



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

Report #MHC-25-02

To: Municipal Heritage Committee

From: Karl Grenke, Manager of Development Services

Date: May 13, 2025

Re: Heritage Protection Options for Gallipeau Centre (Rideau Regional Centre)

Recommendation: THAT the Municipal Heritage Committee provide advice to Council as it relates to the specific attributes on the Gallipeau Centre property that merit municipal protection.

Background

The Ontario Heritage Act provides a variety of tools for municipalities, the Province and provincial agencies to recognize and protect buildings, districts and landscapes with cultural heritage value.

The former Rideau Regional Centre (now Gallipeau Centre) located at 361 Queen Street is the Town's largest private landholding, at about 342 acres. For decades, the complex, comprising about 74,000 square meters (roughly 800,000 square feet) served as a residential centre for the treatment and care of individuals with development disabilities until its phased closure in 2009. Now privately owned, the property has been subject to periodic and preliminary discussions regarding potential redevelopment of the complex and potentially the lands surrounding it. At present, the property is subject to a heritage conservation easement administered by the Ontario Heritage Trust that provides a framework to protect and commemorate the complex as a complete cultural landscape that acknowledges its institutional history and recognizes architectural attributes of many of the structures, as well as the unique and deliberate layout of the site, including its grand entrance road (the "allee") and the ring road that surrounds the built complex.

The Easement was established under Part II of the Ontario Heritage Act at the time of the conveyance of the property from provincial to private hands and comprises several binding requirements that are intended to guide development. While protections vary across the property depending on identified historical and architectural value, the overall objective is to manage the redevelopment in a way that maintains the integrity of the overall built landscape.

The Easement is held by the Ontario Heritage Trust and the Town is not a party to the Easement, nor does the Town enforce its provisions.

On October 7th, Town Council passed a resolution requesting that the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (under whom the Ontario Heritage Trust is an agency) remove the Easement from the title of the property. This resolution was passed to respond to concerns that have been raised that the provisions of the easement are overly restrictive to the adaptive re-use and economic viability of a redeveloped site. While the Heritage Trust has indicated an openness to working with proponents once a development concept is

advanced, the inherent lack of certainty in such a process has been seen to be a barrier to that first step and an encumbrance to potential future residential development.

On October 15th 2024 and January 2025, the MHC subsequently passed two resolutions recommending that any action to remove the easement be paused until Council considers adopting its own heritage protections on the property. These resolutions were conveyed to Council as communication items on their agenda and Council received these as information. To the best knowledge of staff, no formal action has been taken to date regarding the request of October 7th.

The Municipal Heritage Committee has requested that staff provide a report assessing the tools available under the Ontario Heritage Act and Planning Act to manage change and development on the property. In accordance with its mandate, the Municipal Heritage Committee may provide advice to Council regarding potential next steps.

The key question that Council will need to ask, which will inform what we do, is which attributes are worthy of heritage protection.

For the Committee's reference, Appendix A of this report includes the list of built heritage and landscape character defining elements that are identified in the Easement.

Ontario Heritage Act

Council's resolution does not preclude the Town from adopting its own protections under the parts of the Ontario Heritage Act that pertain to municipalities.

The property currently has no municipal heritage protection under Parts IV (individual designation) or V (conservation district) of the Ontario Heritage Act, and we do not have a record of any previous designation by-law under the Township of Montague, in which these lands were situated prior to its annexation by the Town at the time of sale. While Council *can* establish its own designation while an easement is in effect, we do not recommend it as potential duplication can cause confusion. The potential removal of the easement would have the effect of downloading the responsibility of heritage protection from the Province to Council, who can consider an individual property designation (Part IV) or district designation (Part V) under the Act.

An ***individual designation*** would likely be the easiest and quickest step that Council could take to meaningfully protect attributes on the property.

- It is important to note that a designation applies to the property, meaning that the heritage attributes and character defining elements do not need to be limited to a building.
- Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the Act identifies architectural, historical and contextual criteria that would need to be met for a property to be eligible for designation.
- A designation by-law must include a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property, which cannot be removed or altered unless approved by Council.
- Owner's authorization is not required under the Act for Council to designate a property, however our practice has usually been to obtain that consent before

bringing a by-law forward. The owner is notified in advance of the passage of the By-law and the owner can appeal a designation to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

The preparation of a designation by-law typically involves research to allow us to best understand the property and its significance, however in this case that work would be facilitated greatly by the work that went into the heritage easement and other documents and which would be transferable to a by-law.

Council may also pass a resolution **listing** a property on the Town's heritage register. Doing so puts a 60-day pause on approving an application to demolish a building on the property, however, does not provide the other binding protections that a designation by-law would have. A listed property must be designated within 2 years or else the listed property is removed from the register. This tool would best be used if the property was facing a threat of demolition and Council was interested in protecting the building and needed additional time to assemble a by-law.

A **district designation** for the entire property (or part of it) could be looked at in time, particularly if Council's priorities for protection extend beyond the buildings and towards the broader landscape such as viewsheds and the interplay between the allée, the ring road and future connecting streets. A conservation district (HCD) designation process follows two phases, as set out in the Heritage Act:

1. HCD Study assesses whether the site or part of it merits district designation (meeting the criteria set out in the Regulation), proposes district boundaries and identifies key attributes. The Regulation requires that at least 25% of properties in a proposed district satisfy at least two set criteria, however does not set a minimum number of properties to be included in a potential district.
2. HCD Plan and Guidelines sets out a framework to manage and guide future development.

An HCD is appropriate when the character defining elements of a neighborhood collectively exceed the sum of individual parts or properties. By virtue of this fact, the process for identifying and protecting a district would likely take far longer than that of an individual and scoped designation and would require technical assistance from a heritage consultant. At this stage where a future development concept and property layout is unknown, an HCD may be premature, however can be revisited in the future as a way to manage change.

Both a single property and a district designation would allow Council the ability to establish more flexible demolition or alteration allowances for buildings that are deemed to be of lesser ("non-contributing") value.

Additionally, Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act allows the Municipality to enter into a **voluntary easement** agreement with a property owner for the conservation of property of cultural heritage value or interest. Easement agreements set out requirements for maintaining a property or specific heritage features of a property. Easements can be flexible in scope and can be used in return for granting municipal planning approvals or exemptions such as density bonuses. They are registered on title and binding on future owners. This is unrelated to a Heritage Trust easement under Part II of the Act.

Ontario Planning Act

The Town's land use planning rules also provide for the protection and conservation of identified heritage resources. Broadly, land use planning follows the following hierarchy in Ontario.

***Provincial Planning Statement (PPS)** sets out provincial planning principles and expectations as it relates to land use and protection of matters of provincial interest. PPS requires conservation of "protected heritage property" which is now defined as properties designated under Part II (easement), Part IV and Part V of the Heritage Act. Municipal planning policy and land use decisions must be consistent with the PPS.*



***Town's Official Plan** is the primary policy document that articulates how Council wants to see the Town grow and develop. While it must be consistent with the PPS, it is customized to accommodate the Town's unique and specific situation. The current Official Plan includes several high-level policies specifically for the Gallipeau Centre property "in order to ensure the cultural heritage attributes of the site are conserved and potentially enhanced through redevelopment." Most of the vacant part of the site is in a "development reserve" which means that development cannot happen until a comprehensive study identifies the need. The Town is currently in the process of drafting a new Official Plan, which may look at establishing new development rules for the Gallipeau Centre property. The current Official Plan policy for the site broadly references the heritage attributes of the site and suggests that redevelopment should protect the established architectural style of the complex, the campus layout and frame lands.*



*The **Zoning By-law** implements the policies of the Official Plan and sets out specific land use rules governing what land uses can occur on a property, alongside performance standards such as parking, height and setbacks. Currently, a Development Permit By-law applies to the Gallipeau Centre property. A **Development Permit By-law** is an optional planning tool that replaces traditional zoning for this property only, however has the same function. While the By-law does not formally link to the Heritage Easement, it supports its intent through design criteria that are established in each zone that support the retention of the existing structures where possible and ensure new development is complementary to the built landscape of the area. Once the new Official Plan is approved, the Development Permit By-law would need to either be amended or replaced by traditional zoning in order to align with the policy.*

Stemming from the PPS, the strongest planning protections for heritage properties apply to those that have individual or district designations. Depending on the wording of the Plan, development, alterations or demolition would normally need to be supported by a Heritage Impact Study that assesses the impact of the development proposal and proposes treatment, mitigation or other recommendations to best protect or complement the heritage

features. The Study would be triggered by the designation (either on the property or if the proposal was adjacent a designated property) and normally submitted at the time of a development application. Like any other technical report, the Study would ultimately help inform Council's decision and any conditions arising from the development.

Official Plan policy can identify work that needs to be completed before a development, which can include engineering, environmental, economic or heritage related deliverables that can be implemented alongside development approvals. Planning policy can also build in phasing provisions.

It is anticipated that a draft of the new Official Plan will be ready for public consultation early this summer, and MHC will have the opportunity to provide comment.

Following adoption of the Official Plan, work will begin on a new Zoning By-law or Development Permit By-law to align our land use planning regulations with the Official Plan policies.

Concluding Comments

Heritage Act and Planning Act tools are not designed to be hierarchical to each other, rather they work best in tandem to protect what Council identifies as necessary to protect and manage change on a complex property. The Terms of Reference for the Municipal Heritage Committee empower the Committee to research or recommend the listing or designation of properties under the Heritage Act. To best define the process moving forward, staff suggest an initial step is the identification of the specific attributes that merit protection by the municipality, should the provincial easement be removed.

Respectfully Submitted:

Original Signed

Karl Grenke, RPP, MCIP

Manager of Development Services

Appendix A – Excerpt from Heritage Easement Agreement

SCHEDULE "B2"

HERITAGE CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES (HERITAGE FEATURES)

DESCRIPTION OF THE HERITAGE FEATURES

The Heritage Features of the Property referred to in the Agreement are comprised of the following elements:

- (a) the exteriors of the Buildings on the Property; and
- (b) the Selected Interiors of the Administration Building and Auditorium / Gymnasium.

The Heritage Features of the exteriors of the Buildings include, but are not limited to, the following highlighted elements:

The Administration Building

- Shape, form and massing
- Recessed Art Moderne main (south) entrance,
- Brick exterior walls with horizontal banding;
- Flat roof;
- Axial symmetry aligned with the Campus axis;
- Punched window patterns;
- Limestone detailing on the façade;
- Understated and stylized classically inspired square columns and in antis square pilasters;
- Flanking plinths on each side of the steps;
- "Ontario Hospital School" incised text on the entablature;
- Two sets of steps creating a sense of monumentality; and

The Gymnasium / Auditorium Building

- Brick exterior walls with horizontal banding;
- Broad and squat proportions;
- Flat roof;
- Axial symmetry aligned with the Campus axis;
- A series of large tall windows arranged in panes of 12 (east side);
- The 5 tall and large blind windows (west);
- The "main entrance" porch with 2 flanking supports clad in limestone (west); and
- Glazed entrance vestibule (west).

Medical or Clinical Building

- H-shaped plan with four flanking wings;
- Symmetrical institutional design;
- Brick exterior walls with horizontal banding;
- Flat roof;
- 4-storey height of main block with 2-storey side wings;
- Glass block windows (east side south of main wing and north window in surgery);
- Elongated semi-circular porch supported by two tapered concrete columns.

The Heritage Features of the Selected Interiors of the Administration Building and Auditorium / Gymnasium include, but are not limited to, the following highlighted elements:

Administration Building: Lobby and Vestibule

- Single open undivided space
- Elliptical floor plan
- Simple dichromatic patterned terrazzo floors;
- Marble-clad walls;
- Travertine baseboards;
- Elliptical ceiling relief; and
- Stainless steel wall-mounted clock;

Auditorium

- Single open undivided space;
- Stream-lined Art Moderne influenced decorative treatment of the ceiling from the south wall to the proscenium;
- The simple banded proscenium;
- Balcony;
- Acoustically banked walls to the sides of the stage;
- The thrust stage; and
- Four vertically proportioned blind windows on the west wall.

Gymnasium

- Single open undivided space;
- Rectangular windows;
- Brown-brick walls;
- Tiled half partition wall; and
- Bleachers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The provincially significant cultural heritage landscape is composed of three (3) zones:

1. **The Campus:** The Campus is the RRC institutional complex of interconnected buildings and associated open spaces, landscape and plantings located within the ring road and built during the third quarter of the 20th century. The Campus is oriented on a true north axis.
2. **The Glacis and Allée:** The simple groomed lawns that slope gently down and away from the Campus are evocative of a glacis seen in military architecture. This area includes limited but strategic tree plantings, some buildings, and structures as well as open spaces immediately surrounding the ring road. In addition for circulation reasons this area is associated with the 700-metre roadway and main allée both of which extend from Highway 43 (i.e. Queen Street) to the ring road and the Campus.
3. **The Framing Lands:** The Framing Lands is a set of visually and physically contiguous associated surrounding meadows and former farm fields with their natural and regenerating forested edges and perimeter screens that extend beyond the Glacis and main Allée. These lands and their trees form backdrops and designed screens for almost all views in and out of the Campus.

The Cultural Heritage Landscape Features of the Campus

The Cultural Heritage Landscape Features of the Campus include, but are not limited to, the following highlighted elements:

- Lawns, roads, walkways, parking areas, and gardens within the ring road;
- Open space and courtyards between the pavilion groups and buildings within the ring road;
- Plan and overall footprint of the complex of interconnected institutional buildings;
- The main axis, aligned to true north-south, that regulates the layout and organization of the main institutional buildings at the RRC;
- The interconnected design of the buildings linked through a 400-metre main north-south hallway and a series of 6 east-west cross halls;
- The brick exterior walls of the buildings that frame the open spaces;
- Major limestone elements framing the entrance and glass-block stairway window (since covered over) on the north and south ends of the pavilions;
- Fenestration patterns of the punched, ribbon, round and corner windows (location and size of rough openings but not actual windows)
- The flat roofs of all buildings;
- The low height and horizontal proportions of the buildings;
- The approximately 1.2-km circumference ring road that provides the elliptical boundary for the institutional campus;
- The siting of the Campus set back from the public right of way or adjacent lands;

The Cultural Heritage Landscape Features of the Glacis and Allée

The heritage features of the Glacis and Allée include, but are not limited to, the following highlighted elements:

- The large berm or earthen platform on which the RRC is built that rises approximately 2.5 metres above the surrounding lands;
- The sparsely landscaped lawns surrounding (i.e. outside) the ring road and the main allée;
- The raised 700-metre laneway which rises on a gentle slope and intersects the ring road on a north-east bearing;
- The allée that extends from Highway 43 (i.e. Queen Street) to the entrance of the RRC ring road.
- The Nurses' Residence or Independent Living Building; and
- The arc of conifers of approximately 200 metres in length planted northwest of the ring road beyond the main parking lot.

The Cultural Heritage Landscape Features of the Framing Lands

The heritage features of the Framing Lands include, but are not limited to, the following highlighted elements:

- Those adjacent meadows, visually and physically contiguous with the facility;
- The secondary allées on the east and west of the Allée south of the main RRC complex;
- Strategic plantings that frame views and obscure the RRC facility from the public right of way and adjacent properties including the plantings along the east-west watercourse south of the main complex.

:SF July 4, 2011