

Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District Plan and By-law Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is the Town doing this? Why are we changing the Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District Plan and By-law?

The Town wants to make simpler rules for taking care of Old Town Lunenburg. We made a new plan and rules for Old Town Lunenburg that focus on why it is important and how to protect it. We are updating the current rules to focus on what makes Old Town special and making sure any changes residents or businesses make do not negatively affect its character. This includes changing buildings and streets that already exist and new development.

Q: What is the Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District's Boundary?

The boundary is the same as the current boundary with one notable exception: some Creighton Street homes have been added to the district on the north side of Creighton Street in the east, heading towards Blockhouse Hill.

The differences between the current and proposed Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District Plan and By-law are explained in a table at the bottom of this document.

Q: What are the differences between the buffer and transition area?

Old Town Lunenburg has a World Heritage Buffer Zone put in place by the World Heritage Committee in 2017. The purpose of a World Heritage Buffer Zone is to ensure the preservation of a site's Outstanding Universal Value by preventing or minimizing any negative impacts that may arise in the surrounding area. The Town reports activity in the World Heritage Buffer Zone to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Committee through Parks Canada. Adopting a new Heritage Plan and By-law would not change the World Heritage Buffer Zone. The Town's reporting to Parks Canada will remain the same.

For Parks Canada's response to our new Heritage Plan and By-law, please see the [February 27, 2024, Council Agenda – page 38](#).

The Transition Area includes parts of the Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District that are outside the Old Town Lunenburg World Heritage Site. This includes some of the World Heritage Buffer Zone. Historic properties (character-defining or locally significant structures) in the Transition Area will be regulated under conservation guidelines. Non-historic properties (supporting structures) and new development in the Transition Area will be regulated under design guidelines.

Every single property in the Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District is now classified as either *character defining* or *supporting*. *Character defining* means there are more rules about what can be done to the property because it is important to Old Town's architectural history. You can find out if your property is supporting or character defining by checking the table of properties on page 28 of the draft Plan and By-law here: <https://townoflunenburg.ca/conservation-district-and-by-laws.html>

Q: How is this plan different from what is already in place?

At the end of this document, there is a table that shows the main ways the old and new rules are alike and different. It is there to help you check things quickly. But it does not cover everything. You should look at the full Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District Plan and By-law to do a thorough check yourself.

Q: It feels like this has been in the works for a long time. Have any changes been made to the draft?

Yes, changes have been made since the draft was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Committee. This includes:

- Changing the boundary of the heritage conservation district to match the boundary already in place. The current draft does not make the district any bigger, except for adding some homes on Creighton Street to the district.
- Now, when designing new buildings in Old Town, you can get ideas from historic buildings not just on your block, but also on nearby blocks. This means you can look at a wider area for inspiration. For instance, if you are building a house in Old Town, you can take inspiration from historic houses on the block behind you, in front of you, and even on the block diagonal to you, instead of just those on your own block.
- The rules for the Transition Area have been changed to include the city-like feel of Old Town compared to its surroundings. Adding this detail to the guidelines gives the Heritage Officer clearer instructions and more authority to decide if this aspect of the area fits well and should be approved. more power to think about this aspect of the area when deciding if something fits in well and should be approved.

Q: How was the decision made for which structures were character-defining?

Buildings are character-defining or locally significant if they add to the heritage of Lunenburg. Some buildings are important because they fit into the old plan of the town. Most of them show the traditional style of building in Lunenburg. Some buildings, like the Heritage Bandstand or old banks, are important because they are part of Lunenburg's story. All of these are protected by the new rules for preserving Old Town Lunenburg. Each building was looked at by the Brighter Communities team. If a building does not speak to Lunenburg's history, it is called a supporting building. These buildings follow different rules for how they can be changed.

Q: What requirements will there be for development on Blockhouse Hill to respect the district's heritage under the new Plan and By-law?

Part of Blockhouse Hill, including Sylvia Park, is in the Transition Area of the draft Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District Plan and By-law. This does not, however, prohibit development on these lands. The provincial *Heritage Property Act* says heritage conservation district designation can not prohibit all development on a lot. It is impossible to conserve empty space untouched in perpetuity using a heritage conservation district designation. For instance, when UNESCO defined the buffer zone

in 2017, it was aware that much of that land was zoned for development – and could be developed after creating the zone.

Q: I bought a house with vinyl siding. Can I keep it?

Yes you can keep it. You just can not replace more than twenty percent of it with new vinyl siding. With the new plan, wooden clapboard or shingles must be used when replacing more than twenty percent of any exterior wall covering. All new residential and commercial buildings must have wooden clapboards or shingle siding. A new civic building may be built of brick or stone. Preferably, all new marine-industrial buildings will be clad in wood shingles or clapboard. However, new cladding materials are permitted for new buildings in the Waterfront Area that do not front on Bluenose Drive. Composite siding and wood lookalikes are not allowed.

Q: It's very expensive to paint my house every seven years. Why should I have to pay out of my own pocket to maintain some kind of heritage status?

Maintaining the heritage status of Old Town Lunenburg is not just about preserving the appearance of individual properties, but about safeguarding a cherished piece of our collective history and identity. While it may seem burdensome to bear the cost of regular maintenance such as painting every seven years, it is important to recognize the personal and broader benefits that come with preserving our heritage.

Firstly, being designated as a World Heritage Site brings prestige and recognition to our town, attracting tourists and bolstering our local economy. The well-preserved historic character of Old Town Lunenburg is a major draw for visitors, contributing to the vitality of businesses and creating job opportunities.

While it may require financial commitment from property owners, it is essential to view work like painting as an investment in the long-term sustainability and prosperity of your home and our community. Maintaining our homes keeps them safe, makes them last longer, and keeps building waste out of landfills. Regular maintenance can save you from needing more major and more costly repairs down the road.

Additionally, maintaining the integrity of our heritage buildings ensures that future generations can continue to appreciate and learn from our rich cultural heritage. By investing in the upkeep of these properties, we are passing down a legacy that connects us to the past and shapes the future. Ultimately, by preserving the unique character of Old Town Lunenburg, we not only enhance our quality of life today but also leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Q: Can I install a heat pump at my house?

Of course. You just have to make sure that, like other machines, you do not put the heat pump on the front or main side of the building. If people can see the heat pump from the street or sidewalk, you need to cover it up with something like a fence, garden trellis, small building, or tall plants that stay green all year. Also, if the pipes for the heat pump are outside, they must be painted the same color as the building.

Q: Will subdivision be allowed in Old Town under the new regulations?

Yes. The draft Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation Plan and By-law do not affect whether you can subdivide a property. Subdividing property is handled under the Town's Subdivision By-law, which is available here: <https://townoflunenburg.ca/strategy-and-by-laws.html>.

Q: Will this affect my taxes?

No, the Heritage Conservation District Plan and By-law do not affect tax rates. Your taxes will not change if the Plan and By-law are adopted.

We know heritage conservation is complex and it can be hard to understand how this new Plan and By-law might affect you and the community. We are here to help! If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to email heritagedev@townoflunenburg.ca, call Town Hall at 902-634-4410 or drop in to make an appointment.

Existing	Draft
Strengthened and new provisions	
Absent	New statement of significance for Old Town Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District.
Absent	New guidelines on maintenance and repair.
1.1 New buildings constructed within the old town heritage conservation district shall be compatible with nearby, substantially intact, pre-1940 buildings	Clarification on what properties contribute to the district's heritage value (character-defining), which are supporting, and which are locally significant. New statements of significance for civic and ecclesiastic character-defining structures. New definitions of compatible and distinguishable.
3.1.4 Commercial Buildings, under Form Other Forms includes Lunenburg's two historic bank buildings.	Lunenburg's two historic banks are categorized as locally significant and cannot be referenced to

	inspire new commercial construction. This is because they are not vernacular structures.
<p>1.1 New buildings constructed within the Old Town Heritage Conservation District shall be compatible with nearby, substantially intact, pre-1940 buildings</p>	<p>New structures must be physically, visually, and stylistically compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the district's character-defining structures. Proposals for new structures that are incompatible, dominating, and indistinguishable from the district's character-defining structures and the heritage value of the district are not permitted. New buildings in the district must be compatible with Lunenburg's character-defining structures of the same type, whether civic, commercial, residential, or marine-industrial. Specific guidelines are provided for each new building type. For example, new civic buildings must be physically, visually, and stylistically compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the district's character-defining structures upon close inspection. Here, distinguishable upon close inspection means recognizable by a trained professional, such as an architect or architectural historian, as distinct from surrounding character-defining structures from the nearest street intersection (Section 2.1.1).</p>
<p>Absent</p>	<p>Additions to Character-Defining Structures – Rooftop Decks are prohibited on principal roofs.</p>
<p>8.1 Permitted fence types – include wooden post and iron pipe fences</p>	<p>6.1 (Guidelines) Fences – wooden post and iron rail fences are no longer permitted.</p>
<p>Absent</p>	<p>6.2 (Guidelines) Retaining Walls – ideally, retaining walls should not distract from surrounding character-defining buildings and should be less than 1.2 meters (4 feet) in height. Using soft landscaping to screen retaining walls is strongly encouraged. Gabion walls are prohibited within the district. Boulder, wooden planks, and wooden timber are preferred. Taller retaining walls are discouraged but are allowed within the district to ensure public safety, accessibility, and the longevity of existing buildings.</p>

Outbuildings – Need for a Certificate of Appropriateness is determined by size. No provision against prefabricated structures.

6.0 Outbuildings and Accessory structures – new outbuildings of more than 80 sq. Ft. Ground floor area requires a certificate of appropriateness and shall be designed in a style similar or complementary to that of the primary building with which they are visually associated. This can be most easily accomplished through a similarity of roof pitch, window design, and exterior cladding materials. Similarity of paint colour can also help to integrate an outbuilding with the primary building. New outbuildings shall be clad in wooden clapboards, wooden shingles, or wooden board and batten siding. Vinyl and aluminum siding shall not be permitted. New outbuildings with a ground floor area of 80 sq. Ft. or less are regarded as minor structures for which no certificate of appropriateness shall be required, in accordance with section 3.2 of the conservation by-law, but such structures should preferably be of a design similar or complementary to the primary building. Prefabricated metal or plastic storage sheds are discouraged.

7.19 Alterations to Outbuildings - Applications for alterations to outbuildings shall be guided by this section (section 7.0) while recognizing that outbuilding architecture is utilitarian rather than formal and that the guidelines will need to be applied with flexibility. Generally, outbuildings may be added to or altered in a manner consistent with their existing style and materials, and subject to the basic requirements for compatibility of materials (wooden cladding) and maximum floor area and height (750 sq.ft. And 22 ft. Respectively, as established under the land use by-law).

Absent

Outbuildings – Need for a certificate of appropriateness is not determined by size. Prefabricated metal and plastic sheds are prohibited outside the waterfront area.

6.3 (Guidelines) Outbuildings

- All outbuildings, including but not limited to sheds and garages, must be physically, visually, and stylistically compatible with and subordinate to the property's main building.
- Outbuildings must be stylistically coherent with the main building. This can most easily be accomplished by incorporating similar roof types and pitches, window designs, exterior cladding materials, colour, and architectural detailing.
- New outbuildings in all areas except the waterfront must be clad in wooden clapboard or shingles or otherwise match the cladding present on the existing main building. Materials other than wood are permitted for windows, doors, and roofs.
- Prefabricated metal or plastic storage sheds are prohibited outside the waterfront area.

The following do not require a certificate of appropriateness:

- Pet houses and children's play structures;
- Canvas and plastic tarp buildings on lots directly abutting Lunenburg's harbour located in the marine industrial (MI) zone, subject to the requirements of the land use by-law, for the enclosure of ships, vessels and other marine-related equipment and accessory components; and
- Temporary structures erected for temporary use pursuant to the Town's Land Use By-law.

6.6 (Guidelines) Solar Panels and Alternative Energy Generation Mechanisms – solar panels

	<p>and other green technology improve sustainability and are encouraged within the district. Four roof-mounted solar panels are permitted and more may be approved.</p>
<p>2.10 Windows – ...squarer proportions may be appropriate in some circumstances, particularly on houses modelled on early 20th century styles.</p>	<p>2.3.3, 5.3.3, 5.5.3 Windows and Doors – Square or horizontally orientated are only permitted on non-principal façades to accommodate internal functions such as kitchens and bathrooms.</p>
<p>2.16 Roofs and Chimneys – Metal roofing should not be used in new houses unless it has a dark or medium-toned paint finish, i.e., without exposed metal.</p>	<p>2.2.5, 2.3.5 Materials – Shingles, especially traditional wooden shingles, are favoured for roofs. However, any material is permissible, including metal roofs, if it does not detract from character-defining structures on the same block as the new commercial building. Dark colours are preferred. Bare metal is prohibited. Metal roof slopes within an edge within 1.5 metres (5 feet) of a public right-of-way must have snow guards. Corrugated metal roofs are prohibited.</p>
<p>Absent</p>	<p>One of the reasons Old Town Lunenburg is designated a National Historic Site and listed as a World Heritage Site is it is an exceptional example of a culture based on, and an urban community designed for, marine activities. Maintaining this culture is essential, and nowhere is this more paramount than in the Waterfront Area. Development in this area must balance preserving the historical evidence of Lunenburg's long cultural ties to the sea, particularly maritime character-defining structures, and allowing the working waterfront to thrive.</p> <p>2.4 New Marine-Industrial Construction – New marine-industrial construction should support Lunenburg's ongoing marine culture.</p> <p>5.7 Additions to Marine-Industrial Character-Defining Buildings – Restoring missing features that support traditional practices is encouraged.</p> <p>5.8 Alterations to Marine-Industrial Character-Defining Buildings – Greater leniency may be</p>

	provided in altering character-defining marine industrial structures if it allows for the continuation or return of traditional marine-industrial functions to the Waterfront Area.
Absent	1.5, 2.2, 2.3, and 5 Documentation – New construction and interventions on existing properties should be assiduously documented.
Section 1.0 (By-law) – Eleven definitions	Appendix I – Fifty-Two definitions, including new definitions of, for example, vernacular, neo-vernacular, compatible and distinguishable. These concepts are crucial to conserving Old Town Lunenburg.
Weakened provisions or eliminated provisions	
<p>4.8 (By-law) Types of development requiring public hearing –</p> <p>.1 demolition of removal of any pre-1940 building or any post-1940 building subject to demolition control identified on Schedule A, Heritage Conservation District Map;</p> <p>.2 new residential buildings containing three or more dwelling units;</p> <p>.3 new commercial, industrial, institutional or public buildings</p>	<p>8.1 (By-law) Developments Requiring a Public Hearing –</p> <p>(a) Applications to demolish or remove a character-defining or locally significant structure.</p>
<p>4.5 Wharves – Old wharves constructed of wooden pilings are an important component of the historic character of the old town waterfront. New wharves constructed in this setting should preferably be built using traditional methods. Where more modern methods are used, e.g. Reinforced concrete, then the new wharf should be faced with wooden materials so as to fit in visually with surrounding older established wharfs</p>	Absent
<p>4.4 Materials – New waterfront buildings shall preferably be clad in wooden shingles or wooden</p>	<p>2.4 New Marine-Industrial Construction – Preferably, all new marine-industrial buildings will</p>

board siding, on traditional models. Steel siding may be appropriate provided that it is painted or factory finished. Exposed concrete or concrete block is considered incompatible with the Old Town waterfront industrial building tradition and is strongly discouraged. However, fibre-cement board cladding may be appropriate where it replicates the appearance of traditional wooden siding. Vinyl and aluminum siding shall not be permitted.

be clad in wood shingles or clapboard. However, new cladding materials are permitted for new buildings in the Waterfront Area that do not front on Bluenose Drive.

7.18 Alterations to waterfront industrial buildings – alterations to waterfront industrial buildings shall be guided by section 4.1 (guidelines for new waterfront buildings), section 7.1 (guidelines for alterations to exterior surface materials). Essentially, additions and alterations to existing waterfront buildings are freely permitted provided that they fit with the existing form and character of the building and satisfy the basic requirements for compatibility of materials (wooden cladding) and maximum height (45 ft. As established under the land use by-law)

5.8 Alterations to Marine-Industrial Character-Defining Building – Every effort must be made to preserve historic fabric through maintenance, repair, and replacement in kind. Altering historical material on the exterior of character-defining structures should be avoided whenever possible. However, greater leniency may be provided in altering character-defining marine industrial structures if it allows for the continuation or return of traditional marine-industrial functions to the Waterfront Area.

Illustrations – Throughout document

Absent. However, staff intend to produce an illustrated version for residents.