



Report
Staff Report
The Corporation of the City of Brampton
5/20/2025

Date: 2025-05-06

Subject: **Recommendation Report: Heritage Impact Assessment, 24 Alexander Street and Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges – Wards 1 & 3**

Contact: Tom Tran, Heritage Planner, Integrated City Planning

Report number: Planning, Bld & Growth Mgt-2025-411

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Tom Tran, Heritage Planner, Integrated City Planning, to the Brampton Heritage Board Meeting of February 18, 2024, re: **Recommendation Report: Heritage Impact Assessment, 24 Alexander Street and Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges – Wards 1 & 3** be received;
2. That the Heritage Impact Assessment, 24 Alexander Street and Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges dated May 2025 be deemed complete;
3. That the following recommendations per the Heritage Impact Assessment, 24 Alexander Street be received:
 - I. Based on the current design, the former Central Public School building at 24 Alexander Street remains outside of the construction limits and therefore no impacts will be made to the identified Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (CHVI) of the property;
4. That the following recommendations as per the Heritage Impact Assessment, Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges be received and followed:
 - I. The temporary removal of the stone cairn commemorating the construction of the original Channel is required due to anticipated impacts from the proposed construction. A conservation plan is recommended to address the temporary disassembly and relocation of the cairn.
 - II. It is recommended that a commemoration plan be developed for the Diversion Channel and the three associated bridges: the Church Street Bridge, the Scott Street Bridge, and the Queen Street Bridge. This plan should expand upon the plaque and text on the existing cairn structure and provide a meaningful interpretation of the historical and cultural significance of the Diversion Channel and the bridges. Consistent with the BHB and Council

- recommendations for 30 James Street in April 2025, the final commemoration plan for the Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges will also contribute towards a cohesive commemoration program throughout the Riverwalk project, linking the north and south ends of the Channel as part of the larger wayfinding and landscaping plan;
5. That the demolition and construction work on the Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges can proceed. The Conservation Plan for the cairn should be reviewed and accepted by Heritage Staff prior to its removal/relocation. Likewise, the Commemoration Plan for the Channel and Bridges should be accepted by Heritage Staff prior to the approval of the final landscaping plan for the project.

OVERVIEW:

- **24 Alexander Street and Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel are listed properties in the Municipal Register. The three Bridges (Scott, Church and Queen Street bridges) are neither listed nor designated heritage properties.**
- **The requirement for the heritage evaluation of the three structures was included in the Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (CHAR) prepared by AECOM in 2020. The Heritage Impact Assessment Reports for these properties were provided to the City in May 2025. Along with the HIA on 30 James previously presented to the BHB in February and adopted by Council in April, these reports complete the required heritage assessment component for the Downtown Brampton Flood Protection Project.**
- **The former Central Public School at 24 Alexander Street is identified to meet eight criteria under Ontario Reg. 9/06. The proposed construction activities associated with the Downtown Flood Protection Project will have no impact on the identified Cultural Heritage Values for the property.**
- **The new, widened and deepened channel will be constructed of concrete like the existing. Removal and replacement of the concrete lining is not considered an adverse impact to the channel's CHVI. However, as the stone cairn is identified as a heritage attribute of the Channel, its removal is considered an adverse impact to the CHVI.**
- **Each of the three Bridges meets two criteria under Ontario Reg. 9/06. These are Criteria 7 and 8 that address the contextual value for the bridges. As the proposed replacement of the bridges will require their permanent removal, there will be direct adverse impacts to the CHVI of the heritage resources.**
- **The HIA recommended a commemoration plan be developed for the Diversion Channel and the three associated bridges. In addition, a**

conservation plan is recommended to address the temporary removal and storage of the cairn.

- **The HIAs are deemed complete per the City’s Terms of Reference.**

BACKGROUND:

The Downtown Brampton Flood Protection (DBFP) project is part of Riverwalk and focuses on ways to eliminate and reduce flooding from the Etobicoke Creek during extreme storms. Riverwalk is an important initiative to revitalize downtown Brampton and unlock its economic and development potential. The initiative will provide long-term flood protection along the Etobicoke Creek; while significantly expanding the access to the public spaces and amenities within the existing park spaces as well as improving connectivity with downtown and beyond, this includes works to support naturalization along the stream course enhancing residents to access natural spaces.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) for the DBFP Project was undertaken in 2020. As a part of the EA, a Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (CHAR) was completed by AECOM to identify potential heritage resources adjacent to or within the Study Area and determine preliminary impacts. Six resources determined to have CHVI were at risk of being directly impacted by the project, these are: 30 James Street, the former Central Public School, the Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and the three Channel Bridges. The CHAR recommended that Heritage Impact Assessments be completed for these properties.

The HIA for 30 James was presented to the BHB in February and its recommendations were approved by Council on April 22nd, 2025 which speaks to the need of a cohesive commemoration strategy that considers the Riverwalk project as a whole:

“IV. That the commemoration strategy celebrates the cultural heritage significance of 30 James Street as well as the evolution of the Etobicoke Creek flood diversion channel and its wider influence on downtown Brampton.

VI. That the commemoration strategy incorporate a memorial and other physical or landscaping features that will complement and enrich the Riverwalk project for the enjoyment and benefit of the future generation and community.”

Subsequently, the HIAs for 24 Alexander Street, the Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and the three channel Bridges were submitted to the City on May 2nd, 2025.

Property Location

Former Central Public School - 24 Alexander Street

The former Central Public School at 24 Alexander Street is currently owned and maintained by the City of Brampton. The property is located in Downtown Brampton on

the north side of Alexander Street at the corner where Alexander Street becomes Union Street. The nearest intersection is Main Street North and Alexander Street to the southwest. The north portion of the Subject Property consists of the 4.8 acres of the school yard which includes two gravel baseball diamonds, and a large, grassy field. The school yard overlooks Ken Williams Drive and the Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel on the north side. The surrounding context of the Subject Property is residential and consists of late 19th and early 20th century, one-and-a-half to two-storey detached houses in varying architectural styles. It is located in Ward 5 and Secondary Plan Area 7 of the Downtown Brampton Secondary Plan.

Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and three Bridges

The Study Area of the DFBP project encompasses the Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and the Scott Street, Church Street and Queen Street bridges. The Area is located in Downtown Brampton south of the intersection of Scott and Nelson Streets, north of Rosalea Park and the south side of Scott Street. To the southeast of the Area is the end of the concrete diversion channel and the continuation of naturalized Etobicoke Creek surrounded by woodlot, along with the Etobicoke Creek Recreational Trail. The general context of the area is predominantly residential and consists of late 19th century and early 20th century residences, with modern commercial infill at the intersection of Scott and Queen Streets.

CURRENT SITUATION:

CHVI of the structures

Former Central Public School - 24 Alexander Street

24 Alexander Street is a two-storey, brick-clad, Edwardian Classical school building built in 1916. This is identified on a date-stone on the main elevation. A one-storey rear addition was constructed in 1967. The former Central Public School is located near the southeast portion of the property lot and is set back from Alexander Street. The CHER completed as part of the 2025 HIA by AECOM identified that it meets **eight criteria of O. Reg 9/06** for design/physical, historical/associative and contextual:

Per the cultural heritage evaluation, the building has the following characteristics:

“The building features traits commonly seen in Edwardian-Classical structures such as a balanced, symmetrical bay façade. Additional features typical of the architectural style include a stylized, stone frontispiece, jack-arched brick lintels or brick voussoirs with white keystones, the building’s use of fixed-pane windows styled like sash windows and dropped cornice. It displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit through its stylized stone frontispiece and date stone on the south elevation. The building has historical value as Brampton’s first primary grammar school and as its second public-owned school, having first opened in 1856. While the original 1856 school building has

since been demolished, the current Edwardian-Classical building is still connected to the identity of the original school. The school was also noted to be Brampton's longest-running primary school prior to its closure in 1983. It is reflective of the work of James Augustus Ellis, a well-known Toronto architect who, throughout his lifetime, designed over 170 buildings throughout Ontario and in parts of Western Canada. The property also has visual and historical links to its surroundings and is a local landmark."

24 Alexander is currently included on Brampton's Heritage Register as a Listed property. On December 9, 2024, it was included in the Initial List of Properties Recommended for Designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as part of the City's response to the requirements of Bill 23, *The More Homes Built Faster Act*.

Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel

The Diversion Channel is approximately 600m in length and commences upstream of the Church Street Bridge and extends southward, downstream beyond the CN rail crossing to the south of Queen Street. It has a concrete base that slopes towards the low flow channel. The cairn commemorating its construction is located at the southeast corner of Scott and Church Streets, near the northeast parapet of the Church Street Bridge. It is constructed of rusticated concrete block with a pyramid capstone and features plaques on both its north and west sides. The property was listed on the Brampton Heritage Register in 2006 with the following statement of cultural significance:

"Following the 1948 flood the Etobicoke Conservation Authority proposed that the Etobicoke Creek be straightened and diverted out of the immediate downtown core. The ambitious plan called for the construction of a massive concrete channel to be used to funnel water away from downtown and prevent future flooding. The ambitious civil engineering project was touted by The Brampton Conservator newspaper as the 'first of its kind ever undertaken in Canada'. Approximately 30,000 yards of soil and 500 tons of rock and shale were removed for the channel. More than 500,000 pounds of reinforcing steel and 46,000 bags of cement were used in its construction. The project was planned and supervised by Dr. Ross Lord, a mechanical engineer with the University of Toronto. The engineering firm on the project was James MacLaren and Associates of Toronto. The main contractors were Armstrong Brothers Construction of Brampton. The opening ceremony for the channel and stone cairn was officiated by Premier Leslie Frost on July 5, 1952."

Church Street, Scott Street and Queen Street bridges

Church Street, Scott Street and Queen Street Bridges are single-span concrete rigid-frame bridges constructed in 1951, serving as Channel crossing corridors for traffic and pedestrians. All three bridges have been heavily altered from their original design. Although neither listed nor designated heritage resources, they are identified as having potential cultural heritage value in the 2020 CHAR report and were evaluated in the

current CHER as meeting **two criteria of O. Reg 9/06** for their contextual value. This means they have Cultural Heritage Value or Interest per Part IV of the Heritage Act.

As noted in the CHER evaluation:

“The bridges are physical, functional, visual and historical link to their surroundings, particularly the Etobicoke Creek Diversion channel. Since their construction, the bridges have remained in their original location, maintaining their physical and visual connection to the channel through their shared concrete construction. The bridges were constructed to support the function of the diversion channel, which has shaped the development and character of Downtown Brampton for over fifty years.”

Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

For 24 Alexander, the proposal includes the partial removal of the property’s rear sports field to accommodate the hydraulic requirements of the new channel. It will not directly impact the CHVI and heritage attributes of the property. This being the case, no mitigation is required.

For the Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel, the HIA notes that the proposed Channel reconstruction will be done with like materials in the same location, albeit with modified dimensions and side slopes. This being the case, the heritage integrity of the Channel will not be affected.

The HIA considers the direct impacts on the following heritage attributes/resources:

1. Direct impact from the temporary removal of the Cairn which is a heritage attribute of the Diversion Channel:

A heritage conservation plan is recommended to address the removal and storage of the Cairn until such a time when it can be incorporated into a new commemoration plan.

2. Direct impact from the removal and replacement of the three Bridges:

A commemoration plan should be developed for the Diversion Channel and the three associated bridges: the Church Street Bridge, the Scott Street Bridge, and the Queen Street Bridge to address their historical and cultural significance.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

None

Other Implications:

None

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

The approval of the Cultural Heritage Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment noted within this report supports the Culture & Diversity and Growing Urban Centres & Neighbourhood Focus Area. The recommendations therein facilitate a key flood protection plan to enhance Brampton's downtown revitalization and develop the public realm along Etobicoke Creek to create a downtown destination and identity. It also creates opportunities for the commemoration of important heritage resources that contribute to the understanding of Brampton's history.

CONCLUSION:

It is recommended that the Heritage Impact Assessment, 24 Alexander Street and Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges, be received by the Brampton Heritage Board as being complete.

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Heritage Impact Assessment for 24 Alexander Street
- Attachment 2 – Heritage Impact Assessment for Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges
- Attachment 3 – Highlights of HIA for 24 Alexander and Etobicoke Creek Diversion Channel and Bridges