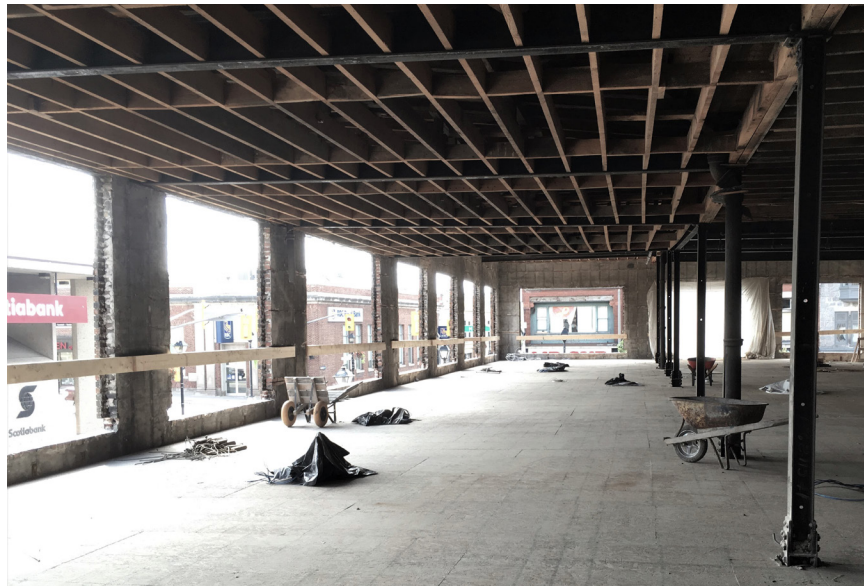


FIGURE 4.13
Second floor - September 18, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.14
Facade updates - October 24, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.15
Windows installed - November 29, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.16
Main floor - December 19, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.17
Second floor - December 19, 2018.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.18
Second floor updates - February 5, 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.19
Second floor updates - February 5, 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.20
Second floor finishes - May 2, 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.21
Second floor finishes - May 2, 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.22
Exterior view - May 22, 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.23
Exterior finishes - June 22, 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.24
Interior stairwell - July 16, 2019.
Source: Author



FIGURE 4.25
Interior views - July 16, 2019.
Source: Author

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