

Arts, Culture & Heritage



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Cultural development plays a key role in achieving sustainable and livable communities. Academic theorists such as Jon Hawkes and Richard Florida have published popular writings on the value of cultural engagement, expression, preservation and celebration in creating communities in which people want to live, work and visit.

The new Official Plan for the City of Vaughan will provide guidance for the physical development of the municipality over the next 25 years. It will also take into consideration important areas of sustainability: social, environmental and economic. Jon Hawkes in 2001 wrote that culture may also be considered a fourth pillar in sustainable community planning (*The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning*).

Creative City: Arts, Culture & Heritage

Like every great city in the world, cultural assets in the areas of architectural heritage, archaeological preservation, arts and culture are significant factors in determining what makes a city unique and great. Vaughan presently has over 250 heritage structures identified in its Register of Heritage Buildings and boasts three heritage conservation districts designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. These are found in the former village cores of Thornhill, Kleinburg-Nashville, and Maple. The Woodbridge heritage conservation district study is currently underway. The design guidelines developed for these areas require preservation of significant architectural buildings and outline design elements for new construction in these areas. While heritage conservation districts do not require a slavish reproduction of historical architectural styles, they do require buildings to conform to massing and scale that are sympathetic to their surrounding architecture.

Although considered by many as a relatively new community, Vaughan actually has a rich history dating to 1797 when the first immigrants settled here from the United States. Many

were promised large tracts of land from the British to come to Vaughan and settle in what was fertile soil perfect for farming. By the 1820s to the end of the 19th century, a large flow of immigrants came to Vaughan looking for a better life. By the 20th century and 21st centuries we see settlement from all parts of the world creating a richly multi-cultural and diverse community.

Vaughan's history is mainly that of a rural-agricultural community. In fact, Vaughan Township changed relatively little from the 1840's when the number of inhabitants stood at 4300 to 1935 when it had 4873 residents. World War II, however, sparked an influx of immigration, and by 1960 the population stood at 15,957. However, over the past decade, Vaughan has experienced an unprecedented period of growth.

The City of Vaughan was one of the first municipalities to undertake an Archaeological Master Plan in the late 1980s. Some hugely significant archaeological sites have been discovered such as palisaded Iroquoian village sites dating from the early 16th

century. These sites and others have been recorded in the City of Vaughan Archaeological Master Plan Study and in other archaeological assessments conducted from the early 19th century to the present day. The major sites in Vaughan include the Mackenzie Site, the Seed-Barker Site, and the Boyd Site, near or along the Humber River system. Other significant sites include the Keffer Site, the Surgain Site, Jarrett-Lahmer Site, and the Teston Road Ossuary near or along the Don River system.

Today, assessments for archaeological resources are conducted on lands being developed within the City of Vaughan. Assessments are conducted to ensure that significant sites, unmarked gravesites, ossuaries (prehistoric mass burial sites) or historic European settlement sites are recovered and/or protected. Provincial guidelines have been established to ensure proper mitigation of these archaeological sites. Additionally, licensed archaeological consultants, City officials and officials of the Archaeology Unit of the Ministry of Culture, all work towards identifying and protecting archaeological resources

in Vaughan and throughout the Province. All significant sites identified through the archaeological assessment process are registered and recorded with the Ministry's archaeological database. City staff ensures archaeological assessments are conducted and included as a condition of approval for development applications in Vaughan.

Vaughan's strategic plan identifies as a strategic objective: preserving our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture. In 2008, the City will undertake a study to develop a cultural map (resource identification) and cultural plan in an effort to increase the capacity of arts, culture and heritage assets in the community and engage Vaughan's multi-cultural community in these areas. The new Official Plan for the City may address issues related to opportunities for the arts, public art, culture and heritage in maintaining a healthy and prosperous community. The Official Plan needs to address the preservation of local arts, culture and heritage resources and contribute to the growth of a more "creative" and livable city.



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