



Seaforth

HERITAGE CONSERVATION
DISTRICT PLAN

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RESEARCH
for a
HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PLAN
for
MAIN STREET, SEAFORTH

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide the background research for a heritage conservation district plan for the town of Seaforth. The district comprises the main downtown business section of Seaforth which is distinguished by one of the finest late nineteenth century commercial streetscapes in Ontario. The research analyzes the physical, economic and social fabric of the district all of which have a direct bearing on its future well-being.

Much research has already been compiled on the town and the authors wish to acknowledge the excellent technical background study prepared by the Huron County Planning Department for the Seaforth Official Plan Review. This study has been an invaluable resource base for the heritage conservation district plan and considerable reference is made to it.

Main Street looking south
c. 1880





Main Street in Seaforth is one of the finest late nineteenth century streetscapes in Ontario. This picture shows well the variety of architectural composition consisting mainly of uniform commercial blocks with a marvellous roofscape of towers. There is that rare combination of order and spontaneity.

THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

The research for this heritage conservation district plan has analyzed in a comprehensive manner the physical, social and economic characteristics of Main Street in Seaforth. As well extensive interviews have been conducted with merchants and their staff in the business area and with other interested parties. From this research has emerged a distinct pattern of response, some of which is encouraging and some disquietening. The intent of this section is to summarize in brief the main findings and recommendations.

The long term preservation of the superb historic building stock on Main Street in Seaforth is not assured if present trends prevail. At present a substantial number of the buildings are vacant, especially on the second floor, and the profit incentive to repair and maintain is limited. Up until quite recently the image of late Victorian building was considered regressive and as a consequence much essential historic decoration has been removed from the front facades. Interior remodelling has damaged the exterior proportions of many of the second floor vertically proportioned windows. Store fronts have been significantly changed and their original heritage qualities lost. Simple maintenance and repairs to the historic building stock is woefully inadequate as evidenced by peeling paint and deteriorating fabric. The rear of the commercial blocks alternate from well kept to generally ill-kept. There is, amongst a good number of the merchants, a deep concern in regard to the future of their business area.

The foregoing are the disquietening findings of the research and interviews and the seriousness of the problem should not be glossed over. If the present trends continue the long term conservation of the district is threatened. The basic fact is that conservation depends in great measure upon the economic well-being of the business area and a full profitable use of the building stock. To be sure grants and financial aid can be secured to assist in the repair of the exterior facades but this is only superficial and short term if the building stock is largely vacant and unprofitable to maintain and use. Evidence of this unprofitability is apparent and at present much of the district is living on borrowed time.

On the positive side there is an overwhelming desire to conserve

and restore the historic fabric of Main Street. Through extensive interviews with the merchants, their staff and interested groups much pride was expressed in the business area which was considered superior to most. Even though considerable anxiety was voiced regarding the growing number of empty stores and unknown long term economic future of Seaforth, almost all interviewees desired to see Main Street preserved and beautified. Most believed the business area worked well although attention should be given to improved off-street car parking, the removal of car parking meters and the erection of a sign on the highway indicating the business area. Landscaping as a means to beautify Main Street was suggested frequently. The most encouraging response was simply the belief that the district is a special place worthy of special treatment.

Conservation of Main Street in Seaforth to be effective must include many different but mutually supportive actions. Simply to address the ways and means of conserving the historic building stock is insufficient. Enunciation of noble goals is one thing; to see the goals achieved quite another. What then should be the main goals to achieve in this plan? They may be grouped into the following areas of activity.

- Economic Rejuvenation
- Building Preservation and Restoration
- Beautification

1. ECONOMIC REJUVENATION

Sound conservation depends upon a profitable and full use of the building stock. Without these basic and essential ingredients little effective and long conservation will occur. On Main Street a large proportion of the historic buildings are vacant and a growing number of stores are closing down. Confidence amongst the business community is unsteady. Economic rejuvenation is therefore crucial if this plan is really to be effective. Short term facelifts can be achieved with government assistance but this does not ensure long term prosperity and economic stability.

How then can economic rejuvenation occur? Frequently economic rejuvenation conjures up images of a new industry, a new tourist attraction or some other grand panacea that will overnight resolve all problems. Such images often remain just so - images. However a main drawback of this approach is that it tends to preclude all the attributes the district has now; attributes

moreover that the local community which by its closeness, becomes blinded to. Dr. Richardson perceptively wrote that "a small community has three basic assets usually lacking in the city: a sense of human scale in both buildings and business, a sense of place and history and a sense of personal contact". These are very valuable assets which Seaforth has and which should form the basis of a plan of economic rejuvenation. It is above all these assets that are distinctly Seaforth and undoubtedly underlie a desire of the merchants, their staff and other interested parties to preserve and strengthen the business area. The desire is above all to preserve a particular way of life. A plan of economic rejuvenation should therefore build on this human scale and the sense of place, history, & personal contact. It is unlikely that Seaforth will greatly expand its trade area so the need to preserve and strengthen what is, is paramount.

A plan of economic rejuvenation must necessarily crystalize a vision of what the community and its main street are about. Like the loss of appreciation of what the assets of a small community are, this vision of a small community has to some extent been lost also. The last twenty years has visibly seen many small communities attempt to shed the image of their smallness and all that that may mean and emulate the larger city. Hence there has been an introduction of the hard edged gloss of signs, lights and synthetic building materials to give an appearance of modernity. Ironically the very personable qualities and image of small communities such as Seaforth, are now being introduced into large city shopping plazas by way of rustic finishes and countrified names.

A clear vision of the heritage conservation district is essential particularly now when that vision has become so confused and non-productive in terms of the economic well being of the businesses.

To emulate the large city image is folly and wasteful. An important part of the plan of economic rejuvenation is coming to terms with what the main street is and what it can offer better than most. Without being overly repetitive Dr. Richardson's perception that the district can provide a sense of human scale in buildings and business, a sense of place and history and a sense of personal contact is much to work on. The plan must now market these qualities to economic advantage.

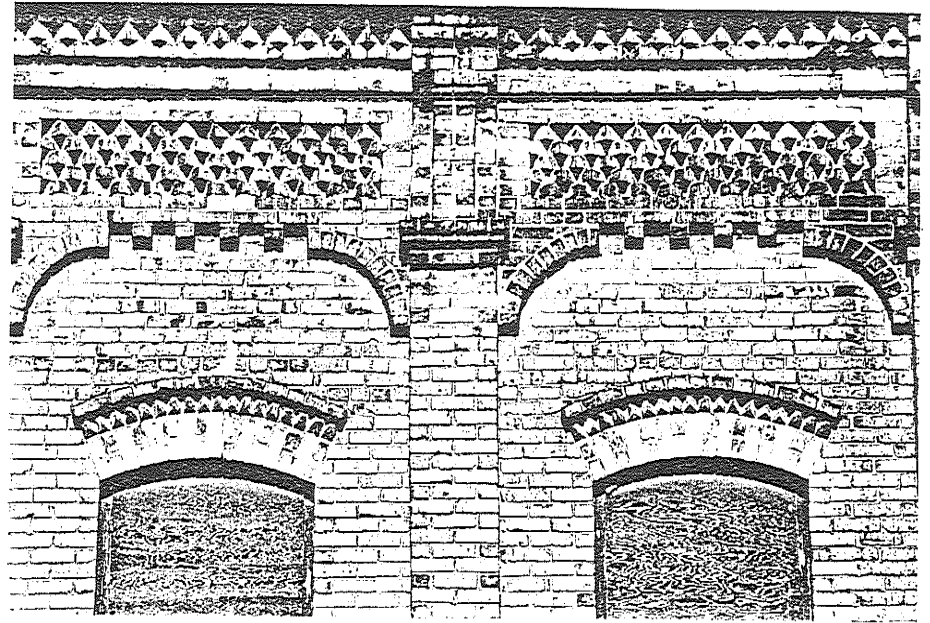
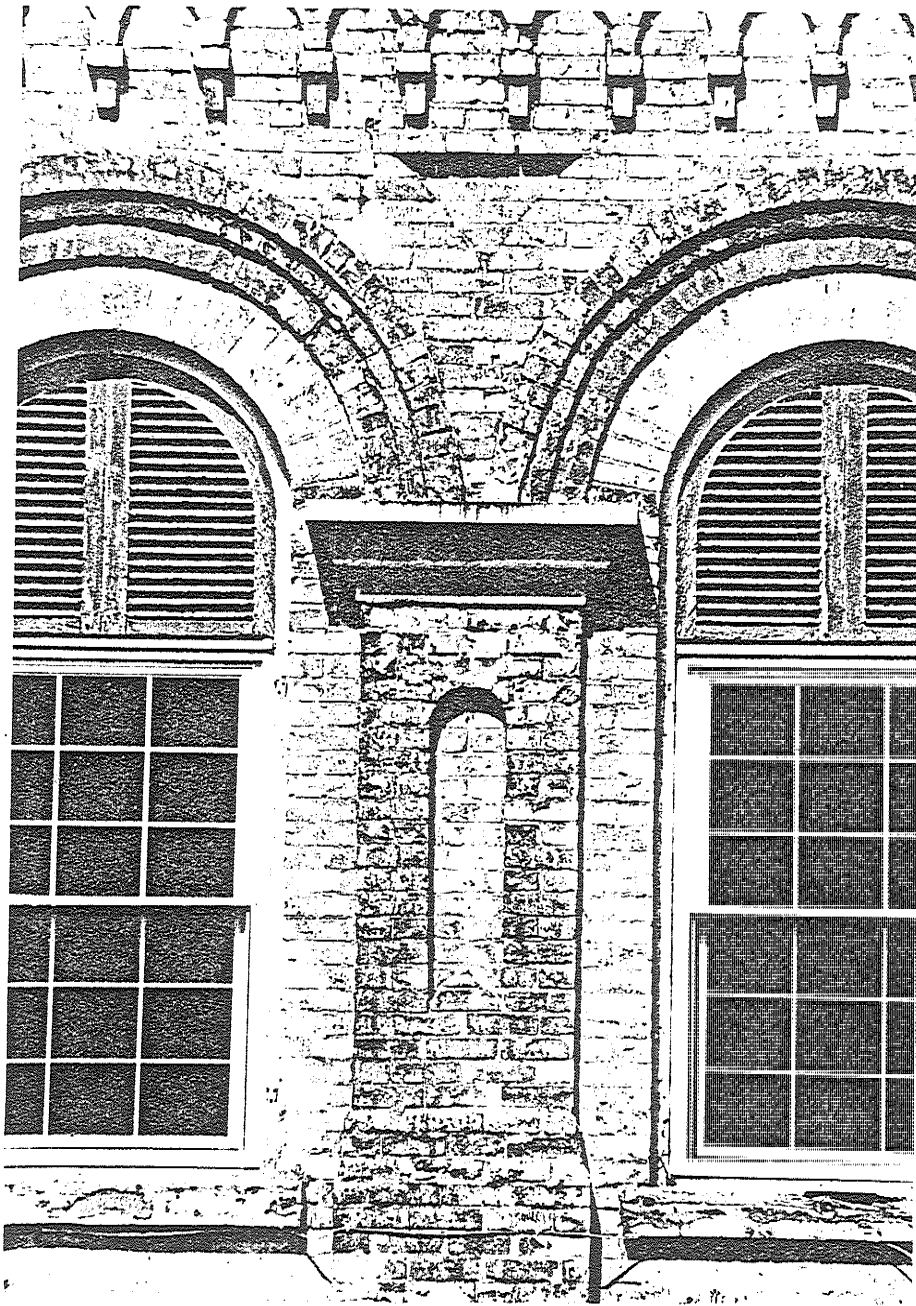
It is beyond the scope of this plan to design clear and concise recommendations for economic improvement in the district. However this plan should and does recognize that its prime concern - conservation of the historic area - depends in great measure upon economic well-being and at present this is faltering. The district has many commendable assets which can be developed to its advantage and a clear vision of what the district is, must be defined. At this time it is strongly recommended that a joint committee of council, business and lay people be appointed to consider further the steps to strengthen the economic future of Main Street.

2. BUILDING PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION

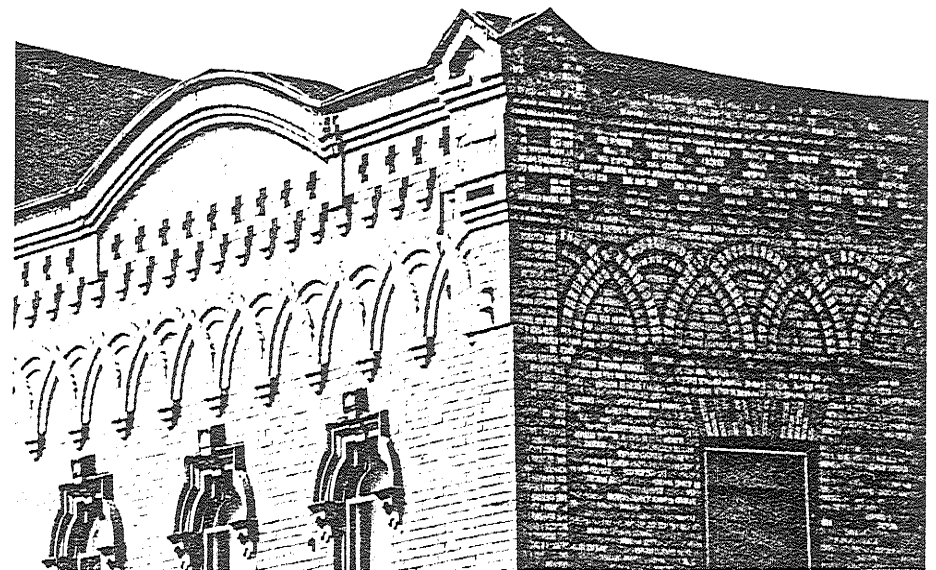
Main Street in Seaforth is a remarkably beautiful and historic street. It is probably one of the finest late nineteenth century streetscapes in Ontario and exemplified by a visual unity of two and three storey commercial blocks with a number of free-standing civic buildings. Interviews with the community revealed a keen desire to conserve the historic building stock. A major recommendation of this plan therefore will be to conserve, repair and maintain the historic buildings. Conservation will include not only the broad composition of the streetscape but also the smaller essential details and proportions of the facades many of which remain and some of which have been lost. The rebuilding of store fronts and signs to complement the period architecture will be recommended as well. It is advised that a careful procedure of research, review and approval be carried out by L.A.C.A.C to ensure that the conservation guidelines be implemented in a sound and effective manner.

3. BEAUTIFICATION

While Main Street in Seaforth is essentially a district of buildings, there are also streets, sidewalks, lights, landscaping and pedestrian amenity to be considered as part of the function and character. It is not recommended that many changes be made to those aspects of the district with the exception of enhanced landscaping and new period street lights. Space is fairly limited in the district & caution is advised against over "prettifying" the street with trendy little flower pots, seats, signs and the like. Main Street is essentially robust in character & derives much of its beauty from its clean uncluttered appearance, softened by the subtle modulation of the building facade.

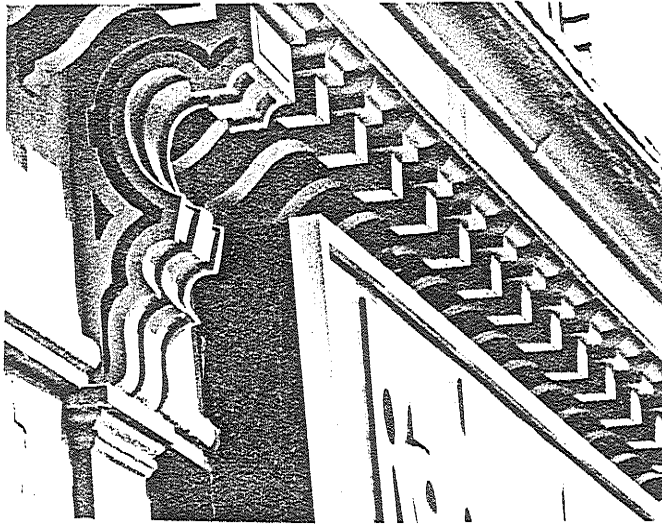


Conservation is not only about preserving streets and buildings but preserving craftsmanship such as the superb brickwork of the building facades shown here.



The foregoing covers the main recommendations that will be developed into policy in the heritage conservation district plan. The continued economic well-being of the district is crucial if effective conservation is to work. At present this well-being is faltering and not assured. Economic rejuvenation is as important if not more so than well articulated goals of architectural conservation.





HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

An excellent historical overview of the development of the town of Seaforth and its downtown business section is related in the technical background of the Seaforth official plan review. The following is an extract from that plan.

REGIONAL SETTING

The Town of Seaforth is located at the intersection of Highway 8 and County Road 12 in the central-eastern part of Huron County. It is flanked by the Township of McKillop to the north and Township of Tuckersmith to the south. The growth development and prosperity of Seaforth is largely linked to the fertile and productive agricultural economy of the surrounding tributary area. An excellent County road system connects Seaforth to the surrounding area while Highway 8 and the CNR railway line provide linkages with the rest of the province. The town is approximately 45 miles from Highway 401. In terms of population, Seaforth is one of the largest towns in Huron County. It competes as a central place with the other major towns in the region and is under the urban shadow of the cities of Kitchener-Waterloo, London, and to a lesser extent Stratford.

EARLY HISTORY

When the Huron Tract was opened by Colonel Anthony Van Egmond in 1828, the present site of Seaforth was initially considered unsuitable for settlement because of swampy land conditions. There was nothing but a large sign posted at the intersection

of the Brucefield Road (Main Street) and the Huron Road (Highway 8) giving directions to other places which gave rise to the name "Guide Board Swamp". To the south and to the west, the small settlements of Egmondville and Harpurhey were flourishing and either one might have developed into a major town except for events which would change the history of the three settlements.

Two major factors were instrumental in the development of Seaforth as a town and arrested the development of Egmondville and Harpurhey. The first was the initiative of the Sparling brothers, Christopher and George, who created a land syndicate which assembled land for the townsite and successfully attracted the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway. The railway was persuaded by the offer of free land, and construction of a station and railroad began in 1853. Harpurhey reacted by building a station of its own. Although it was recognized as a flag stop for a few years, business centered around the Seaforth depot. The second factor was the decision to construct the road from Bayfield to Egmondville to connect with the Township of Grey to intersect with the Huron Road at what is now the main corner of Seaforth, rather than at Harpurhey as originally planned. As the northern townships of Grey, Morris and Howick were rapidly settled and crops cultivated, the road was the only good connection to the more densely settled areas in the southern part of the County and provided an outlet for surplus farm products.

With the construction of the road and the railway, the future of the town was assured. Its first trade and commerce depended upon its function as a distributing point for agricultural produce, especially grain, as commission agents and grain dealers established themselves in Seaforth. Harpurhey and Egmondville were also overlooked since they represented an extra mile of travel for weary grain wagon dealers. In the first ten years of its existence, there was a steady traffic from the northern townships to Seaforth on which its initial prosperity was built. By 1870, Seaforth was shipping more wheat than any other settlement in Ontario.

The grain economy stimulated the rapid expansion of Seaforth as a trade and service centre for the agricultural tributary area. The expansion was accompanied by a major wave of construction activity and diversification of the economic base. At the peak of its prosperity, Seaforth was incorporated

as a village with a population of 1,056 people. The rapidity of growth was such that within seven years the population had reached 2,000 and Seaforth was incorporated as a town.

In 1877, the town suffered a serious setback when twelve acres of the central portion of the town were completely destroyed by the "great fire". The fire-fighting equipment was inadequate and the fire spread rapidly through the frame structures. Fortunately, business was flourishing and the Main Street was built almost immediately with fine sets of brick business blocks which stand as a monument to the resiliency of the community and the fine architectural heritage of the period.

By this time, the extensive wheat trade led to the establishment of three large flour milling operations. In addition a vast butter and egg business was developed which became the largest in the county. This tradition has persisted to the present times as the Seaforth area is one of the largest egg producers in Canada.

Like Clinton and Goderich, the development of salt mining in the 1870 s became a major industry in Seaforth. Because the supply exceeded the demand, the Clinton Seaforth salt works were eventually absorbed by the Goderich operation. At this time Seaforth saw the beginning of a foundry and a flax mill. After an erratic history, the flax mill was shut down altogether. For a time the foundry was used to manufacture threshing machines but, with the introduction of the combine, production was changed to the manufacture of boilers and similar equipment which has continued into contemporary times. An effort was also made to establish a furniture factory which did not endure.

At the apex of its development in the last quarter of the nineteenth century industries in Seaforth included:

3 salt works companies	1 pump factory
3 flour milling plants	2 planing mills
1 large egg and butter production and distribution plant	1 saw mill
1 flax mill	6 carriage factories
1 foundry	10 blacksmith shops
1 furniture factory	3 meat packing companies
1 cheese factory	1 thresher/boiler factory

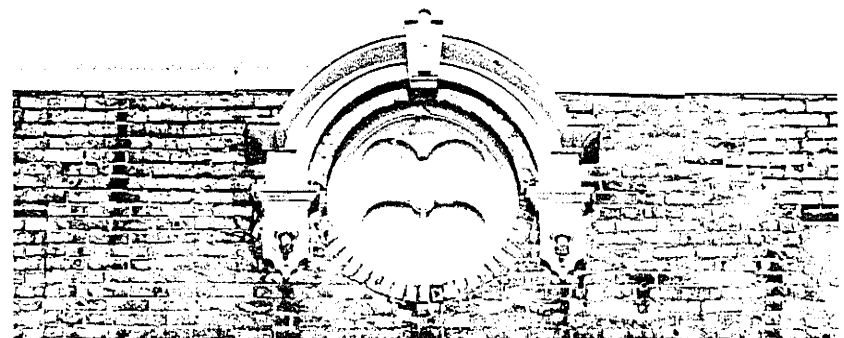
A thriving downtown business community consisted of the following commercial enterprises:

11 dry goods stores	11 grocery stores
2 merchants tailoring stores	3 shoe stores
1 fancy goods store	3 butcher shops
3 jewelry stores	3 bakers
3 sewing machine shops	4 confectioners
3 furniture stores	3 liquor stores
3 hardware stores	7 hotels
3 tin and stove stores	3 billiard halls
2 newspaper establishments	1 bank
3 drug stores	6 seed and flour stores
2 music stores	3 book stores

To serve the community, churches, fraternal orders, a music hall and auditorium, a library, schools and a cricket club existed.

RECENT HISTORY

Since its incorporation as a town, Seaforth has remained relatively unchanged. Industries and business enterprises have flourished and declined or have been replaced by new or similar ones. An important development was the establishment of the Scott Memorial Hospital in 1929. Like the other major settlements in Huron County however, Seaforth has not changed substantially in function, size or character. It remains as the major town in the eastern part of the county, acting as a service and retirement centre for the surrounding agricultural hinterland, an industrial and employment centre. It provides a basic range of central place urban services and facilities for the urban and rural population in the area, achieving social and economic integration with its agricultural hinterland.



OFFICIAL PLAN STATEMENT

The preparation of this heritage conservation district plan is not an isolated exercise: it is a continuum of policies and decisions affecting the town and core area. As stated earlier a major policy statement and body of research is contained in the recently adopted official plan and technical background research for the Town of Seaforth. The excellence of the Official Plan requires little further elaboration and portions of it that pertain to the heritage conservation district plan are re-stated.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Commercial development is an integral component of urban land use structure. Through commercial activity, the community derives the commodities and services required to function and prosper. The commercial sector is also a major source of employment and taxation revenue. To a large extent, the vitality and viability of a municipality is dependent on the physical and economical health of its commercial base. The creation of an orderly pattern of commercial development and the strengthening of commercial enterprise, therefore, are major concerns of the plan.

DEFINITIONS

The Commercial classification of land use is comprised of two major groups of which one is the core area.

1) core area: the core area is the most intensive, diversified and dominant centre of community activity in the municipality providing a broad spectrum of retail, business, financial, personal and professional services, offices and studios, hotels and restaurants, places of entertainment, culture, habitation and recreation, institutional, judicial, civic and administrative uses. As a multi-functional environment which serves as the social, economic and cultural focal point of the community, the core area provides a basic people-place function. The core area is the traditional and established business district of the municipality and with its tightly built up urban form and compact nature which is connected by a system of sidewalks, roads and parking areas, provides for the general commercial requirements of the municipality and particularly the multi-

purpose pedestrian comparison shopping trade.

GOALS

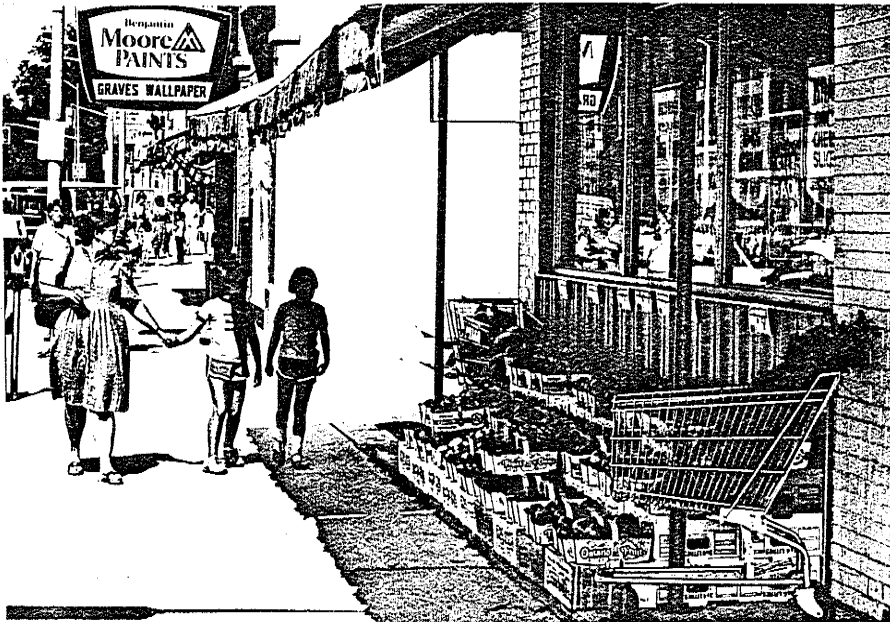
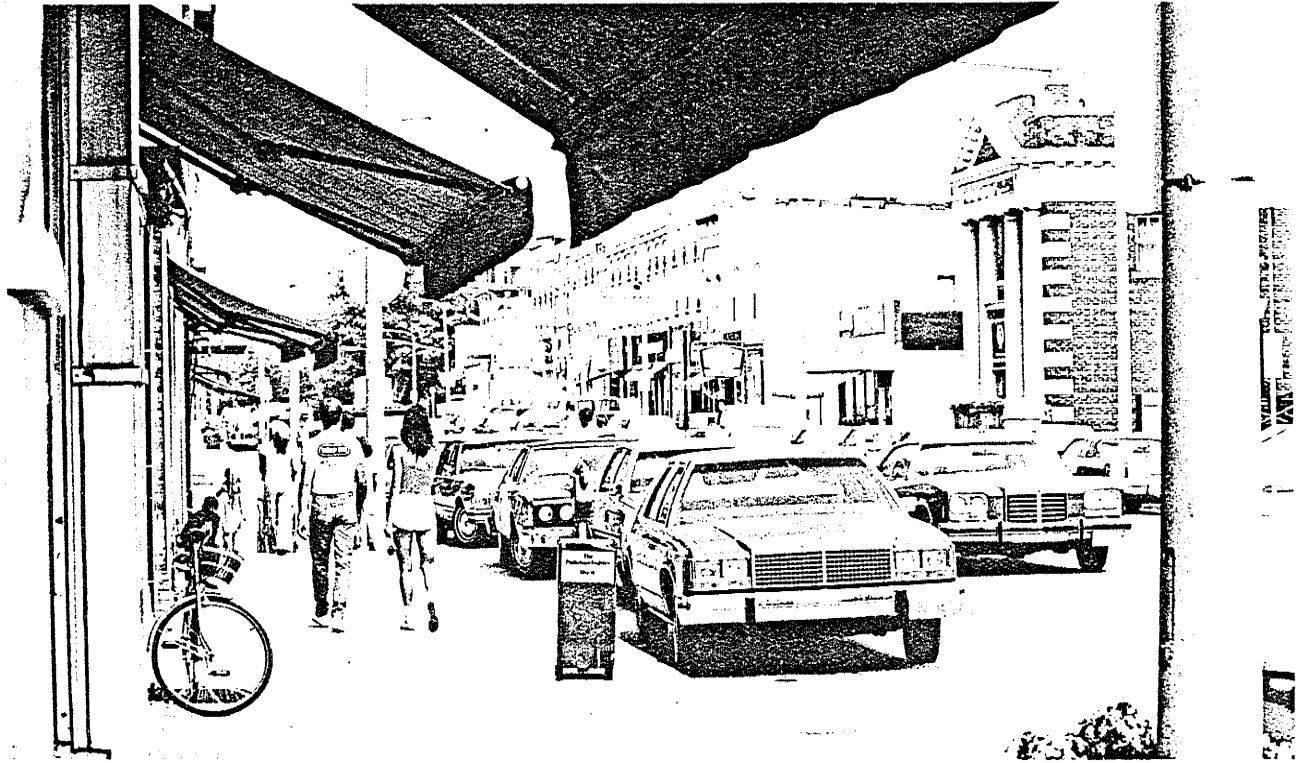
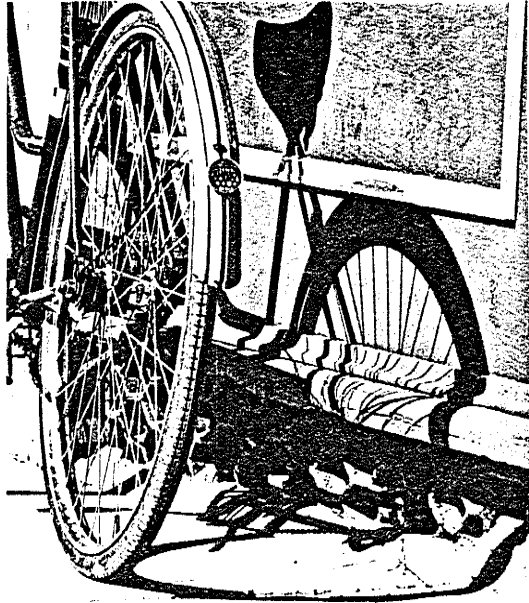
The commercial planning goals are as follows:

- 1) to promote an orderly pattern and a high standard of commercial development and redevelopment in the municipality;
- 2) to strengthen the commercial economic base to provide for the commercial requirements of the local and trade area population;
- 3) to retain, strengthen and enhance the core area as the dominant centre of commercial activity for Seaforth and its surrounding tributary market area;

CORE AREA POLICIES

To achieve the commercial planning goals, the following policies are adopted:

- 1) The core commercial area will continue to be the dominant most intensive and diversified centre of commercial activity in the municipality. To promote the core as a pedestrian-oriented shopping and service area, the use of land will continue to be compact, intensive and tightly built up;
- 2) the decentralization of general commercial uses will not be permitted:
 - a) to protect the long-term viability of the core area;
 - b) to promote investor confidence in the future of the core area by creating a certain and stable investment climate for the expansion, rehabilitation, redevelopment and restoration of the core area;
 - c) to ensure that the core area realizes its full social, economic and cultural potential;
- 3) the municipality in co-operation with the business community, government agencies and interested parties will continue with a comprehensive and on-going program for the revitalization of the core area including building improvements, parking



These pictures show the typical informality and spontaneity a commercial area needs. In some respects it is a bit messy but it has vitality. Conservation must be careful not to overly order everything so that it becomes attractive but lifeless.

facilities, lighting, landscaping and parks, signage, street furniture and a continuous system of weather-protected sidewalks:

- a) to instil a feeling of civic pride and improve the quality and variety of downtown activities and experiences;
- b) to enhance the sensory quality and reinforce the basic function of the core area as a people place by creating an enriched environment where people will enjoy being;
- c) to attract visitors and promote tourism;
- d) to promote a compact well-defined pedestrian core area environment which is attractive, competitive and viable.

The rejuvenation of the core area will include a program of rear yard improvements, including a general clean-up of buildings and property, the upgrading of parking, refuse storage and loading areas and the provision of rear door access points and walkways to encourage and facilitate pedestrian movement;

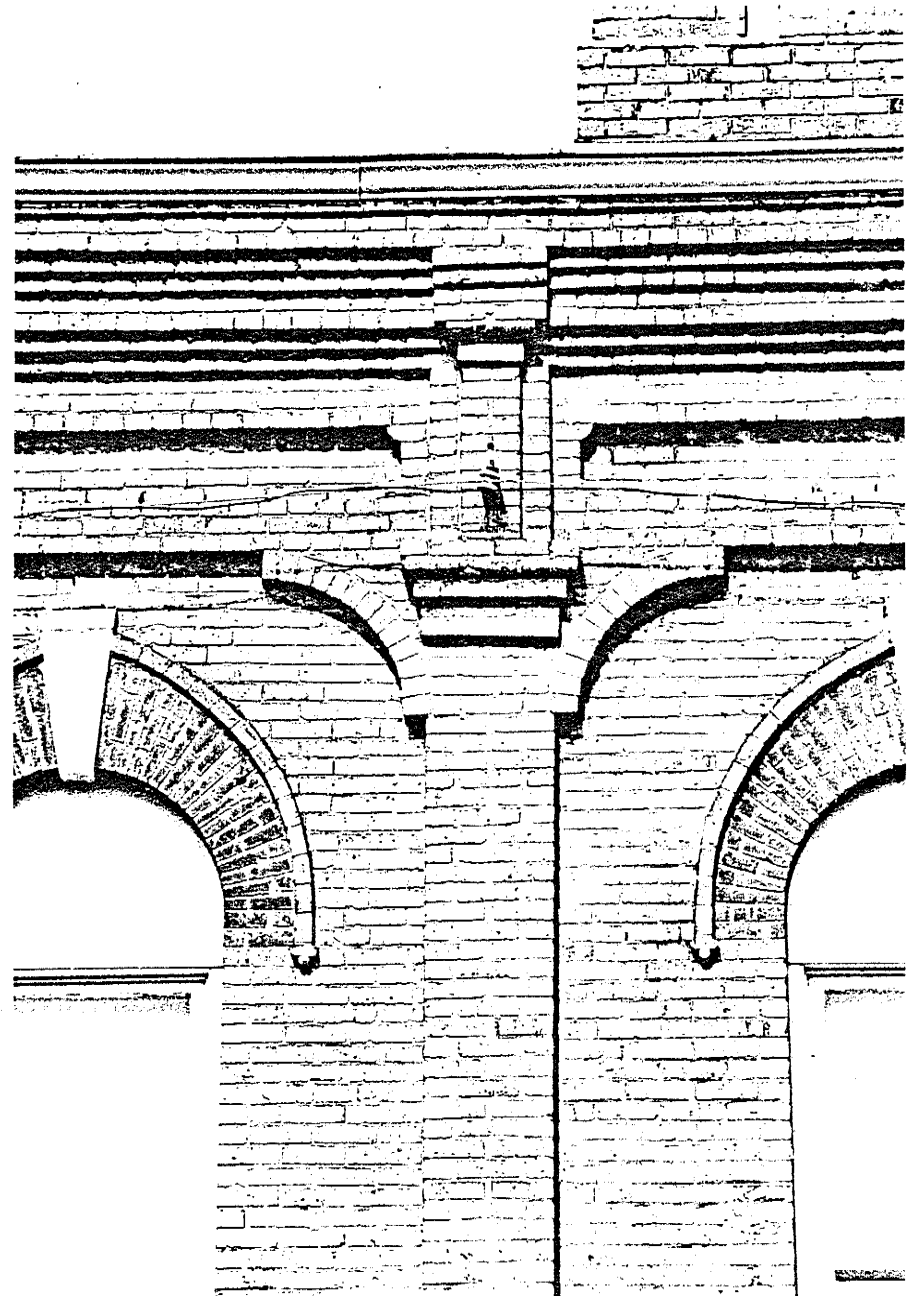
- 4) the Main Street, distinguished by its historic buildings, is a unique and significant heritage district which will be preserved, protected and enhanced through heritage district conservation planning;
- 5) prior to issuing building permits for new buildings or exterior renovations in the core area, the municipality will review the design to ensure that the architecture, scale, materials, colours and signage can be harmoniously integrated with the character of the surrounding built and natural environment;
- 6. the multi-functional nature of the core area will be encouraged by promoting a healthy mix of supportive and compatible commercial, residential, institutional and open space uses subject to the following additional policies:
 - a) related and supportive uses will be located and developed in such a way as not to detract from the primary retail-commercial function of the core area;

- b) residential uses will be allowed in the commercial area in the form of apartments over or behind commercial buildings or in mixed use buildings where the ground floor is primarily used for commercial, office, or institutional purposes;
- c) the requirements of subsection 3.3.4(5) are fulfilled;
- d) new development and redevelopment of the core commercial area will proceed in an orderly and compact manner and the piecemeal infiltration into the adjoining residential neighbourhoods will not be permitted;
- e) residential areas in the core area may be restricted to commercial uses in the restricted area (zoning) by-law to ensure an orderly transition from residential to commercial land use;
- f) where the core commercial area abuts a neighbourhood residential area, the commercial area uses provide adequate buffering, fencing, landscaping, lighting control and refuse storage and disposal to ensure compatibility between the two different land uses.

- 7. the system of alleyways and right-of-ways will be protected and improved to provide suitable rear yard access to core commercial area uses for parking, refuse removal, service vehicles and emergency vehicles such as fire trucks, police cruisers and ambulances;
- 8) on-street parking will continue to provide a significant amount of the core area parking requirements. In the long-term, however, a system of off-street district community parking areas will be developed in conjunction with the core area business community. Parking deficiencies on individual properties will be provided for in the form of an equivalent financial contribution to a central parking fund based on a formula developed and administered through an agreement between the municipality and the core area business establishments. The design of new parking areas will be compatible with surrounding land uses and the visual environment and located to maximize safe and convenient accessibility in the core area;

- 9) off-street parking areas will be prohibited from occupying any street frontage in the core area so that a void in the built-up streetscape will not be created;
10. the creation of new parking areas will be encouraged behind buildings fronting on Main Street. Where a parking area abuts a residential use or a street, a visual landscaping buffer will be created to maintain a sense of enclosure along the street and aesthetic appeal;
- 11) where difficulty is experienced by a major developer in assembling land in the core area for development, the Municipality may assist by:
 - a) acting as an intermediary through its good offices to secure the co-operation of the involved parties to facilitate the proposal;
 - b) designating the area as a redevelopment area under The Planning Act and assembling the land and taking actions as needed to bring the proposal to fruition;
- 12) the Victoria Park, shall be maintained and enhanced as a community park and place of public assembly for civic, cultural, promotional and recreational activities;
- 13) the natural landscape of the core area will be enhanced to promote a high visual quality and parklike setting;
- 14) the Municipality may participate in core area improvement programs as they are developed by the senior levels of government based on need, local relevance and the availability of resources.

The craftsmanship of Main Street as shown below is now largely irreplaceable. It is this that must be conserved. Note the beautiful small clover leaf bases to the projecting window brick corbelling.



THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

In March 1974 the Province of Ontario proclaimed the Ontario Heritage Act. The Act enabled municipalities to conserve protect and preserve their heritage in basically two ways. The first way (Part 4) enabled the designation of individual buildings that were of historical and, or architectural significance. The second way (Part 5) enabled the designation of groups of buildings which by their collective presence contributed to the man-made heritage resource of Ontario. The preservation of a group or district of buildings is inherently a far more complex and challenging task than individual designation, but of far greater value. The character of most towns in southwestern Ontario is made up by their town centres and as Roy Worskett has written "visually most towns derive their identity and personality from the way in which buildings, both good and bad, together create a general atmosphere and build up a recognizable local townscape". To a large extent the preservation of the identity and personality of a town is the preservation of its core area.

Recognition of the heritage value of the core area in the town of Seaforth has been prevalent for many years, but it was not until the proclamation of the Ontario Heritage Act that formal steps could be taken to protect this heritage.

In May 1976 the council for the town of Seaforth appointed a Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee. The committee's main responsibilities are to advise council on all matters relating to Part 4 of the Ontario Heritage Act which is the Conservation of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Value and to Part 5, which is the Designation of Heritage Conservation Districts. The L.A.C.A.C. has pursued its responsibilities with vigour and effectiveness: to date buildings have been designated under Part 4, and the preparation of a Heritage Conservation District is active.

The first step in the preparation of a Heritage Conservation District Plan was made in May 1980 when L.A.C.A.C presented to the Town Planning Board a request that a statement of support of heritage conservation be included in the Town's New Official Plan. This inclusion would therefore enable L.A.C.A.C. to pursue the preparation of a Heritage Conservation District Plan. The District advised by the committee included Main Street from the Carnegie library to the south to the Queen's Hotel to the

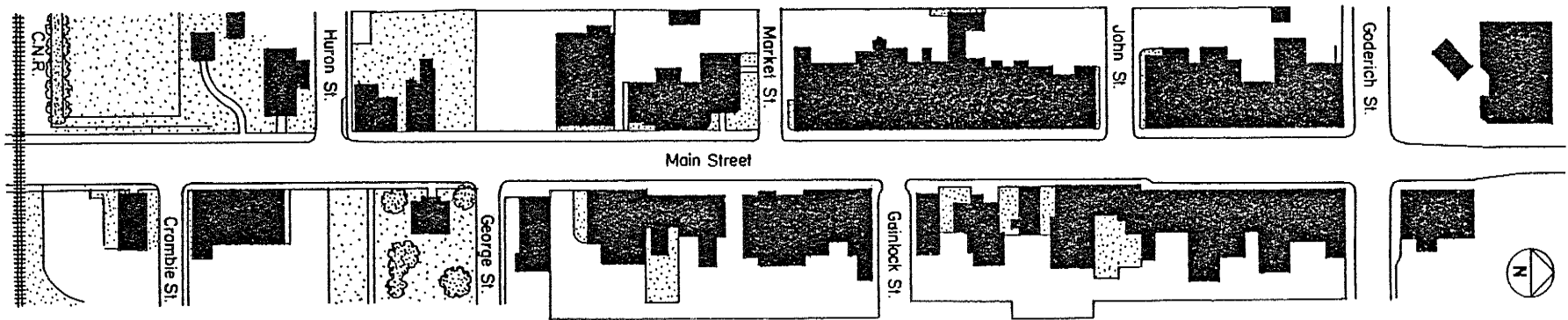
north. L.A.C.A.C.'s request was successful and the technical background for the new official plan for Seaforth succinctly states the case for a Heritage Conservation District Plan. Relevant text is related.

"Heritage conservation involves the protection and enhancement of a place(s) consisting of indigenous features by themselves or with their associated landscape which are a unique or representative remnant of significant past human activity or events. Heritage resources include historic, architectural, and archeological sites and buildings which provide important historical continuities with the community. In a dynamic society, the physical change of the environment is a constant human activity which has often inadvertently damaged or destroyed irreplaceable heritage features through the disturbance and modification of the landscape. Damage can occur as a result of ill-designed development, thoughtless destruction or alterations and the use of discordant materials. Without heritage conservation planning a community faces the danger of completely severing its links with historical and cultural origins.

The preservation and enhancement of heritage resources provides a continuing opportunity for present and future generations to study, understand and appreciate the origins, institutions and settlement of an area. Heritage is a statement of what we were, what we are and provides insights on what we will be. Heritage conservation is of benefit to both contemporary society and to posterity in maintaining a community, identity, a sense of place, and a continuity with the past.

The benefits of heritage conservation go beyond cultural and historical preservation. There are practical and sound economic advantages in pursuing and supporting heritage planning measures. Buildings should be conserved because they are one way to conserve our limited resources, to conserve our energy. They represent one of the biggest investments made by society yet many buildings are thoughtlessly bulldozed away because of age. Heritage planning is an attempt at the rational use of the standing built environment, and the efficient utilization of scarce resources through recycling.

In following the conservation ethic, additional benefits accrue to private property owners and the community. Buildings in the core area, in particular, were erected in attractive sets embracing a common architectural composition in the design. A disturbance in the architectural unity of the building sets



the heritage conservation district

detracts from the overall appearance of each block. Instead of clarity, a discontinuity in design prevails disturbing aesthetic harmony and evoking a messy, and unattractive image of the area. In maintaining an attractive and harmonious built environment, property values are enhanced. The preservation of unique buildings creates an unusual, interesting and exciting environment attracting people into an area. Better known examples are Yorkville in Toronto and Gastown in Vancouver which have been transformed from run-down declining areas to profitable business areas generating economic development and tourism. In a 1972 survey completed by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to determine rates of participation in various recreational activities, it was found that 35.9% of the people surveyed visited historical sites.

The Council of the Town of Seaforth has appointed a L.A.C.A.C. to investigate the heritage resources of the community. The efforts of the L.A.C.A.C. have succeeded in the designation of individual buildings and efforts are continuing. Preliminary research on the designation of the core area as a Heritage Conservation District has been completed. The business section on Main Street is a rich architectural heritage area which is remarkably intact and unchanged since it was rebuilt after the great fire in 1877. Although some changes have been made at the shop window level, the overall composition of brick facades at the second and third storeys is complete and original. The reconstruction took the form of fine sets of brick building blocks which through the use of common materials (buff brick), setbacks and rooflines achieved an impressive visual consistency. At the same time, variety in detailing from one building to the next establishes entirely individual identities down the length of the street. Visual focal points on the street include the former Cardno Music Hall and the Post Office Tower. The Cardno Music Hall is on the second floor of the Cardno block which was the centre for concerts, balls and travelling shows until the 1940's. The hall has a high mansard roof which supports a still higher mansard tower.

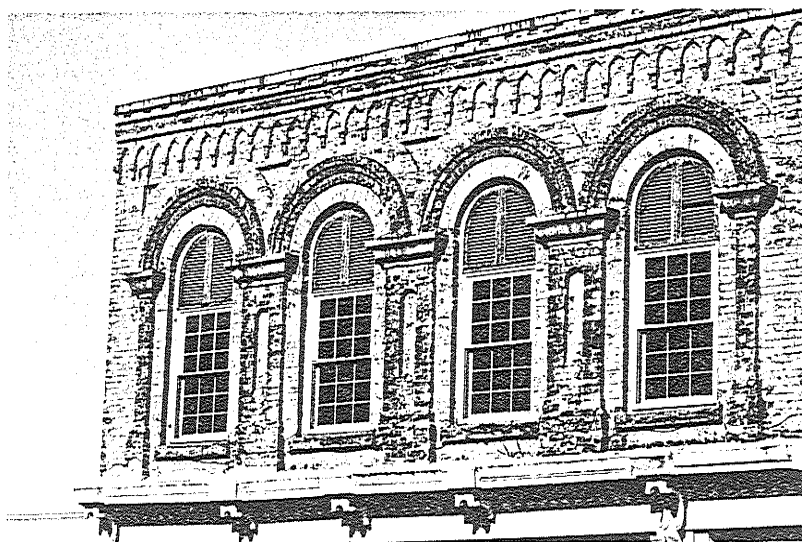
It is rare to find such a noble street facade that has not been spoiled by insensitive modernization or demolition. The preparation of a Heritage District Plan for Main Street is essential, therefore, to the protection and improvement of the unique historical streetscape of the area. An application for a grant from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation for the preparation of a Heritage District Plan should be pursued as

quickly as possible and integrated into a broader concept for the revitalization of the central business district. In the interim, it is recommended that Council pass a resolution requiring that all building permits for any core area building facade alterations, new constructions, or demolition permits be referred to the L.A.C.A.C. for comment. In addition, estimates should be requested from heritage planning consultants for the preparation of a District Conservation Plan."

In September of 1981 the new Official Plan for the Town of Seaforth Planning Area was adopted by council and subsections 3.3.4 (4) and (5) Core Area Policies read:

"the Main Street, distinguished by its historic buildings, is a unique and significant heritage district which will be preserved, protected and enhanced through heritage district conservation planning; prior to issuing building permits for new buildings or exterior renovations in the core area, the municipality will review the design to ensure the architecture, scale, materials, colours and signage can be harmoniously integrated with the character of the surrounding built and natural environment;"

In 1983 the preparation of the heritage conservation plan commenced.



LAND USE

The district is foremost a business and administrative centre. Accordingly commerce is the predominant use of land. It also geographically in the centre of the town tightly bound by residential areas to the north, east and west and industry along the railway to the south. The core area comprises 10.2 acres. This is a remarkably small proportion of the town's 597 acres and is testimony to the physical and visual compactness of the commercial building stock.

The technical background for the Seaforth Official Plan Review analyzes and discusses the core area accordingly.

"The core area is the most concentrated and intensive centre of commercial activity in the municipality providing a broad range of retail, service, professional, entertainment and institutional uses as well as housing accommodation. The closely built building sets and sidewalk system provide a multi-purpose commercial environment facilitating pedestrian comparison shopping in an attractive, safe and convenient setting. A healthy core area has the highest land values, the greatest investment and assessment and provides a major source of municipal revenue. It is also the focal point of social economic and cultural interaction in the community. The physical and economic condition of the core is a reflection of the community. It creates impressions about the resident community - industrious, progressive, prosperous - and in this way influences the attraction of a municipality for economic investment, industrial development, shopping and as a place to live.

In the absence of positive planning strategies, however, the core area is vulnerable to the pressures of decentralized commercial development and particularly suburban shopping centres. The decentralization of the core commercial function can quickly undermine the stability and viability of the core area resulting in vacant stores, under-maintenance, declining investment and eroded tax revenues. Commercial blight reduces municipal revenue and assessment to the overall detriment of the tax base. The maintenance of municipal services in the core area must continue despite a reduction of business activity required to finance it. Without an adequate trade area, decentralized commercial development causes a loss of capital investment in the central business district. The

shift of investment to the periphery may result in core area deterioration without any net benefit to the overall community.

A multi-faceted approach is required in core area planning. In addition to protective planning policies, improvement measures are essential. Core area improvement activities can take a broad variety of forms, including - street, sidewalk and parking area improvements to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian movement; decorative lighting not only enhances the appearance but also can be made to attract evening shoppers; heritage conservation to preserve the character of the downtown and provide a clarity and continuity in the streetscape; utilization of signs as attention creators, directional guides and beautification aids; landscaping and business area promotion. The vehicles for undertaking a core area improvement program are a heritage conservation district plan and the formation of a Business Improvement Area under The Municipal Act. By creating a more interesting, attractive and functionally efficient environment, a stimulus is provided for increased investment, development and trade augmenting the economic health and viability of the core area.

Commercial activity is the overwhelmingly dominant land use in the core area followed by the municipal administration offices and the County Library. The residential function is normal. The compactness of the core area appears to have squeezed out all but the most important functions."

It should be noted however that considerable undeveloped land exists to the south of the district on Main Street and the physical and visual integrity of the streetscape changes in this respect. These vacant areas do however provide a land-bank for future commercial development which is a desirable asset even though an uncompleted appearance results.

The technical study also tabulates the respective core area land use and physical composition and is shown on the tables below.

CORE AREA LAND USE

Classification	Area (ac.)	%
1. Commercial	7.9	77.5

Core Area Land Use Cont'd

Classification	Area (ac.)	%
2. Institutional	1.8	17.6
3. Residential	0.5	4.9
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	10.2	100.0

Source: 1978 Assessment Roll

PHYSICAL COMPOSITION OF CORE AREA

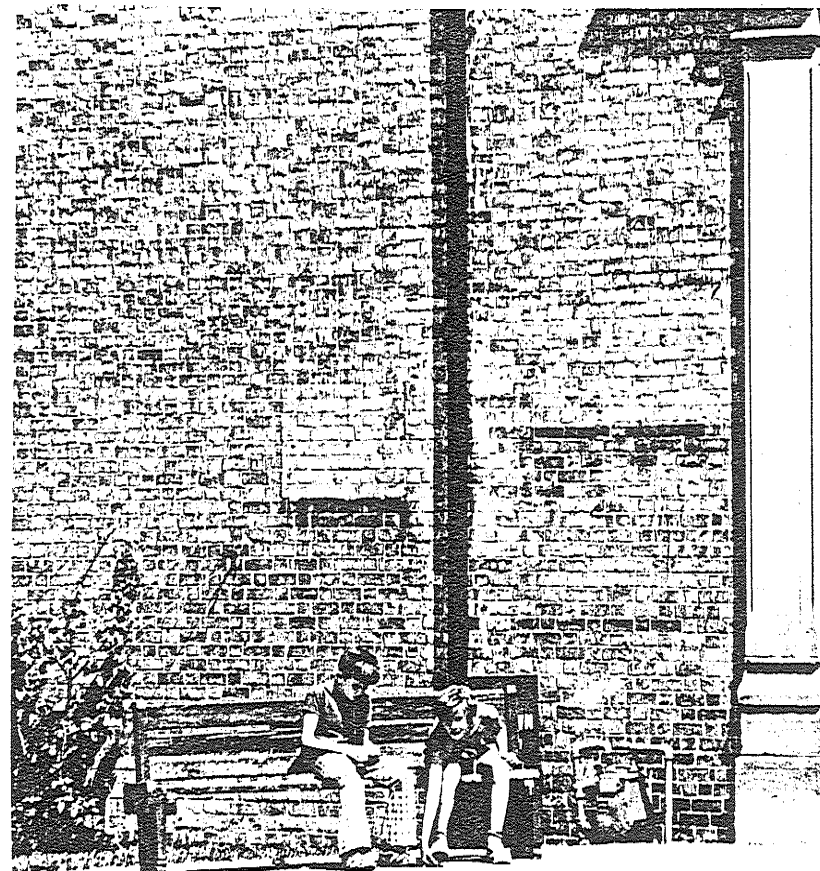
Use	Area (ac.)	%
Building Coverage	6.5	57.5
Green Area	0.2	1.8
Sidewalks	0.7	6.2
Parking and Alleys	3.9	34.5
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	11.3	100.0

Source: Field Survey

With respect to a comparison between core area commerce and commerce located in other parts of the town, statistics reinforce prior observations that the core area predominates as the business area of Seaforth. The technical study of the Seaforth Official Plan Review determined that of a total 76,059 square feet of commercial space in the town, 63,459 was in the core area. These statistics confirm also that the core area is the centre for general commercial (comparison type retail stores) and convenience goods. However the Plan Review does state a note of caution that the compactness of the core area has been restrictive for large scale developments such as supermarkets and building supply yards that require large spaces for their merchandize and customer car parking. Although in Seaforth this type of business is a small proportion of the whole, trends have shown that this often leads to perimeter

shopping areas where land and development costs are far less. To date the trend has not occurred in Seaforth and indeed a new large grocery store has located on Main Street to the south of the historic built up area.

There are few seats on Main Street. The one shown below is welcome and well used. Provision for the pedestrian is important to make the street inviting and pleasant.



BUILDING USE

The land use section determined that the predominant activity in the district is commercial. The more particular uses of the building stock at first floor are accordingly.

Garage	Photo Store
Travel Agent	Newspaper Office
Hairdressers (3)	Printing Works (2)
Amusement Arcade	Bakery
Sewing Centre	Furniture Store
Restaurants(3)	Catalogue Office
Paint and Wall paper Store	Banks (2)
Cheese Store	Post Office
Food Stores (3)	Automotive Supply
Variety Stores (3)	Legal Office
Record Store	Town Hall
Insurance Agents (2)	Hotels (2)
Beauty Salon	Flower Shop
Clothing Stores (4)	Bus Terminal
Jewellery Stores (2)	Library
Finance Company	Residence
Appliance Store	Canadian Tire Store
Shoe Stores(2)	Feed Mill
Pharmacy	Optometrist
Hardware Stores (2)	Service Clubs (2)
Real Estate Offices (2)	Apartment Building

At present there are seven vacant stores or spaces in the district, one of which is a former large department store.

On the second floor of the building stock are in total 63 apartment units, two meeting halls and a furniture show room. The apartments are largely rented. However there are also a significant number of simply vacant second floors with no defined use and some with intermittent uses.

To ascertain the approximate percentage of vacant second floor space a method was employed which measured the frontage of the second floors facing Main Street and then determined the frontage that was used and that which was vacant. Of the 100% frontage of second floors 57% was in use and 43% was vacant or only used on an intermittent basis. This is a serious underuse of the commercial building stock.

In analyzing the variety of commercial activity a broad and efficient range exists in a compact and convenient layout. However it should be noted that few community activity spaces in the core area exist with the exception of the town hall, Legion Hall & Masonic lodge. Formerly the Cardno Hall was an important community focal point for gatherings and concerts. Today no such space exists and before and after business hours the district lacks invitation or activity. A new community centre is outside the district in the arena. The lack of people and attraction after business hours was commented on quite frequently in the interviews. Many contradictory decisions in the past have tended to deplete Main Street of its former people-place function.



A broad range of commercial services are provided on Main Street, however a significant volume of the building stock is vacant and under-used.

BUILDING OWNERSHIP

Of the 61 businesses establishments and residences in the district 34 are owner occupied and 27 are rented. This is a significant finding that may make the task of conserving and restoring the building stock more difficult than dealing directly with the owner occupiers. If a businessman does not own a property he or she is less likely to carry out long term improvements such as store front renovations. Indeed this may explain the significant ill-maintenance of many of the exterior facades. However, these comments are purely conjectures and further dialogue with the property owners will indicate the extent of the problem if any to accomplish restoration.



There is a woeful lack of regular maintenance of the historic building stock and the many empty second floors invite deterioration of the fabric.

BUILDING CONDITION

The condition of the building stock varies considerably from building to building, however some fairly broad and pertinent comments can be made. Whereas the streetscape as a whole exudes remarkable architectural unity detailed analysis of the commercial block facades, reveals a woeful lack of maintenance. Cornices, brackets, soffits, window frames, sashes, and original store front joinery are often in disrepair, unpainted or simply missing. Brickwork requires repair and pointing and numerous windows have been removed, blocked up, altered in an unsympathetic manner with the original historic proportions. Many store fronts have been renewed and while, functionally sound, do not compliment the upper facade. There is therefore a significant amount of simple but crucial upkeep and maintenance to carry out.

With regard to the structural quality of the commercial blocks analysis carried out by John Brock, Architect, comments that "the floor structures are generally unable to carry the design live loads required by the present building code. If they were to be used more intensively to carry heavy equipment, stock, or large assemblies of people, they would have to be reinforced. The degree of fire separation between adjoining buildings is generally good due to the solid masonry walls. The lack of fire separation between floor levels of individual buildings and absence of adequate fire stopping are common problems. Furthermore, there are generally insufficient exits from upper floors of buildings.

The general future condition of the building stock, given present trends of significant vacancy at second floor, does not bode well. Over 43% of the upper floors are vacant and unheated and inevitable deterioration of the building fabric is occurring. This deterioration is evidenced by leaking roofs and roof structures as well as frost damage to the plaster work.

STREETS

Main Street is the primary thoroughfare in the District. This together with Goderich Street may be classified as a collector road. Respectively they are County Road #12 and Provincial Highway #8 and, as the technical background of the Seaforth Official Plan Review has determined, they provide the north-south and east-west arterial outlets to the regional road network serving both local and through traffic. Traffic volumes established for collector roads are 1000 to 5000 A.A.D.T. A distinguishing feature of Main Street is its generous width of 99 feet as opposed to the usual street allowance of 66 feet. Functionally this allows ample space for traffic flow and car parking while aesthetically the streetscape possesses a nobler and more spacious scale that enhances the enclosing building facades.

Off Main Street are a number of local streets (John, Market, Gouinlock and George) leading to the residential areas. Local streets generally carry low volumes of traffic at low speeds most of which have either an origin or destination along its length. In the case of the district the local roads feed traffic to Main Street.



To the rear of the commercial blocks is a service lane and car parking.

To the left is shown Highway #8. At the intersection is Main Street and to the right is the heritage conservation district. The intersection is a most unattractive introduction to the business area.

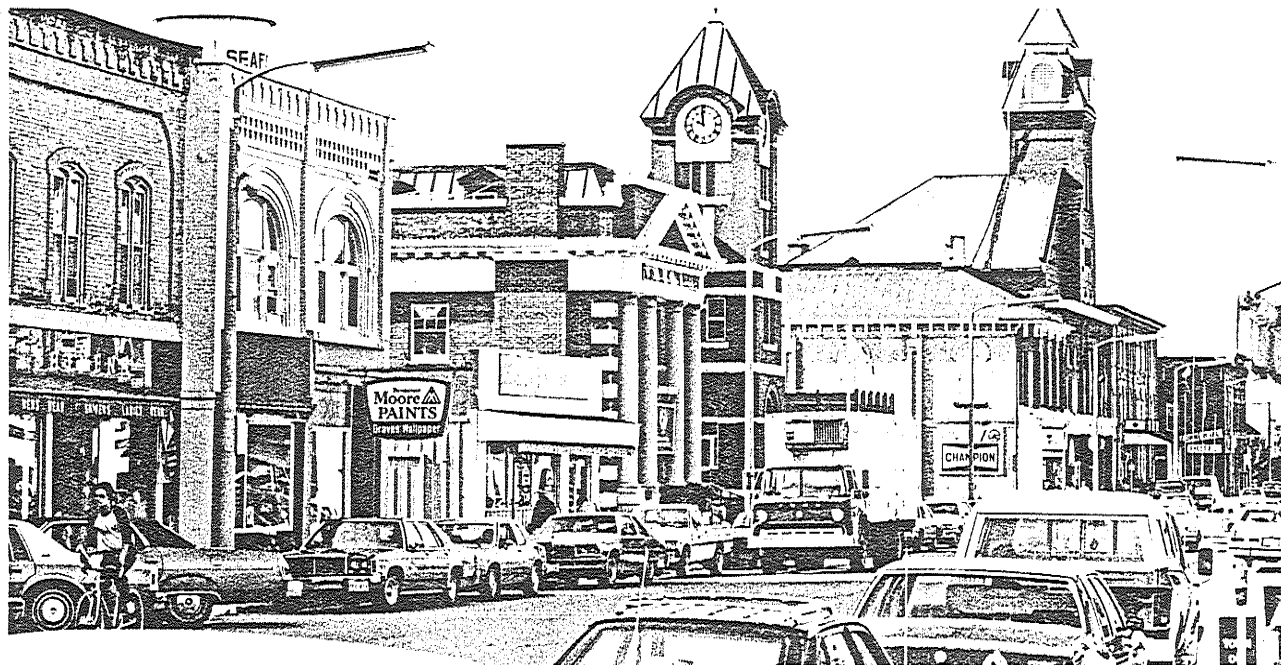
CAR PARKING

Two types of car parking are provided in the District - on street and off street. The Seaforth Official Plan Review provides the following analysis and commentary on car parking.

"The core area parking system in Seaforth consists of two components; the parking lots strung out along the rear of the core area buildings and on-street parking spaces -- which are inter-connected by a network of alley ways and feeder streets. The alleys and off-street parking areas provide 235 private and public parking spaces. The on-street parking inventory consists of parallel parking spaces located on both sides of Main Street and the core area feeder streets (John, Market, Gouinlock, Victoria and High Streets). Main Street and Gouinlock Street provide 142 metered parking spaces. The trade area analysis found that parking facilities are generally adequate for the present level of retail activity. Some of the stores which require high on-site parking facilities such as the supermarkets and building supplies found available parking restrictive."

Most car parking is on Main Street. The service car parks behind the blocks should be further developed for public, merchant and staff use.

A small section of angle parking is located on the east side of Main Street towards Provincial Highway #8.



OPEN SPACE & LANDSCAPING

Very little useable open space exists in the heritage district. The building stock is tight up against the street line with the exception of the Post Office, Town Hall, Library, Commercial Hotel and Toronto Dominion Bank all of which have an open forecourt of approximately 16 feet. The only forecourt to be consciously landscaped is in front of and to the side of the Post Office and Library which have grass cover and in the case of the Library some mature trees. A narrow decorative flower border fronts the new Roth's Foodmarket and McKillop Mutual Insurance Office. A number of boulevards on the side streets where they intersect Main Street are grassed with the occasional tree and park bench. A particularly interesting, but not very visible, open space is the Seaforth Lawn Bowling Club at the far south end of the district. This is a most attractive area of green space with an immaculate grass lawn.

Victoria Park to the east of Gouinlock Street is an attractive small park while it is not actually part of the district it offers a splendid vista of a rich profusion of trees. Opportunity does exist of highlighting this vista.

Flower baskets were hung from the street lights last year and from the interviews, these were very much enjoyed by the community. This year sidewalk flower bins were installed, which are not so visible.

To conclude this short analysis, open space and landscaping are limited in the heritage district and from the interviews it is clearly evident that those who work and live in the area support the concept of more landscaping in a manner to beautify the street. Opportunities do exist and will be pursued and recommendations will be presented.

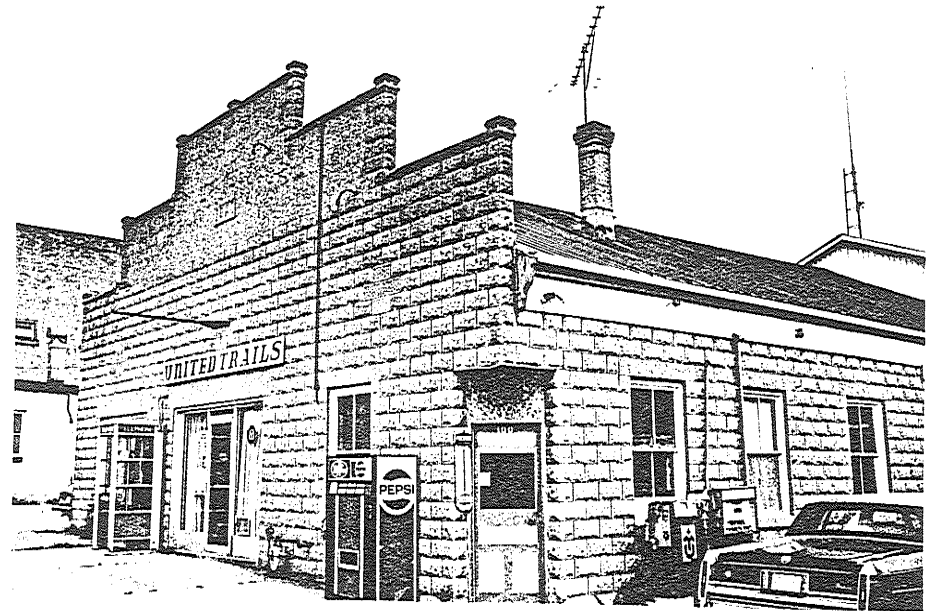
The research found a keen desire for more landscaping on Main Street. At present only a small area of grass around the post office and the library shown to the right exists.



PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

Pedestrian amenity includes benches, garbage receptacles, telephone kiosks, newspaper boxes, bicycle racks, mail boxes and the like. The post office is a focal point building on the street and any semblance of a public amenity open space with community notice board is here. This is a natural area for assembly when the community comes up town to collect its mail. However, pedestrian amenity is very limited in the district and where located, is dispersed in a rather random manner. It is this visible lack of "place civitas" that weakens the street. It is without any spatial climax or feeling of having arrived. Victoria Park to the south of the district is a fine outdoor people place but not intimately connected with Main Street.

Opportunities do exist to develop a more significant pedestrian amenity profile on Main Street, and this will be explored in the recommendations section.



Fresh fruit on the sidewalk shown to the left and even a pepsi container above make the pedestrian and shopper welcome. Here people walk, meet, chat and shop. The environment must be made pleasant.

STREETSCAPE

Streetscape is a term used to describe the character and composition of a street as a whole. Main Street in Seaforth is a rare and fine example of a largely intact late nineteenth century commercial building stock. There is a unique visual integrity about the streetscape depicted by a near uniform brick facades, two and three storeys in height, with closely similar proportions, windows and details. The uniformity is relieved by the projecting towers of the post office, Cardno Opera House and town hall. The heritage conservation district includes this building stock plus a number of detached and unrelated new and old buildings to the south end. There is little doubt that the streetscape is a superb heritage district of immense richness in regard to building craftsmanship, composition texture and detail.

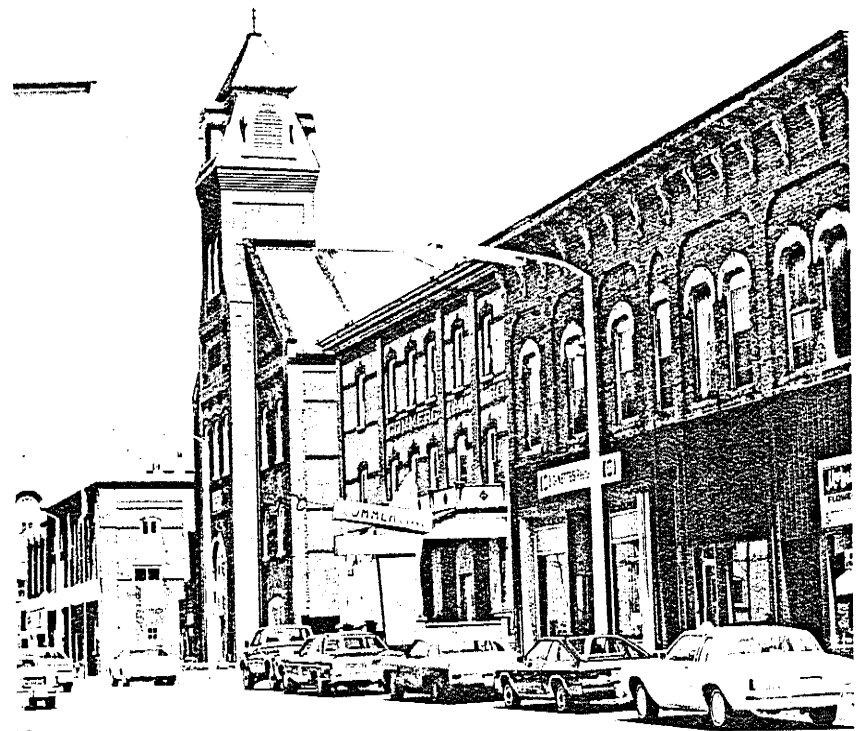
The greatest impact of the streetscape is experienced entering from the north past Highway #8. The full compositional value is prevalent with the enclosing facades to the street. Progressing south on Main Street the Cardno Opera Hall adds a stunning flourish to the facade with its higher Mansard roof surmounted by a clock tower. The continuity of the facade changes then on the east side with the free standing Bank of Commerce, post office and Toronto Dominion Bank. These are now individual free standing buildings of varying architectural interest. The post office is without doubt a building of considerable visual impact and grandeur. Just past this group on the east is Gouinlock Street with its arresting vista to the Victoria Park. The soft textural quality of the treescape provides a pleasant change to the hard edge of Main Street. The vista could however be greatly improved as Gouinlock is a most unimpressive street

Past Gouinlock Street moving south, the streetscape regains its compositional integrity of enclosing brick facades and is now highlighted by the town hall. This is a very tall and dramatic looking building in red brick and of austere proportions and details. Its roof and tower is perhaps more arresting than its front facade which has lost the original entrance porch and hence is rather flat. Adjoining the town hall is the Commercial Hotel a large and potentially very handsome building when restored to its glory. Opposite on the west side are a number of more modest commercial blocks in brick of the late nineteenth

century. On the south-west corner of Market and Main Street is a fascinating converted garage of the late 1940 s.

South of George Street, Main Street becomes scattered in its appearance as a streetscape and there is now a loose assembly of old and new buildings, vacant land and car parks. The town library is a particularly attractive older building while the Canadian Tire Store to the far south is an excellent example of the adaptive use of an older industrial building. Opposite is the Seaforth Lawn Bowling Club with its manicured green lawn and summer club house. The C.N.R. tracks form the south boundary of the district.

The streetscape is further described in the accompanying photographs of this subsection.



Main Street is without doubt one of the finest late nineteenth century streets.



There is a rare and fine integrity about the streetscape mainly due to the matching heights and architectural composition of the individual commercial blocks. Sills Hardware to the left is one of the few original store fronts. The tower of the Cardno block adds an exciting flourish to the roofline.

HERITAGE RESOURCE

Preceding sections have recognized quite clearly that Main Street in Seaforth has an immensely rich architectural heritage. The town's history of development, its evolving building stock and that which remains today is testimony to the heritage. The streetscape analysis defined the composition of the street with a dramatic sense of entry from the north end, the progression of enclosing facades punctuated by the high rising towers of the various civic buildings and concluding with a rather loose assembly of new and old buildings at the south end. Note was made of the vistas out from Main Street especially to the east down Gouinlock Street to Victoria Park. What now of the smaller, but no less important, details that make up the streetscape as a whole? These are interpreted as the heritage resource. It is not intended to analyze building by building but to draw attention to the many typical heritage resource features that make up the building stock. It is in fact these many smaller details which are so very important to the composition of the historic streetscape, and which are so easily and often removed. A comparison of old photographs with the present appearance of many commercial blocks shows quite vividly just how much of the facade decor and detail has been lost.

The predominant building type in the district is the commercial block and there is a remarkable unity of design from block to block. A typical facade may be defined in basically two parts - the lower transparent store front and the upper brick facade punctuated by windows.

STORE FRONTS

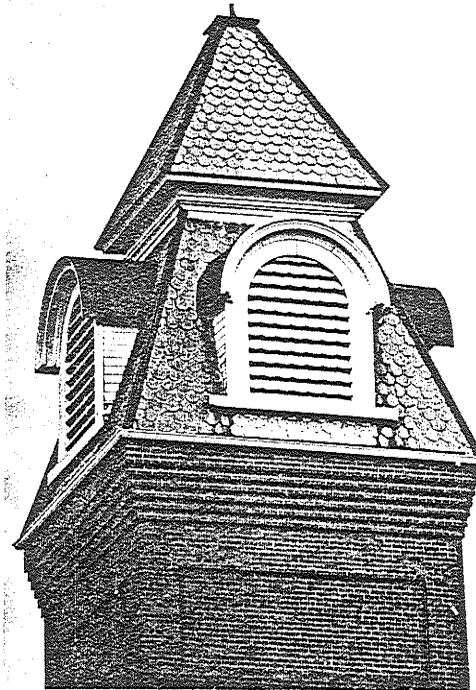
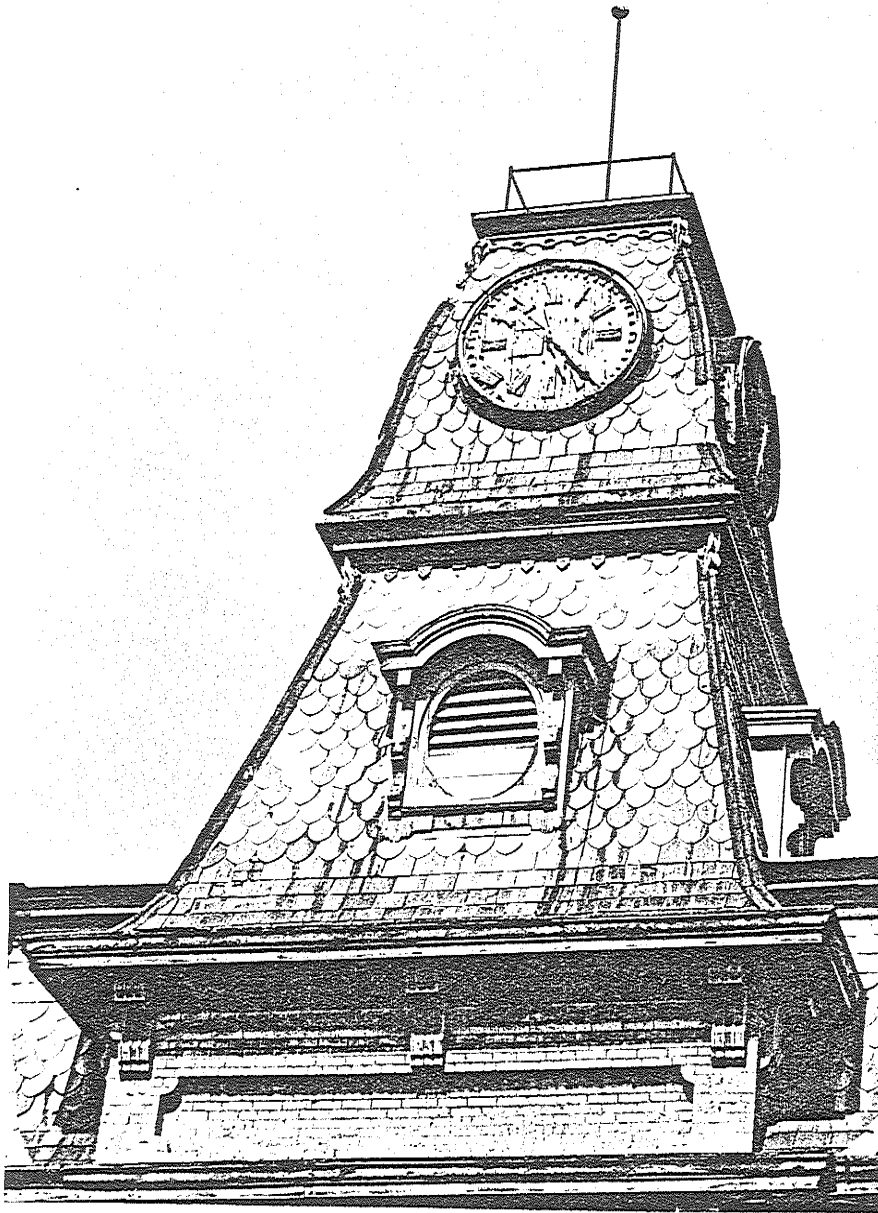
The store fronts have experienced very considerable change and many of the original features have been long gone. Today there is a whole mixed range of store fronts in varying materials. The changes were brought about for two basic reasons. Firstly, to improve the window display potential by inserting larger unobstructed sheets of store front glass and secondly to reassert a new modern image. Image in fact is a major reason for many, and any association with late Victorian building style was perceived as backward and not progressive. A new and "forward looking" image was therefore sought. The result is a streetscape of individualistic store front statements bearing no relationship to one another or to the style of the

historic building as a whole. Most new store fronts could be anywhere. To a large extent therefore a whole heritage of store fronts have been lost. There are a few notable exceptions such as Sill's Hardware which is a splendid original commercial block. Interestingly enough, many customers request the owners not to change their store front because of its rare authenticity. Fragments of the original store fronts fortunately may be still found such as the upper fascias, brackets, dentils and the like; however if still remaining, they have been covered up by new signs.

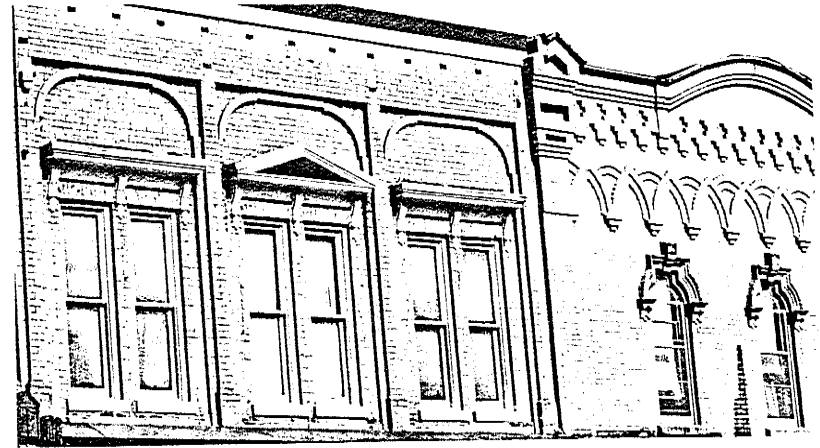
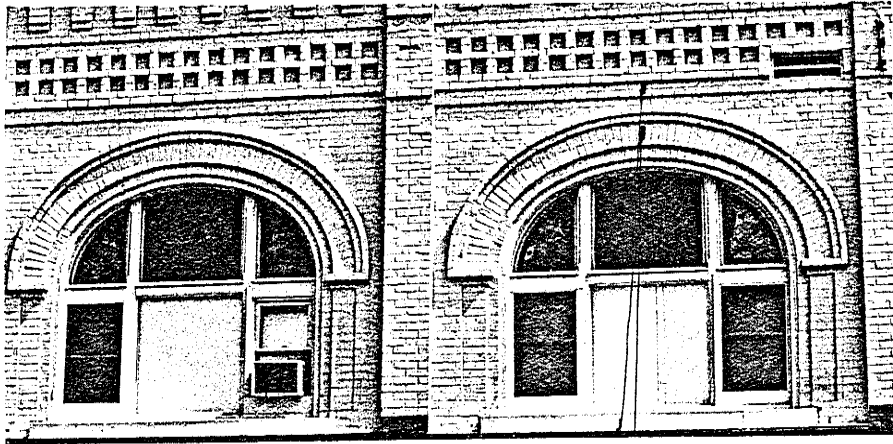
SIGNS

Signage on the buildings of Main Street have also changed significantly and the same reasons for store front changes applies to signs - to create a new modern image. The technology of sign making has changed with plastic manufactured signs replacing the hand painted. There are conflicting opinions about what type of signs are appropriate for a heritage conservation district and the following is a useful extract from the book "Conservation of Historic Streetscapes" by the author.

"A significant feature of the twentieth century urban environment is outdoor advertising. There are few vistas of business areas or even residential areas that do not display some form of street publicity through facade, hanging or freestanding signs. This new element in the visual and textural quality of cities, towns and villages is a result of a consumer society that likes to buy and sell, proclaim and to notice. The collective visual result of advertising may either enhance and enrich the personality of a historic streetscape or overwhelm it. To the conservationist advertising has often been considered vulgar and inappropriate, marring the repose and clarity of an architecture or streetscape that was never designed to receive applied graphics. It represents a visual exploitation of a mellow and restrained early building stock. To be sure there will be poor advertising as there will be poor building but the objective is to combine the best of both. Gordon Cullen has observed that perhaps the most dynamic and exciting quality advertising brings to the urban environment is vitality. To strip a main street of all its signs and advertising would be to remove a layering of visual vitality and immediacy that greatly enriches the street as a whole. The approach to signs in



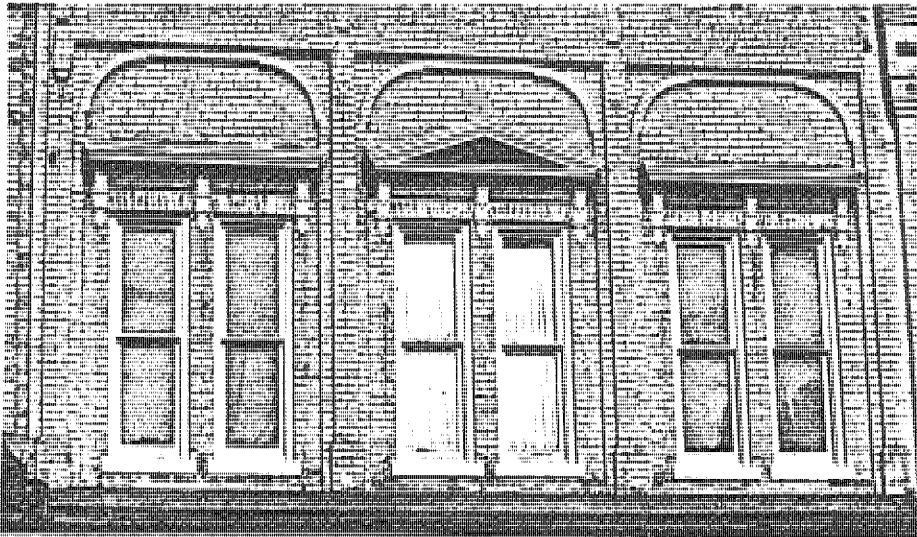
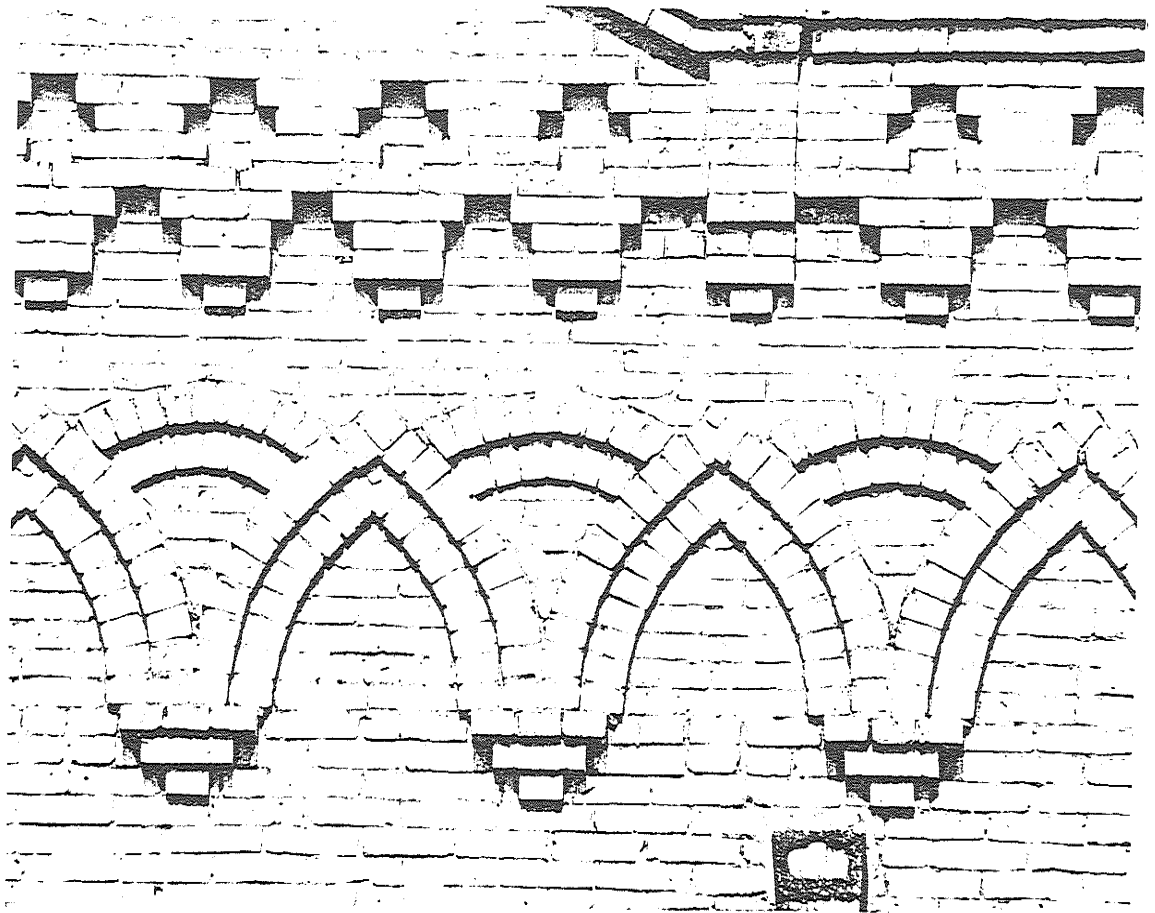
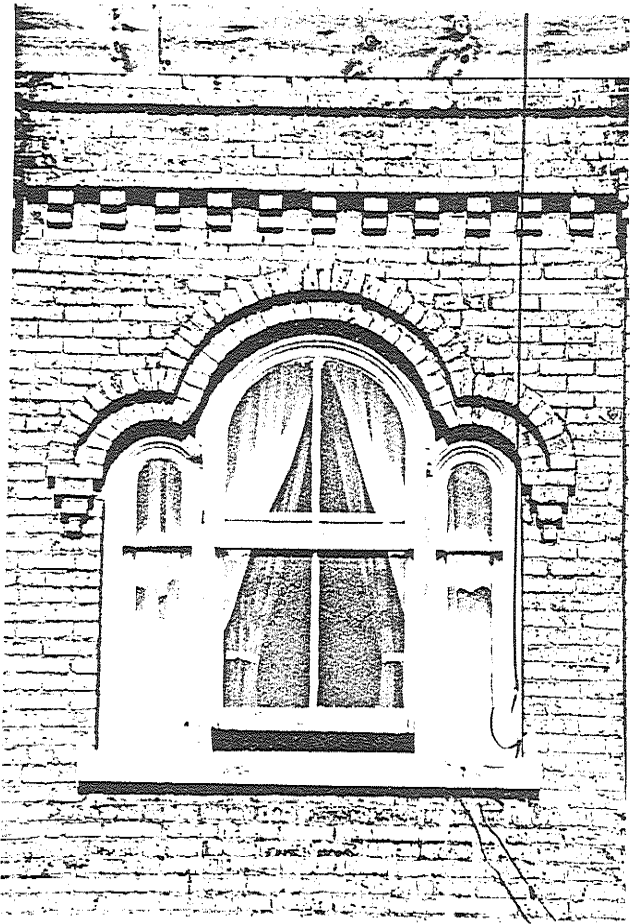
The towers of Main Street are an exuberant and romantic feature. Their preservation and upkeep is important as evidence of an age of prosperity and pomp.



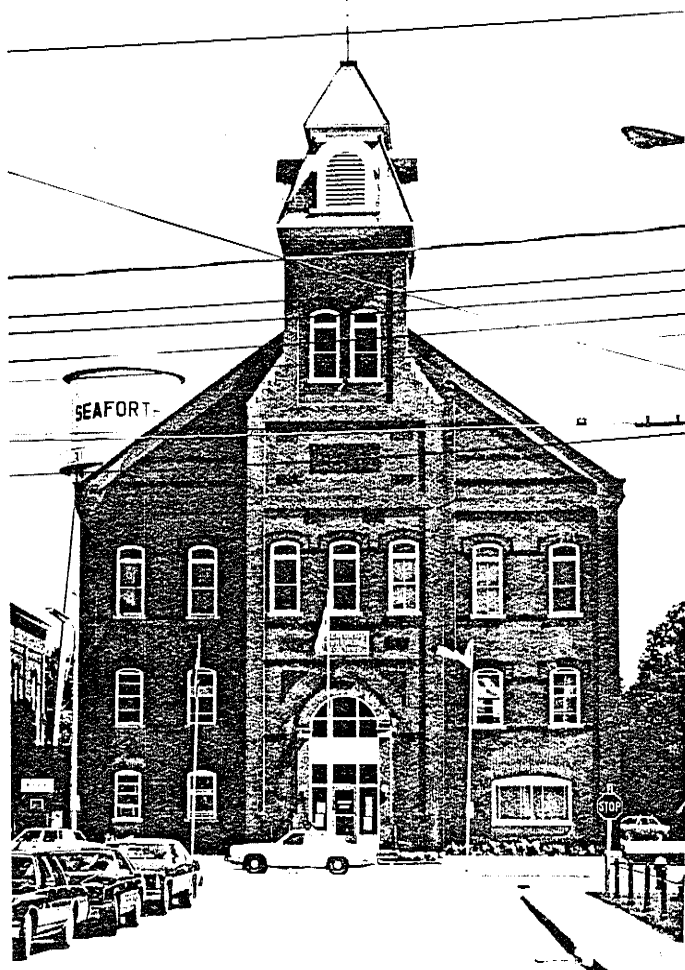
The upper facades are a rich modulation of decorative brickwork.



The east side of Main Street changes from a continuous building facade to a group of individual free standing buildings as shown to the left. Landscaping could tie the composition together better than at present.



The basic building layout of Main Street is quite simple - a straight street with commercial blocks on either side. Closer observation reveals however an immensely rich and subtle modulation of the brick facades. The brickwork is testimony to superb craftsmanship and skill.



The full beauty of the town hall is best appreciated from Market Street, where the whole front facade and tower is visible. The tightness of Main Street obscures this. This magnificent vista should be developed further.

an historic streetscape is as Moshe Safdie has written "To combine order and freedom: freedom without chaos and order with our sterility". A balance must be achieved between the particular scale, texture and mass of the building and the presence of its applied outdoor publicity. There should be a certain discordancy and excitement but not a blatant abuse of the street personality which often hanging signs, over-large lettering and an ill designed clutter of create".

Store fronts and signs therefore are an aspect of the heritage district that have radically changed and largely with no reference to the streetscape as a whole. They have simply happened in a piecemeal fashion. If the heritage district is to be conserved as an effective and visible whole, attention should therefore be given to welding the store fronts and signs together in a manner which complements the historic character of the street.

UPPER FACADES

The upper facades of the commercial blocks on Main Street are, to a large extent, the heritage resource of the district. They visually hold the street together and provide it with the character that is Main Street, Seaforth. It is this character that an overwhelming number of respondents in the interviews desired to preserve and enhance. What then exactly are these upper brick facades that provide so much to the character of Main Street?

In themselves the facades are deceptively simple in their design and composition. They are all uniformly of buff coloured brick punctuated by vertically proportioned windows and surmounted thereover by projecting brick corbelling, sill courses and piers. The reasoning for this rich and subtle modulation of the facade is often misunderstood. Discussion on the subject contained in the author's book on the Conservation of Historic Streetscapes reads accordingly.

"A significant feature of the facade however is the architectural detailing of projecting brick banding, pilasters and window lintels, stone keys, sills and date plaque, wood cornices, brackets and store facades and iron cresting on top of the facade. The purpose of this detailing is not only aesthetic but functional and often the latter is unappreciated in the celebration of the visual beauty and richness. The

fact that so much of the nineteenth century building has endured and weathered well is a result of functional facade detailing as much as an abundance of material and skilled craftsmen. Every modulation of the building facade to the left is to strengthen the lateral stability of the wall; the projecting window lintels, sills and cornice at roof level deflect water off the openings and facade as a whole, while the wood brackets support the projecting cornice. The only purely decorative elements are the semi-circular date plaque and iron cresting.

The nineteenth century facade detail therefore embraced sound constructional reasons that have stood the building stock in good stead. Every facade will employ a different set of details which should be carefully studied for functional as well as their aesthetic merit."

In the heritage district on Main Street the overall facade of the streetscape has remarkably and thankfully remained. The facades have however lost many of their applied details, especially the upper cornices, brackets and iron cresting. The situation is rather similar to the store fronts that have largely been stripped of their original details in a quest for a new and modern image. As discussed earlier these details which have often been interpreted as purely decorative do in fact perform functionally, especially to throw water and snow off the face of the building. Their decorative presence still remains significant and the loss has resulted in a very much more flat and austere streetscape than many interviewees also recognized. Unfortunately the disappearance of these decorative elements occurs bit by bit over a long period of time and the evolving austerity of the streetscape does not readily impact. It is interesting to note in the interviews how many respondents celebrated those instances where the original decorative architecture survived such as with the Cardno Block and its upper Mansard roof and tower.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

The upper facades exemplify not only good late nineteenth century architecture but also craftsmanship. It is trite but true to say that nothing really on Main Street is irreplaceable however at what expense? In this regard the building craftsmanship of Main Street is irreplaceable and that is reason enough to consider very carefully the removal of the heritage resource that makes up the street. Craftsmanship includes not only the

actual physical skill of building but also the scale, proportions and details that were evolved by tradition according to traditional ways. Craftsmanship is therefore tradition also and the building stock is a living and visible testimony to tradition. A particular attribute of this tradition has been the human scale of the streetscape. The author discusses scale in his book on the Conservation of Historic Streetscapes.

"Scale is probably one of the most difficult but also one of the important qualities of a streetscape. Illustrated here is a physically very large building in a small town. It does not appear however, to overwhelm or belittle the pedestrian or the street. The reason is the rich and almost domestic size of its many visible parts that have created a human or intimate scale that invites and pleases the eye. These parts or architectural details include an abundance of elaborately carved woodwork over the store windows at the roof soffits and on the clock tower, the breaking up of the brick second storey into six bays by projecting pilasters, the arched second storey windows with projecting brick arches and key stones, the gently sloping and coloured slate roof punctuated by four small dormer windows and finally a central high clock tower decorated with dormer windows and wood cornices. The whole composition exudes warmth and visual delight. Stripped of all its elaboration and detail the subject building would appear massive and out of scale with the rest of the street. Scale therefore is not size but detail and texture. In some cases a massive scale is intentionally sought and successfully achieved on smaller buildings such as banks where an appearance of solidity and safety is desirable. Large and sparse building elements are used such as stone with classical motives. In residential design conversely an intimate human scale is usually sought. The early streetscapes by their liberal use of detail and embellishment generally achieved an inviting human scale that is keenly sought after now, in old downtown residential neighbourhoods. As a valuable quality of streets is the presence of human scale, care must be exercised to conserve the very features that provide this." (* Cardno Opera Hall)

ROOFSCAPE

A particularly interesting and visually exciting feature of the heritage district is the roofscape and the towers of the post-office, Cardno block and town hall. The first two are clock towers and the last is decorative. There were other elaborate

towers, one being over a former hardware store on the west side. These towers are a valuable part of the heritage resource of the street. They add flourish and variety to the silhouette of the building facade. Without them the composition would be considerably less in its vitality and richness.

STREET FURNITURE

Thus far, discussion has focused on the building stock. A street however comprises far more than just building. Its function and character is also moulded by street lighting, seats, telephone kiosks and the like. The author discusses these in his book on the Conservation of Historic Streetscapes.

"The conservation of historic streetscape will involve not only major works such as the easing of traffic conditions or the provision of off-street parking but also smaller actions including a careful selection of street furniture such as garbage cans, park benches, planters and bicycle racks. Their quality and design will indicate the skill in which the details of the streetscape composition have been handled while their location will indicate the manner in which the street is to be made to work. Design has an influence on the user. Poorly designed and ill maintained street furniture invites abuse whilst good and well maintained furniture results in respect. Street furniture has much meaning beyond its prime functional quality. Seats and planters denote pause and rest. Mail boxes and telephone kiosks belong in places of activity and movement. Flag poles are for ceremony and pageant. Clock towers are monumental. All are necessary features requiring careful selection and placement. The design selection of the street furniture should be directly related to the character of the street. For example in a predominantly late nineteenth century streetscape of stone commercial buildings robust fixtures possibly in textured concrete would be appropriate. On a main street in a summer tourist village that is made up of mainly boom town front buildings with coloured awnings and brash graphics, brightly coloured fixtures in plastic or metal could be appropriate. There is therefore no uniform approach and what is appropriate for one community may be quite the reverse for another. The temptation to duplicate a successful application of a series of fixtures in one community to another, must be resisted unless the requirements are near identical."



Main Street is a compact composition of building with virtually no landscaped open space. However just past the post office is Gouinlock Street which captures a superb view of Memorial Park. The street should be landscaped to link Main Street with this lovely park.

In the heritage district the street furniture is a variety of styles, shapes and sizes which while adequate in themselves bear little relationship to the historic qualities of the street as a whole. Indeed there is actually very little pedestrian amenity at all. It is desirable therefore to carefully consider each and every piece of street furniture and relate its design and placement to the desired conservation goals of the heritage district.

LIGHTS

Lights are essentially a functional element, that provide illumination at night for the continued activity of a street in terms of shopping and driving, as well as for security. The height, overhang and location of the fixture can be determined with considerable scientific precision to achieve an adequate and even flow of light. The art of lighting must also however be reconciled with the character of the streetscape that is to be conserved. The design, bulk and placing of the poles is therefore important. If the street still has original decorative cast iron light fixtures it may be preferable to retain these even though contemporary illumination standards are not met. In this case the conservation of the historic character of the street is the top priority. With new light fixtures, clean and simple design should be sought.

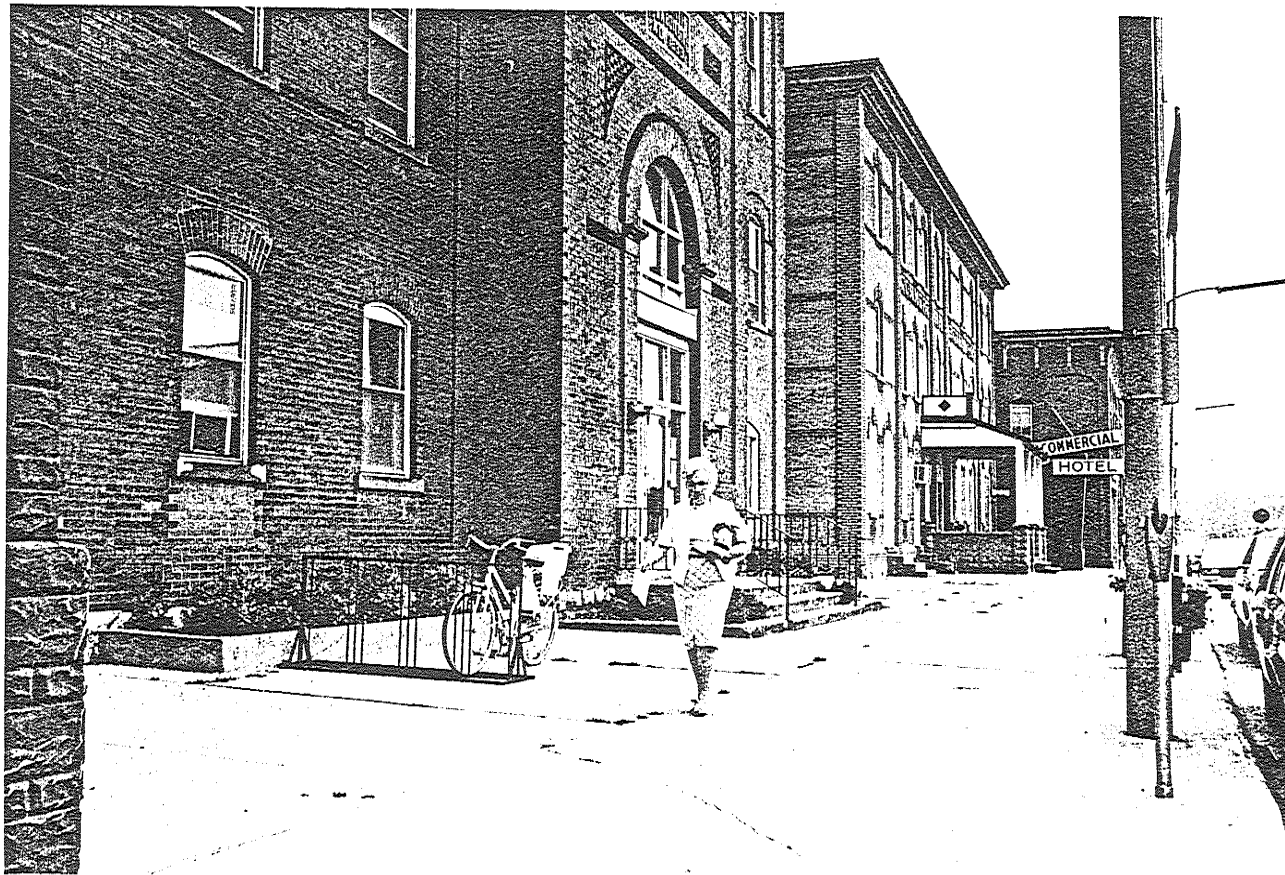
The lights on Main Street are modern, neat and tidy and functional. However it may be highly desirable to institute late Victorian cast iron lights with globe lights to highlight the heritage quality of the district. Such a proposition would be extremely attractive and give the street that added vitality that respondents to the interviews so desired. The visual clarity of the street would certainly accommodate such an addition. Consideration may also be given to illuminating the towers of Main Street that were discussed in the subsection on roofscapes. At night they are lost, but illuminated against the black sky, the effect could be most dramatic.



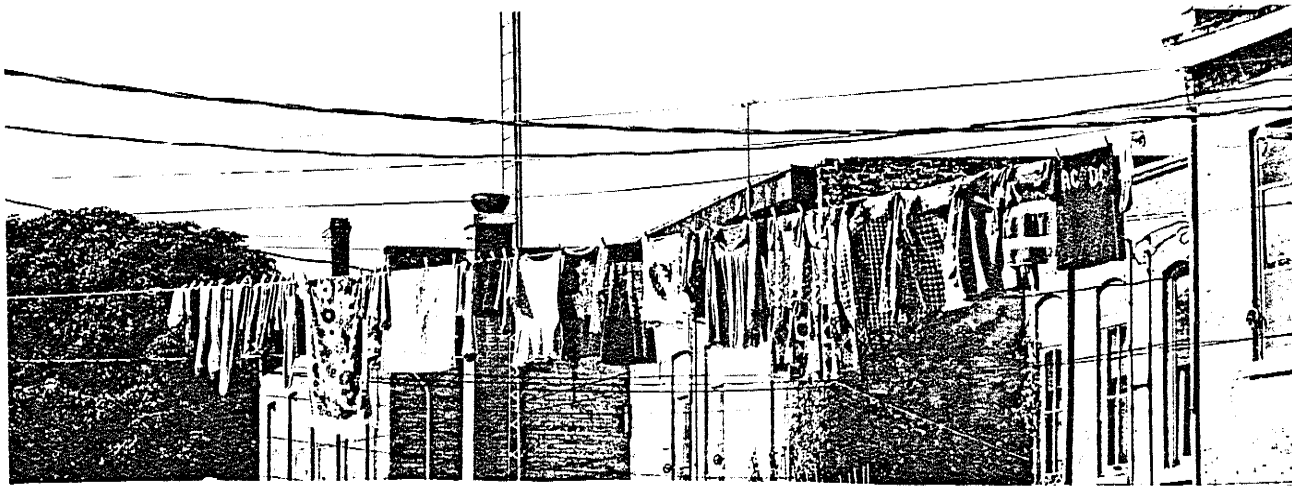
The visual poetry of reflections of an historic building in a sign facade.



How not to alter an historic building facade.



The interviews revealed a desire by the community to beautify Main Street, to make it more attractive and picturesque. There are many opportunities to do so. The above picture shows the unattractive front to the town hall and Commercial Hotel. This could be effectively landscaped with trees, flowers and seats. It is these small opportunities that must be sought out and developed.



Conservation relies on a profitable and viable use of the building stock. Empty buildings extinguish the viability for conservation.

ECONOMICS OF CONSERVATION

The success of the heritage conservation plan for the Town of Seaforth relies in large part upon the economic well being of the district. The best conservation policies are of little value unless the district has economic vitality and strength. It is necessary therefore that this plan address areas of economy that it might effectively influence. To a large extent many influences on the economic well being of the district are quite beyond the control and direction of the plan. However, there are many areas of the economy of the district that this plan can and should influence. The most obvious ones are with regard to the physical building stock and streetscape character, both of which can assist the long-term viability of the district. Other less obvious but important features include the marketing of the district as a special place of heritage value. It is the intent of this section therefore to discuss those areas of economic activity that the plan may effectively influence.

1. PLANNING COMMITMENT TO THE HERITAGE DISTRICT

Heritage conservation district planning does not exist in isolation but is only one part of many, required to conserve an historic area. Business associations, the municipal council, L.A.C.A.C.'s and horticultural societies to name a few can all foster a commitment to preserve its built heritage. In Seaforth an eloquent and forceful statement of commitment is contained in the town's new official plan. This is a significant step for the district because in essence the town, through by-law has committed itself to conserving and strengthening the cultural and economic vitality of the downtown business section. The particular policies contained in the official plan are discussed in the section of this plan entitled "Official Plan Statement" .

One of the most important statements in the official plan is with regard to the commitment to the core area, as opposed to permitting commercial development on the periphery of town. Peter Barnard discussed this issue at the 1978 conference on Conserving Ontario's Main Street in the following manner.

"It is evident that unrestrained new development gravitates to the periphery of towns. The reasons are not hard to see: the core area with its multiplicity of ownerships, vested interests, entrenched zoning provisions and diverse pressures, is a high cost, high risk location, whereas the outskirts offer lower

cost land and low risk potential. The result is that both new housing and new shopping facilities tend to be built on the urban fringes.

The other result is a weakened downtown: business and trade are siphoned off to the fringes, people stop going downtown to shop and there is a general decline in the public's interest in the area. Because of deteriorating economic health, local property owners no longer have the resources, nor sometimes the will, to maintain their properties and to prevent further decline, thereby entering a downward spiral which encourages even greater public interest in the suburban malls.

The economic and social costs of a declining downtown are high. It leads to a loss of investment for expansion and maintenance of the business. Besides lowering employment and reducing the municipal tax base, such a decline leads to heritage buildings falling into disrepair and then deteriorating past the point of economic rehabilitation so that demolition ensues."

Fortunately the effects of periphery shopping centres has not effected Seaforth and the official plan has policies to prevent the very damage Peter Barnard describes. A proper planning framework has been established and the role of the District has been clearly defined as the main centre for commerce and related government services. The framework also includes the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved including the municipality, the business people and the L.A.C.A.C. The planning commitment to the district has provided a sound base for effective conservation.

2. BUILDING STOCK - EFFICIENT USE AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY

"To be effective, conservation must be based on efficient use and economic viability. These two qualities are interdependent; the economic viability of a building depends upon the use to which it can be put. For a building to function efficiently, it must not only be convenient to use but also capable of use at reasonable cost." Roy Worsket wrote the preceeding in his book, Character of Towns, and touches on two of the main issues of conservation - efficient use and economic viability. It is trite but true to say that no building stock will ever be 100% efficient. Only degrees of efficiency exist. The intent is to optimize efficiency and economic viability.

The building stock in the district under study is in varying degrees of efficiency and economic viability. It is an accumulation of over a century of piecemeal growth and change that has been under continuous adaptation to meet contemporary needs. To be otherwise would have resulted in decay and deterioration.

Just what is inefficient or uneconomical at any particular time will vary from building to building. However, it may be reasonably expected that most buildings and environments will be found lacking in contemporary terms due to a variety of contributing factors. The objective is to determine what those factors are so remedial steps may be taken. Nathaniel Lichfield has considered these factors under five headings.

- 1) Structural obsolescence, where the fabric of the building has reached the point of being unable to offer adequate physical shelter.
- 2) Functional obsolescence, where the building has such internal defects in arrangement and sanitation as to impede efficient use.
- 3) Locational obsolescence, where the building is no longer sited in an appropriate relation to the external linkages and communications which influence its use.
- 4) Environmental obsolescence, where the conditions in the immediately adjoining area (incompatible neighbours or traffic) render the use of a building unacceptable to its occupants in its current use, or, in the extreme case, any occupants for any use.
- 5) Economic obsolescence. All these conditions of obsolescence are remediable by the expenditure of money, whether inside the building as in (1) and (2), or outside as in (3) and (4). This money will not be spent unless it can be adequately compensated by the returns to be obtained from more effective use of the building and thereby greater occupational value, in either its current use or some other use. If the expected returns would not be sufficient then the building is also economically obsolete. There is also a special case of economic obsolescence where a building may have some or even none of the other four obsolescence factors, but where the potential value of the site for a new building, again

5) Continued..

in the same or a new use, is sufficiently high to justify its redevelopment. This might be called site obsolescence.

The district is now considered under the five foregoing factors that contribute to a decline in efficient use and economic viability of a building stock.

Structural obsolescence is not a significant problem with the building stock in the district. On a comparative basis with world historic sites and monuments the building stock is young. The severe weather conditions in south-western Ontario do however contribute to a more intense use of the building fabric than temperate climate settlements. Notwithstanding this, inspection of the buildings in the district and discussions with the owners have established that the building stock is in a moderate state of repair only.

Functional obsolescence of the building stock generally has not been found in the district. In most cases the building stock has been remarkably adaptive to new uses, with a cellular layout of the buildings. Large floor area commercial establishments such as grocery stores that through their sheer physical size have found it uneconomical to assemble the required floor area in the existing building stock and have thus built anew. The particular aspect of the building stock in the district that has suffered is the residential component mainly on the upper floors. Although this has largely been the result of environmental obsolescence, functional obsolescence in terms of very deep and poorly lit space has also aggravated the problem. The internal arrangements of the upper floors thus often preclude the requirement to meet the Ontario Building Code and in general do not provide an attractive and comfortable living space. Access by steep and narrow stairs also detract for young and older inhabitants.

Locational obsolescence is considered in terms of a town and a trade area perspective. In terms of the town and district with its prime function of commerce, is well placed in a central position and near equidistant from the four corners of the town. This was discussed and verified in the technical study for the Seaforth Official Plan Review. Similar conclusions were also drawn in regard to the town's location in its trade area. Albeit shopping patterns have vastly changed over the last half century,

Seaforth continues to provide an essential service role to its own and the neighbouring community. Locational obsolescence is not therefore considered a major problem for the district, although every effort must be made to maintain the competitiveness of the district for an increasingly mobile consumer.

There is however one major aspect of locational obsolescence that is of concern to Main Street and this is the weakening of the area as the main place of assembly. To a very large extent the residential and assembly activity of Main Street have eclipsed. The loss of the residential component is discussed at length in following paragraphs. The loss of the traditional assembly functions include those places that in the past have accommodated large groups of people, the presence of which adds great vitality and economic well-being to the street as a whole. The new arena and Van Egmond House and many other service clubs are now off Main street, and the people presence they generate is absent. This concern was voiced forceably by respondents during the interviews, who said that for a variety of reasons Main Street was no longer a people place and was in fact empty and inactive after store hours. There is therefore an locational obsolescence on Main Street in that many supporting activities to a healthy and viable business area have been withdrawn, with the evident result of a weakening business environment.

Environmental obsolescence varies considerably in the district. With regard to the business, government and recreational use of the district, the environment is well suited. Main Street is the public thoroughfare upon which the building stock faces. The street is necessarily compact, busy, active and vital and affords the best environment for commerce in a small town. For the residential component environmental Obsolescence is however a definite problem. Noise and lack of security on Main Street are detrimental to a comfortable living environment in the apartments on the upper floors. Outdoor living amenity space such as gardens, balconies and back yards are also absent and the sharing of car parking and service space with the businesses at ground floor does not enhance the presence of the living environment. These and other factors have conspired to make the upper floors of district building stock partially and in some cases completely obsolete.

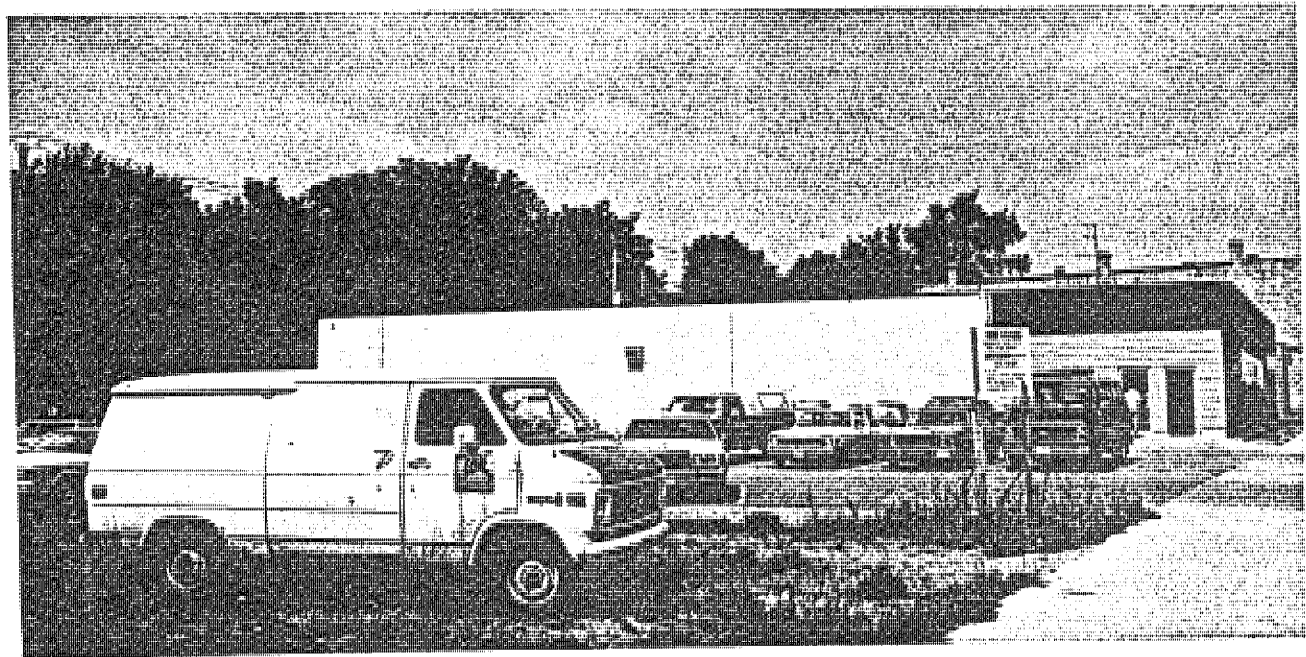
The evident problem of environmental obsolescence in the district is considered very important, especially with regard to the upper floors. In an age where building maintenance and energy conservation are high in cost, efficient use and economic viability are paramount in older building stock. Without these the building fabric and use slowly but surely deteriorates, to a point that it is uneconomical to restore. To an extent this process has commenced in the district and remedial measures should be considered in this plan.

All the foregoing discussion is remediable by the expenditure of money. However, as stated earlier, this money will not be spent unless it can be adequately compensated by the returns to be obtained from more effective use of the building, and thereby greater occupational value, in either its current use or some other use. Without these returns economic obsolescence sets in and the building stock deteriorates through a lack of up-keep. Until recently the burden of up-keep of heritage buildings in the province was entirely borne by property owners. Even though the heritage was in large regard considered the heritage of the country there prevailed upon the owner the moral and practical responsibility to maintain it at his or her own expense for the nation. The burden was financially onerous and in many cases unreasonable and thus evolved the principle of the nation assisting owners to preserve its heritage. The owners thus become in some measure the custodians of a heritage to be preserved for future generations. This principle with the practical outcome of grants of money is dynamically related to the issue of economic obsolescence. In essence the nation through the Provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Culture's Heritage Administration Branch has now committed itself financially to assist in the repair, restoration and up-keep of heritage building stock. In a direct way economic obsolescence has been partly relieved and opportunities now exist for owners to up-grade their buildings with the assistance of grant money, which otherwise would have been uneconomical. Further discussion on this issue is contained in later sections of this plan.

3. THE DISTRICT - PRESERVATION OF CHARACTER

The downtown shopping area of Seaforth is more than a collection of buildings providing business and services. It is also an expression of the character and personality of the town. It is an important focal point for the community. Main Street

Hanging signs, awnings and a bit of clutter - the stuff of a live main street!



At the south end of Main Street is some new commercial development and a car park shown to the left and above. Although the building does not compliment the two storey historic building stock it is well placed at one end of the heritage district. The district needs this type of business and modern building. The challenge is to locate it so it does not detract from the older building stock.

provides both a sense of civic identity and pride and also the community's link with its own past. Roy Worskett has written that "visually most towns derive their identity and personality from the way in which buildings, both good and bad, together create a general atmosphere and build up a recognizable local townscape " The downtown business area in Seaforth was selected as an heritage conservation district not only because it is historic but also because it is an expression of the character and personality of the community. It is moreover a streetscape of superlative beauty and integrity. An attractive personality attracts. An unattractive personality repels. From an economic view point therefore an attractive, inviting, well maintained and efficient district is good for business. The question of what then is attractive is a difficult and rather subjective issue. As Bob McNulty observed, "there has been an attitude, still quite widely held, that Victorian architecture is a sign that a town has not progressed into the 20th century". Evidence of this feeling can be seen in the manner older commercial blocks are stripped of their Victorian decor and proportions, and covered with metal siding or the like. This is as much an attempt to create a new image as to economize stock that is inherently elaborate and richly modulated. When this process of "improvement" commences the integrity and visual harmony of the streetscape collapses and the result is a discordant and troubled looking downtown. A lack of confidence sets in as to what the character and personality of the town should be.

The identification and preservation of the character of the district is therefore considered an important issue in enhancing the economic well-being of the business community. Main Street in Seaforth has a strong and attractive image that should be preserved in this regard.

4. DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT

Small downtown business areas have many assets that are often overlooked in the development of an economic strategy for improvement. Douglas Richardson has said that "a small community has three basic assets usually lacking in a city: a sense of human scale in both buildings and businesses, a sense of place and history, and a sense of personal contact". The preceding text has mainly discussed the physical building stock of the district. Of equal and indeed greater importance is

management of the business area in terms of personalized service, hours of business, display and window dressing, graphics, advertising and special promotions. It is these aspects of business that shopping centres by their collective action succeed. Small downtowns by their inherent multiplicity of business ownership however lack that cohesiveness. Business associations and B.I.A.'s strive to establish collective programs that benefit the entire business area.

The economics of conservation therefore must embrace the marketing of the district as a place of special personality and service as well as product choice at competitive prices. Marketing in this regard will not only include special promotions but also the provision of a comfortable and attractive shopping environment.



A full and profitable use of the entire building stock on Main Street is crucial for sound conservation.

INTERVIEWS

The opinions and attitudes of the business community towards their business area is deemed to be of much value in the preparation of this heritage conservation district plan. The interview approach was carried out in an open-ended approach. Given the relatively small number of interviews over 90% of the business community were interviewed. A pattern of concern did emerge quite clearly on a variety of issues. Almost without exception the interviewee's expressed support and pride in the Main Street business area and also a desire to preserve and improve the building stock and appearance. The empty stores were of deep concern and a need was expressed to promote the business area as an attractive and inviting area. A brief summary of the main responses, in their order of importance, is below.

Priority	Item
1.	Beautify Main Street
2.	Preserve the historic building stock
3.	Landscape Main Street
4.	Increase car parking space.
5.	Erect highway sign indicating the business area
6.	Fill the empty stores
7.	Remove car parking meters
8.	Increase activity and special events on Main St.
9.	Clean up back of the blocks
10.	Uniform store hours

In response to the area as a whole most interviewee's were desirous to see the historic character of Main Street preserved. However, this was tempered by the feeling that it was somewhat lack-lustre and dull in its appearance, lacking colour and vitality. The respondents were unsure as to exactly why they had this dissatisfaction but were quick to name other communities who had implemented core area improvements with visibly attractive results. Clinton, Exeter and Hensall were named in this regard. Landscaping was a popular theme with the respondents and many suggested that flowers, trees and seats would beautify Main Street. An equal number however cautioned against planting trees on the Main Street sidewalks, fearing there is too little room. Also caution was expressed in making the area overly cluttered with improvement features. Car

parking came in for considerable comment with a desire for more. Although car parking is limited on Main Street many respondents commented on the need for merchants and their staff to park off-street so on-street space is available for the shoppers. Strong desires were voiced on the removal of the car parking meters.

Indication by a sign feature, on Highway #8, of the business area was suggested by many respondents. The new highway sign at Hensall had made a favourable impression and this was mentioned as an example of what was required.

Empty stores were a concern to many respondents and in fact the whole issue of business and jobs were raised. The market trade area of the town was perceived to be limited with little significant growth opportunity. Shopping habits were changing with increased consumer mobility and concern and desire that Seaforth retain its market share was keenly expressed. However empty stores suggested that this was not occurring at present.

Interesting discussion revolved around how Main Street might continue to be the centre point of activity in the town. Traditionally this had been so and the main places of community were located downtown. However this traditional pattern has changed very considerably now and many major community places are now off Main Street. Respondents noted examples of the new arena, the legion building and other service clubs. This exodus has weakened Main Street as a people place and concern was voiced in regard to the area now becoming quite devoid of life other than for shopping. These were vital and perceptive comments.

Many smaller, but no less important, issues were raised in regard to uniform store hours, cleaning up the backs of the blocks and hanging flower baskets.

TRIANGLE DISCOUNT (Mrs. Anne Wood)

Mrs. Wood considered Main Street to be a good business area. She particularly like the flower pots and thought additional park area with benches and landscaping would add to the area. She wished to see the old buildings preserved but added that they needed to be repaired and made more attractive. A

particular concern of Mrs. Wood was the need for more industry and jobs in town.

CAMPBELL'S HARDWARE (Mr. Charles Campbell)

Mr. Campbell offered many insightful and useful comments. Car parking was of concern and he stressed the need for good accessible off-street car parking behind the commercial blocks. Mr. Campbell also wished to see the development of more landscaping on Main Street in terms of small pocket parks and trees. These he believed were attractive features. He thought Main Street should be made more attractive by more appealing building trim colours. His view on the older buildings was that it was mainly the heritage quality of the buildings that preserved them, and not the functional quality which was often lacking. He indicated that operating costs had to be kept low and old buildings were often expensive to maintain. Mr. Campbell also wished to see the back of the blocks cleaned up and a greater awareness by the community of its built heritage.

PHOTO PRO (Ms. Beth Caron)

Ms. Caron liked the older buildings and she believed many others felt the same way. The empty stores were a concern to her, but car parking she believed was adequate.

CULLIGAN REAL ESTATE (Ms. Chris Cairns)

Ms. Cairns would like to see the older architecture cleaned and improved and with trees and flowers along Main Street. Noise on Main Street at night was a concern she mentioned.

HURON EXPOSITOR (Mrs. Susan White)

Mrs. White believed that Main Street had alot going for it and that we should build on what we have. She favours the restoration of the older buildings and especially the co-ordination of the lower and upper facades. She would like to see soft landscaping and trees so the street is attractive for people. A sign on Highway #8 indicating the business area she said would be a benefit. Guinlock Street to Victoria Street could be beautified according to Mrs. White. A major problem she believes is car parking and this could be largely resolved by access to back car parks. With regard to the older

buildings, Mrs. White would like to see the heritage details on the facades highlighted.

TREEMER PRINTERS (Mr. Dave Treemer)

Mr. Treemer offered some very good comments. He believes Main Street is a good business area, but the car parking problem must be solved. A main concern is for how much longer can we afford to keep and maintain the older buildings? He said that the investment must show a return and this was difficult with historic buildings.

TASTY-NU BAKERY (Ms. Julie Jutzi)

Ms. Jutzi would like to see the older buildings kept and smartened up. She believes the Main Street needs some beautification and suggested some landscaping and flowers.

ANNA'S DRESS SHOP (Ms. Anna Hamilton)

Empty stores were a concern to Ms. Hamilton, however she thought the stores that were here were generally attractive and modern. She was happy with Main Street and believed it to be a friendly and good shopping area.

BOX FURNITURE (Ms. Barb Kerslake)

Ms. Kerslake believed the Main Street was nicer than most and that the stores provided good window displays. She did suggest however that the older buildings needed a face-lift. Also of concern was the shortage of car parking and the lack of co-ordination of business opening hours. She would like to see the removal of the meters.

ANSTETT'S (Mrs. Doreen Strong)

Mrs. Strong had some useful comments. She likes the Main Street and the older buildings but suggested that they need more maintenance with a co-ordinated approach and colour scheme. She also favoured more landscaping, trees and flowers. Car parking was a problem. She believed the B.I.A. was a useful organization to promote the business area.

SHINEN'S (Mrs. Rebecca Iszacovics)

Empty stores were a main concern of Mrs. Iszacovics and she believed a most important objective was to keep stores here and busy. To do so she believed that special events such as the Ciderfest and Christmas Parade were successful. These draw in outsiders and are good for business. This she believed was the only way to increase new business. With regard to improvements to Main Street landscaping was good but thought vandalism could be a problem.

ETUE INSURANCE (Mr. Jim Etue)

Mr. Etue was positive about Main Street and believed it to be a good business area with adequate stores and a nice appearance. The town he believes looks good and few improvements are needed. The restoration thus far has been good.

GRAVES WALLPAPER AND PAINT (Mrs. Shirley Snell)

Mrs. Snell had some insightful comments on the appearance of Main Street, the basis of which were that the street lacked a unity with mixed up colours and building appearance. She was in favour of maintenance and a more unified look. A sign at Highway #8 was also suggested. Parking meters were considered a problem.

SUPERIOR FOOD MARKET (Mr. Bob Walkom)

Bob Walkom said that it was important to keep Main Street busy and that more building restoration and attractive landscaping would help improve the area. He would also like to see a sign at Highway #8 indicating the business area. He is a firm supporter of the B.I.A. for which he would like to see more enthusiasm.

CANADIAN IMPERIAL BANK OF COMMERCE (Mr. Jim Gould)

Mr. Gould offered a lot of challenging and tough thoughts. He was of the firm belief that the town and Main Street to prosper must have business and jobs.

He was concerned about the lack of opportunities for young people which he puts ahead of heritage interests. He said that old buildings are expensive to maintain and that without

adequate financial return they will fall into disrepair. Overhead costs are also crucial to the upkeep of historic buildings. He doubts whether the money spent on older buildings in Seaforth is good value. Designation of a heritage building he believes should not limit the use of a building which sometimes will contradict heritage policy. Mr. Gould was a firm believer in making the best use of a building.

Returning to the future of small towns he said it was important to put money towards attracting new industry and jobs. Small towns will survive through jobs not heritage preservation. With regard to Main Street he suggested better access to the back of the block car parking areas. In general he thought the area looked good and complimented the recent new buildings.

TORONTO DOMINION (Mr. Larry Lane)

Larry Lane feels Seaforth is an attractive and pleasant town and he expressed satisfaction with Main Street. He was not overly supportive of grand improvements as he believed the trade potential was limited and the expenditure of money for improvements would not significantly increase business.

SEAFORTH AUTOMOTIVE (Mr. Bruce Wilbee)

Mr. Wilbee indicated that car parking was a problem around Guinlock Street. He felt that Main Street was a good and presentable business area but that a sign on Highway #8 was required directing motorists to the stores. The upper facades of the stores he believed could be improved.

DON'S SHOE PLACE (Ms. Karen Walker)

Ms. Walker believed that Main Street needed more to attract and draw people. A distinctive feature was required. The older buildings she suggested should be cleaned up and Main Street beautified so that people will want to come here. She doubted that the sidewalks are wide enough for landscaping. Store fronts could be improved.

MacLean's Flowers (Ms. Wilma MacLean)

Landscape improvements especially at the intersection of Highway #8 and Main Street were suggested by Ms. MacLean, but not on the sidewalks as they are too narrow. She expressed a likeness

of the older buildings which could be repaired and improved. The parking meters should go.

TOWN LIBRARY (Ms. Trudy Broome)

Mrs. Broome felt that Main Street was a bit dull and needed to be beautified. Empty stores were a concern to her and this she said was the worst feature of a business area. To improve the appearance she suggested landscaping and around the library also. She was keen to preserve and keep up the older buildings.

CANADIAN TIRE (Mr. Dale Derbyshire)

Mr. Derbyshire expressed alot of enthusiasm on benefits of really beautifying Main Street by restoring the old buildings, and introducing landscaping and pedestrian amenities. To compete with Stratford he said Seaforth must move ahead and really make an inviting shopping area. He suggested a nicer link between Main Street and Victoria Park and good signage at the Highway intersection of the business area.

TOPNOTCH FEEDS (Mr. Bob Armstrong)

As a newcomer to Seaforth, Mr. Armstrong brought some fresh ideas. First and foremost he said Seaforth must keep key business and provide jobs. It must be a "come to" and not a "go from" community. He commended the excellent service clubs in town and felt Seaforth had the opportunity of providing everything that is needed. He believed that Main Street could be made more attractive so people are attracted here, however he said that accommodation for the travelling public is sorely needed.

UNITED TRAILS (Mr. Les Habkirk)

Seaforth looks as good as most towns Mr. Habkirk said and Main Street is fine. Vacant stores are a concern and better off street car parking could be promoted. Meters do not help. He said that businesses make a town and if we have good stores people will come. The excellent community activities attract people and provide business.

MURREY'S PLACE (Mr. Brian Flannagan)

Mr. Flannagan felt that an attractive business area will attract people, as also will special events. Empty stores are a poor image and car parking is very important. He indicated that Roth's are popular because of the good parking. Mr. Flannagan had some useful observations on older buildings which he said were not economical to put alot of money into.

ROTH'S FOODMARKET (Mr. George Sweeney)

Mr. Sweeney spoke enthusiastically on the need to spruce up Main Street and with landscaping. The improvement of one store be believes sparks the improvement of another, however he does not want to see an overly cluttered improved street. Double parking was a concern and service vehicles should, he said, use back service entrances.

FLANNERY CLEANERS (Mr. John Flannery)

Alot of money is needed to service old buildings, Mr. Flannery said, and often it feels like throwing money away. He favoured more tree landscaping especially on the side street boulevards. Hanging signs were also needed for easier identification of stores, which was an interesting observation by Mr. Flannery.

SILLS HARDWARE (Mr. Frank Sills)

Main Street is good, Mr. Sills said, and really no major changes are needed. Largely leave alone. The sidewalks were not wide enough for trees he said. A useful comment was to repair the loudspeaker system on Main Street for special events.

HETHERINGTON FOOTWEAR (Mr. Gerry Hetherington)

Mr. Hetherington offered many very useful comments. He wished to see Main Street far more attractive so people are invited to stop here. At present he feels the area to be uninviting. It is also necessary to have more downtown attraction whereby people will want to come downtown. At present few people go downtown after dark. The whole area he believes must be made more people orientated. The second floors which are largely empty do not contribute to make it a people place. Most community activities are outside Main Street in the arena and legion. These were very useful and different observations.

STEWART BROTHERS (Mr. James Stewart)

Mr. Stewart's store was one of the first to put in a modern store front. He voiced concern about the empty stores which were bad for the whole business area. Removal of the flower baskets were a loss he said and the paving of Gouinlock Street took away from the functional appearance of the view towards the Victoria Park.

SEAFORTH JEWELLERS (Mr. Ken Lingelbac)

Mr. Lingelbac made many useful comments. He believed Main Street is an attractive street. Trees are nice he said but the narrowness of the sidewalk and snow removal could prevent them being planted. He was keen on having some feature at the Highway to draw people's attraction to the business area, however vandalism was a problem. Some buildings he felt could be repaired and improved.

STEDMANS (Mrs. Linda Huard)

Seaforth's Main Street is one of the most attractive in the area, Mrs. Huard said. She expressed concern over the empty stores and would like to see something done with the vacant lot where a store burned down. She likes the older buildings. Car parking is a problem and the meters are disliked.

SEAFORTH INSURANCE (Ms. Karen Chesney)

Karen Chesney had many suggestions for improving Main Street. She would like to see more landscaping, the restoration of the store fronts, back to their original appearance, nicer garbage receptacles and flower pots. Victoria Park she felt also should be made more use of. The parking meters should go.

SEAFORTH RECORD SHOP (Mrs. Barranger)

Mrs. Barranger expressed satisfaction with Main Street but desired to see more car parking. Parking meters she said cause a lot of complaints.

BOB & BETTY'S VARIETY (Mr. Bob Beuttenmiller)

Mr. Beuttenmiller did not feel Main Street was as attractive as it might be. He cited a lack of upkeep and uninspiring store fronts. There is adequate car parking and back car park lots do work especially when the merchants and their staff park at the rear of the blocks so shoppers have the on-street car parking.

SCOOP AND SAVE (Mrs. Linda Coleman)

Mrs. Coleman likes the older buildings and would like to see them preserved. However she would like to see Main Street beautified and more support given to local businesses. She doubted whether paved sidewalks and trees would draw more business. Car parking is a problem and the meters should be removed.

SEAFORTH RESTAURANT (Mr. Jim Kiritsis)

Mr. Kiriesis felt that Main Street was in good shape, but desired to see the empty stores filled up. Car parking he believed was adequate.

CHEESE HOUSE (Mrs. Bonnie Bedard)

Mrs. Bedard suggested that the older buildings on Main Street could be cleaned and the store fronts improved. She liked the business area which was generally clean and well kept. The flower baskets were a loss she said and car parking could be improved.

PAINT & PAPER (Mrs. Hazel Hildebrand)

Main Street is attractive said Mrs. Hilderbrand and Rathwells and Sills look very pleasing. She believed that the older buildings are in good repair and the stores are well kept. Something eye catching at the main intersection is needed. Trees on Main Street she felt would not be practical but landscaping and benches on the side streets would be.

SEAFORTH SEWING CENTRE (Mrs. Helen Garrick)

Most towns have more flower boxes and landscaping and this could improve the Main Street, Mrs. Garrick said. The older buildings add interest and it is up to each owner to improve their own property.

TOM AND DONNA'S ETC. SHOP (Mrs. Calhoun)

Mrs. Calhoun expressed satisfaction with Main Street citing the fact that all stores are uptown and close and that the area has a nice appearance. However, she did say that the flower baskets add attractiveness. The lack of jobs was of a concern.

KEATING'S PHARMACY (Mrs. Pauline Bennett)

Landscaping and flowers such as those they have put in Clinton were desired by Mrs. Bennett for Main Street in Seaforth. Also she suggested a sign at the intersection and that something be done with the vacant lot created by the burnt out store. The empty stores were a concern.

GINNETTE'S RESTAURANT (Mr. Jim Nash)

Mr. Nash expressed the opinion that Main Street was attractive and alot cleaner than most towns. His only objection was for the removal of the meters.

McKILLOP MUTUAL INSURANCE CO. (Mrs. Margaret Sharp)

Mrs. Sharp expressed pleasure about the older buildings and Main Street. Empty stores are a concern to her and also she believes some feature is needed at the highway intersection to stop and attract people into the business area. She likes landscaping although vandalism has been a problem.

KLINGS (Mrs. Marilyn Chesney)

Improvements could be made to Main Street, Mrs. Chesney commented, so it is more inviting. Flowers are nice she said. The parking meters should be removed and co-ordinated store hours would help. Special occasions are good for the business area and selection in the stores is important.

BAUER TRAVEL (Mr. Harold Bauer)

Mr. Bauer discussed keenly the keeping up and maintaining of the older buildings which he said give personality to Main Street. He cited the Stratford City Hall as an example. However alot needs to be done to improve the buildings and mostly it is small repair work. Car parking he firmly believes is vital for Main Street as people drive some distance and they deserve easy & adequate car parking. Back of the block car parking should be improved for the merchants and staff. He cautioned against overdoing improvements so the street becomes cluttered.



There is a keen desire in the community to preserve the historic character of Main Street.

CASE STUDY

The purpose of this section is to research carefully one building on Main Street with regard to layout, space allocation, design, structure and services. The building chosen was an empty store called the Kitchen Centre which is very typical of most stores on the street.

In plan the store is long and narrow with a recessed entry door flanked by two side display windows. The display windows are original with wood panelling and ceiling. The layout works very well as the deep recess allows sheltered window shopping and a maximum of window display. The window displays are windowed off from the inside and so form self contained enclosed areas.

Inside the store there is a long narrow room with a high ceiling. The plan shape is therefore very simple and functional. The original tin ceiling still exists. Various new non-permanent screens have been built and new fluorescent lighting has been installed. At the back of the store are two windows and a service entrance door. The floors are maple.

A trap door at the back of the store gives access down to the basement. The basement consists of stone foundation walls, a poured concrete slab floor and an exposed wood joist ceiling. An older but good condition furnace is located in the basement.

On the second floor is apartment space. At the time of the study a key could not be obtained for access to the second floor of the kitchen Centre so the adjoining apartment to the north was studied. This was a two bedroom apartment resided in by an elderly couple.

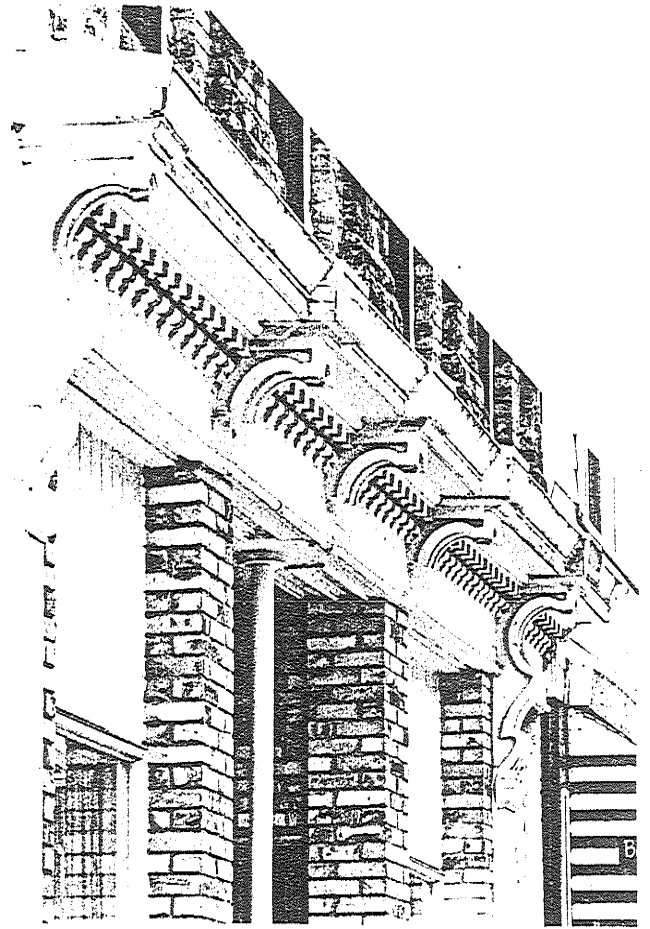
The rooms were small but all had windows. The environment was very cozy, warm and nicely decorated. The residents were very happy and appreciated the warmth and privacy of their home.

In discussing the building with the apartment dwellers and

and researching the building fabric it can be generally summarized that the building is well built and serviced, in a good state of repair and with good layout for business and living. The structure is sound and the roof has been re-done recently. Much of the original historic fabric still exists both inside and outside.

This short case study reveals that blocks on Main Street are functional for today's commercial and residential needs. To be sure modifications are required to up-grade the buildings but these are not considered onerous. One environmental problem is the second floors become hot in summer with the flat roofs.

It is not because of the building itself that it is empty, but the business activity on Main Street which is diminishing & that is effecting many small rural towns. This problem has already been discussed and assertive action is needed. It is crucial that buildings like the Kitchen Centre do not remain vacant as this deteriorates the building fabric over time. The future well-being of this building is therefore tied to the economic rejuvenation of the down town in general.



Hill and Borgal,
Architects and Planners
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