RAILS OF CHANGE:
THE HICKSON TRAIL
CULTURAL HERITAGE
LANDSCAPE STUDY

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SCHOOL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING
QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY
RAILS OF CHANGE:
THE HICKSON TRAIL CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPE STUDY

by

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This master’s report is dedicated to:

Jessica Kilcoyne

Your love, support and patience over the past two years has been essential to the completion of this degree. I appreciated your understanding of the days required working in the archives that you would have preferred to have been spent doing fun things together.

Thank you and I cannot wait for the new journey that is ahead of us!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project emerged from my desire to examine rural heritage planning in an area not experiencing development pressures such as those locations adjacent to the Greater Toronto Area. Many rural municipalities in Southwestern Ontario have conducted limited assessments of heritage resources, including the County of Oxford. With this in mind, I have chosen to examine an area that I have personal connections to in the hopes of assisting heritage planning efforts. The Hickson Trail abuts the eastern limits of my family’s farm just north of Woodstock, Ontario. I have spent a great deal of time in my youth hiking this trail, not realizing its historic significance until now.

The kernel of the idea for this study came from my grandfather, Kenneth E. Yeoman. During our weekly trips to drop off turkeys at the Oxford Deadstock, he would frequently share with me tidbits of the history of the Hickson area and the former railway. My suspicion that very little history had been written about the railway and that a potential cultural heritage landscape existed that should be conserved was developed from our conversations. I greatly appreciate his unknowing role in the undertaking of this study.

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a cultural heritage landscape assessment of the Hickson Trail. A former railway corridor and associated commercial/industrial node in the Village of Hickson, Ontario have been identified by the author of this study as a potential cultural heritage landscape requiring a systematic evaluation to determine heritage value and whether conservation measures are warranted. As a result, the research questions posed in this study are the following: 1. Is the Hickson Trail (the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway) a cultural heritage landscape as defined by the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement?; and, 2. Does the Hickson Trail (the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway) merit protection under the Ontario Heritage Act? These questions are posed to provide a cultural heritage landscape evaluation in the context of Ontario’s heritage planning policy regime. The elements of ‘railscape’ are presented by the author to guide both historical research and a landscape survey. A methodology adapted from the United States National Parks Service is utilized as a framework to evaluate the historical significance, integrity and boundaries of the potential cultural heritage landscape. Overall, the study’s findings are that Hickson Trail is historically significant; however, the landscape lacks sufficient integrity to designate under the Ontario Heritage Act.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This study presents a cultural heritage landscape assessment of the Hickson Trail. A former railway corridor and associated commercial/industrial node in the Village of Hickson, Ontario have been identified by the author of this study as a potential cultural heritage landscape requiring a systematic evaluation to determine heritage value and whether conservation measures are warranted. As a result, the research questions posed in this study are the following:

1. Is the Hickson Trail (the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway) a cultural heritage landscape as defined by the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement?
2. Does the Hickson Trail (the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway) merit protection under the Ontario Heritage Act?

These questions are posed to provide a cultural heritage landscape evaluation in the context of Ontario’s heritage planning policy regime.

Methodology

Neither the Provincial Policy Statement nor the Ontario Heritage Act provides assessment frameworks for the identification and evaluation of cultural heritage landscapes in Ontario. As a result, this study utilizes a modified methodology derived from the United States of America National Parks Service. Two methods are employed by this study to derive data for the evaluation of the Hickson Trail as a cultural heritage landscape. First, historical research is conducted to ascertain the historical impact that the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway had upon the area surrounding the Village of Hickson. Second, a landscape survey is employed to assess the ‘railscape’ features that have endured since the railway was abandoned in 1965.

Following the gathering of relevant data, an evaluative framework modified from the National Parks Service methodology is employed. First, the Hickson Trail railscape is assessed for historical significance by utilizing the criteria outlined in Ontario Regulation 9/06 and by determining periods of historical significance for the landscape. Second, the historical integrity of the railscape is evaluated based upon criteria derived from the Region of Waterloo’s cultural heritage landscape assessment guidelines. Finally, boundaries are identified for the properties...
that comprise the potential cultural heritage landscape as informed by the historical research and the landscape survey.

Research Findings

For almost 90 years, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway (and successive companies) significantly impacted the area surrounding Hickson, Ontario. The arrival of the railway produced the creation of a new community centred on the railway stop to the detriment of an existing nearby settlement, Strathallan. A vibrant commercial/industrial node formed adjacent to the railway stop that provided a transportation linkage for agricultural goods, produce and livestock to be distributed to distant markets. Further, the railway permitted new cultural opportunities such as high school education for youth, excursion trips to Great Lakes coastal settlements, and ‘hockey trains’ for attendance at sporting events. The Village of Hickson was also named after Sir Joseph Hickson, a former General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway who gained national significance in his attempts to compete with the development of the Canadian Pacific Railway during the era of his association with the village.

This study’s landscape survey findings, however, indicate that a large portion of identified railscape features have been lost since the railway was abandoned. Several key buildings within Hickson associated with the railway have been lost, including the Hickson station, the cheese factory, and the grist mill. More importantly, however, is the loss of the segment of abandoned rail right-of-way which has re-naturalized following the removal of a bridge crossing Mud Creek. This segment of the rail corridor is attached to the commercial/industrial node within the Village of Hickson, and its loss diminishes the holistic corridor-node railscape essential to the existence of a railway cultural heritage landscape.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is the opinion of the author of this study that the Hickson Trail railscape cannot be considered a cultural heritage landscape meriting conservation under the Ontario Heritage Act. Although the railscape has substantial heritage value to the area surrounding the Village of Hickson, the historic integrity of the landscape has been substantially compromised in the years following abandonment of the railway. As noted in Map ES1, two separate landscapes now exist: a commercial node in the Village of Hickson and an intact abandoned railway right-of-
way. A cohesive railscape no longer exists to that can be experienced by individuals “on the ground.” Although this study does not recommend designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, the following actions are warranted to recognize the heritage value of the Hickson Trail:

- The Hickson Trail railscape should be listed in the County of Oxford Heritage Resources Inventory (Table ES1 provides a heritage statement and description of the railscape).
- A public workshop should be held regarding the Hickson Trail.
- Interpretive displays should be created for the Hickson Trail railscape.
- Several of the buildings comprising the railscape should be restored and repaired.
- The County of Oxford should recognize the value of the Hickson Trail as a natural heritage corridor.
- A history of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway should be written.

Map ES1: Boundaries of the Potential Hickson Trail Cultural Heritage Landscape
Figure ES1: Hickson Trail Description and Heritage Statement

**Description of Property – The Hickson Trail, Township of East Zorra-Tavistock**
The Hickson Trail is a railway landscape that consists of two constituent heritage features: the Hickson Trail running north-south and bounded by Oxford Road 8, the 13th Line, Oxford Road 17 and Oxford Road 59; and, associated properties within the Village of Hickson consisting of the Hickson Library (85 Loveys St. E), S.T. Loveys, Ltd. (89 Loveys St E.), the postal outlet (83 Loveys St. E.), a red brick private home (81 Loveys St. E.), and a white siding apartment building (88 Loveys St. E.).

**Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**
The Hickson Trail is of cultural heritage value due to its historic and contextual role in shaping the development of the area surrounding Hickson, Ontario. In 1876, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway completed a rail line north of Woodstock, Ontario that provided the final link to the railway’s terminus in Stratford, Ontario. The railway resulted in the creation of the Village of Hickson surrounding the rail stop at the intersection of the railway and the current Oxford Road 8. The railway stop was also instrumental in the decline of the nearby settlement of Strathallan as residents and entrepreneurs located to Hickson to be close to the railway. For 89 years, the railway provided economic, social and cultural benefits to the residents of Hickson, and farmers in the surrounding area.

Additionally, the railway created a distinct settlement pattern in the Village of Hickson. Unlike many rural villages, the central core of Hickson is not located at the intersection of two major roads. Rather, the railway and its associated yards produced a commercial and industrial core surrounding the rail right-of-way that continues to exist to this day. The former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway line between Woodstock and Hickson was abandoned by Canadian National Railways in 1965.

**Description of Heritage Attributes**
Key attributes of the Hickson Trail landscape that reflect its value as an important link to the area surrounding the Village of Hickson include:
- the former railway right-of-way now known as the Hickson Trail;
- raised earth works at the centre of the right-of-way that served as subgrade for rail track structure;
- the red brick S.T. Loveys commercial building located on the S.T. Loveys property;
- the white outbuilding on the S.T. Loveys property that served as the former feed shed;
- the grey outbuilding on the S.T. Loveys property that served as the former coal shed;
- the yellow brick outbuilding on the S.T. Loveys property that served as a former storage shed;
- the brown outbuildings on the S.T. Loveys property that served as former lumber sheds;
- the white aluminum siding apartment building that was a former commercial building;
- the Hickson Library as the former township hall;
- the yellow brick post office building that was a former blacksmith shop; and,
- the red brick house that was once a grain storage shed.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of cultural heritage landscapes is relatively new to Ontario’s heritage conservation and planning regime. Although the identification, evaluation and protection of cultural heritage landscapes has occurred in the United States and European countries for several decades, many Ontario municipalities only began to consider cultural heritage landscape planning with the issuance of the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the Planning Act. In the section dedicated to “Cultural Heritage and Archaeology,” the PPS directs municipal governments to conserve cultural heritage landscapes as well as built heritage. According to the PPS, cultural heritage landscapes are:

a defined geographical area of heritage significance which has been modified by human activities and is valued by a community. It involves a grouping(s) of individual heritage features such as structures, spaces, archaeological sites and natural elements, which together form a significant type of heritage form, distinctive from that of its constituent elements or parts. Examples may include, but are not limited to, heritage conservation districts designated under the Ontario Heritage Act; and villages, parks, gardens, battlefields, mainstreets and neighbourhoods, cemeteries, trailways and industrial complexes of cultural heritage value (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005).

With the definition of cultural heritage landscapes provided by the PPS, candidates for conservation within Ontario municipalities can be identified and subsequently protected under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act.

To date, many municipalities have been slow to undertake studies of potential cultural heritage landscapes, and their focus has remained on individual heritage buildings. As a result, there are extensive areas of potential cultural heritage value that exist throughout the province awaiting evaluation and at risk from destruction. The purpose of this study is to examine one of these potential cultural heritage landscapes: the Hickson Trail.
1.1 Research Question

As a former railway landscape, the Hickson Trail serves as a potential cultural heritage landscape that influenced the history of a rural community in Southwestern Ontario. Thus, this study explores the following research questions:

1) Is the Hickson Trail (formerly the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway) a cultural heritage landscape as defined by the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement?; and,

2) Does the Hickson Trail (formerly the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway) merit protection under the Ontario Heritage Act?

In order to limit the scope of research to answer these questions (Yin, 2009), the unit of analysis is the abandoned right-of-way corridor containing the Hickson Trail and the associated properties in the Village of Hickson that were linked directly to the former railway. Both of these areas comprise the landscape termed the Hickson Trail for the purposes of this study.

1.2 Geographic Location of Study Area

The study area is located in the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock between the City of Woodstock and the Village of Hickson. Map 1.1 presents a visual illustration of the study area and Map 1.2 provides a representation of land uses within the village. It has the following boundaries: north to Oxford Road 8 (also known as ‘Loveys St. E’), east to the 13th Line, south to Oxford Road 17, and west to Oxford Road 59. These boundaries were chosen for several reasons. First, the abandoned rail corridor is located centrally between Oxford Road 59 and the 13th Line for most of its length between County Roads 17 and 8. Second, the study area boundaries provide consideration of landscape elements associated with the rail corridor and properties within the Village of Hickson. Finally, the section of abandoned rail right-of-way within the study area is the only remaining segment of rail corridor of the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway that exists in the County of Oxford.
Map 1.1: Map of the Study Area
Map 1.2: Village of Hickson Land Uses
1.3 Selection of the Hickson Trail

Although some may consider the selection of the Hickson Trail to be an obscure choice for the subject of this study, the author believes that there is a pressing need to consider the heritage value of railway landscapes. Abandoned branch railways such as the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway served as important catalysts in the social, cultural and economic development of rural Ontario. Their operation was largely taken for granted by area residents following the formative years post-construction, and the heritage legacy of railways has been permitted to disappear slowly as the landscape was re-shaped to meet the needs of the automobile age (Brown, 1994). Accordingly, “[t]he material evidence of the origins and subsequent development of the railway is not properly regarded by the population at large in the same context as those aspects of our past that we commonly perceive and value as heritage. Nor are the standards of scholarship or conservation that would be taken for granted in the fields of, say, Roman archaeology or the care of historic buildings applied with similar rigour in the case of the railway” (Cossons, 1997, p. 5). As a result, this study seeks to shed light on the heritage value of “railscape” in the context of the Hickson area and throughout rural Ontario.

1.4 Scope of Study

The author has chosen to restrict the scope of this study geographically and temporally. Although the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway ran vertically across Oxford County from its northern to southern boundaries, the cultural heritage landscape study area focuses upon the surviving remnant of the railway, now serving as the Hickson Trail. While there are historic rail stations and potentially other surviving elements of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway located in other settlements throughout the county, these features are not be considered in the study as they are no longer associated with an intact rail right-of-way.

Given that this report involves historic research, the delineation of a time period for study is important to ensure focused information gathering. The study period for the research project is the years 1870 (the beginning of efforts to establish the railroad) to 1965 (the year the railway was abandoned by Canadian National Railways, the final owner of the railroad). Research for this period shall focus upon historic buildings, persons and events pertaining to the railroad during the period of study. The research project will not examine issues related to the Hickson Trail in the years following abandonment to present.
1.5 Contributions to the Planning Profession

This study provides a timely opportunity to conduct a case study analysis of a potential cultural heritage landscape. There are several anticipated contributions to the planning profession. First, while a variety of American and European scholars have written on the topic, to date, there has been limited research regarding cultural heritage landscapes in a planning context within Canada. Given the limited amount of academic literature, it is not surprising that relatively few Ontario municipalities have adopted planning policies for the identification and evaluation of these important heritage resources. Therefore, the primary contribution of the report will be to add knowledge to the field of heritage planning to assist in understanding the importance of cultural heritage landscapes.

Second, although the PPS requires identification and conservation of cultural heritage landscapes, the prominence afforded to built heritage by members of the public and many heritage professionals presents the need for greater education concerning general information about cultural landscapes. While cultural landscapes offer great potential to inform us about human history and to foster a sense of place, their study is more difficult than that of built heritage due to limited public awareness and the relatively recent arrival of the concept to the field of heritage conservation. This study aims to increase public knowledge about cultural heritage landscapes.

Third, the methodology employed for this major research paper is being modified to be applicable for the assessment of a single potential cultural heritage landscape, and in particular a railway landscape. As such, this report will aim to contribute to the profession a methodology for the assessment of individual cultural heritage landscapes that can be utilized by municipal staff, consultants and citizen groups.

Finally, the methods utilized in this report can be employed to assess other abandoned rail rights-of-way as potential cultural heritage landscapes. Although railways were vital means of transportation to provide goods and passengers between urban and rural centres, few historic railway landscapes have been assessed to determine if they merit designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. As a result, there is considerable research needed on the heritage value of abandoned rail rights-of-way.
1.6 Structure of Report

This report consists of eight sections, including the introduction. Section 2 serves as a brief literature review to the topic of cultural heritage landscapes to provide readers with foundational knowledge about the concept. With the foundational information on cultural heritage landscapes provided, Section 3 advances the concept of “railscape” and its associated components. Section 4 summarizes the legislation and policy framework that guides this study and its conclusions. A comprehensive methodology is then outlined in Section 5 reflecting the process taken by this study to identify and evaluate the Hickson Trail. In Section 6, a detailed overview of the history of the Hickson Trail railscape is provided along with the results of a landscape survey conducted to consider existing conditions. Section 7 distils the results of the historical research and landscape survey through an evaluative framework in order to analyse the heritage value of the Hickson Trail. Finally, Section 8 presents answers to the research questions of this study and provides recommendations for the future treatment of the Hickson Trail railscape.
2.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPES LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to explore some of the conceptual issues pertaining to cultural heritage landscapes. Within the field of heritage conservation/heritage planning, the notion of cultural heritage landscapes is relatively recent. According to Robert Shipley and Robert Feick (2009a), cultural heritage landscapes have been written about for the last twenty years, but have only recently become part of North American mainstream heritage planning initiatives due to concerns about increasing levels of urban sprawl. Both Richard Longstreth (2008) and Richard Francaviglia (2000) indicate that a focus on landscapes represents a new wave of heritage conservation, moving beyond a focus primarily on individual buildings. According to the authors, recent emphasis on cultural heritage landscapes is a new and exciting area for those interested in studying heritage preservation. Longstreth, however, warns that the concept of cultural landscapes is frequently misunderstood and risks marginalization. Thus, it is important that a survey of the literature concerning cultural heritage landscapes be conducted to tease out an understanding of what cultural heritage landscapes are and what benefits they provide. This is the objective of what is discussed below.

The following literature review is organized by four conceptual issues that are products of discussion in the writings of academics and professionals from a diversity of disciplines including archaeology, history, landscape architecture, planning, anthropology, environmental studies and geography. Indeed, as Graham Fairclough (2006) indicates, landscape studies in general is a multi-disciplinary field, which benefits from a diversity of disciplinary perspectives and contributions.

First, an exploration of terminology is undertaken to provide foundational knowledge necessary to properly study the topic. Definitional issues begin with an examination of what a landscape is and what it represents. From here, the reader moves on to a discussion of cultural landscapes, that engages multiple disciplinary perspectives. As the examination of cultural heritage landscape definitions in the literature indicates, there is a lack of a universal definition used by those who study the topic. However, several attributes are consistently referenced that

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1 It is important to note that the terms ‘cultural heritage landscapes’ and ‘cultural landscapes’ are used synonymously throughout this study. This is consistent with the treatment of the term in the literature.
enable the development of criteria to assess whether a subject landscape can be categorized as a cultural heritage landscape.

Second, the over-arching concept of ‘value’ in cultural heritage landscape studies is outlined and discussed. This concept is multi-faceted – value for cultural landscapes can be a matter of philosophy, an evaluative criterion, and a ‘selling’ feature. Addressing the concept of value is necessary to demonstrate the relevance and merits of studying cultural heritage landscapes and articulating plans for conservation. Without sufficient exploration of the value of cultural heritage landscapes, both experts and laypersons can struggle to move beyond basic issues pertaining to the purpose of examining cultural landscapes, let alone move effectively towards assessment and conservation efforts.

Finally, several tensions regarding the examination of cultural landscapes are apparent in the literature and are examined below. Generally, these tensions are relevant for those undertaking an examination of cultural heritage landscapes and require a selection of a perspective prior to engaging members of the public. Tensions regarding the perspective of the individual examining the landscape, an emphasis on buildings instead of landscapes, expert knowledge versus community knowledge, and organic evolution or set-piece interpretation (and their respective converse) create push-pull dynamics that heritage professionals are challenged with navigating in their research efforts. Discussions of these tensions are drawn out from the literature to provoke thought, although there is frequently a lack of consensus on these issues.

2.1 Defining Terms

The concept of ‘landscape’ has at its foundation a visual quality. Landscape emerged from artistic impressions of idealized natural settings – generally without human representations. Classic painted scenes of bucolic farmsteads, winding rivers nestled within large, draping trees, and powerful snow-capped mountains dominating their surroundings are common images evoked by the term ‘landscape’. Indeed, notions of an artistic construct is still a metaphor employed in defining landscape by Eric Hirsch, “the idealized world of the painted representation” (1995, p. 3), Brian Fagan, “like a piece of sculpture, which changes in response to the artist’s hands” (2006, p. 279), and Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern, “the artistic presentation of a scene” (2003, p. 2). While some scholars continue to think of landscapes in
relation to a pure, idealized natural environment, most have adopted a broader understanding of the term.

Landscape has moved beyond being thought of as merely nature in isolation; however the shift in perspective occurred late in the last century. As Tadhg O’Keeffe (2007) notes, up until the mid-1980s, landscape remained understood as a natural environment that humans could alter as necessary, although lacking a symbolic relationship between people and their landscapes. Landscape studies up until this period focused upon descriptions of the natural environment; human alterations, if discussed, were couched in how the features of the physical environment impacted the ways in which people developed the cultural features of the landscape. Since the 1980s, however, a shift in point of view has occurred, by which the actions of people upon the natural environment is the starting point for the consideration of landscape studies. Thus, landscape has become defined as the product of human interactions with the natural environment (McGovern, 2006; Landman, 2010; Groth, 1997; and Fairclough, 2006).

Out of this understanding of landscape has emerged the notion of cultural landscapes, whereby emphasis is placed on how people have used natural spaces at different points in time. Thus, landscape changes can be studied to discern an understanding of how people in the past used spaces together to derive cultural meaning (Groth, 1997). Emphasis, it is argued, should be placed on historic, everyday places – vernacular landscapes – that provide a deeper understanding of how culture was experienced by a large number of people, rather than focusing upon monuments and examples of “high-style designs” (Groth, 1997, p. 3). From this perspective, however, attempts to assess cultural heritage landscapes can suffer the danger of relativity. Longstreth (2008) notes the challenge of defining cultural landscapes broadly based on the historic interaction of people with a natural environment, whereby virtually any landscape has the potential to qualify as being viewed as a cultural landscape. Interestingly, he does not provide a means by which to avoid this pitfall of relativity, and a survey of the literature pertaining to cultural landscapes is silent in providing solutions. Arnold Alanen and Richard Melnick (2000), however, argue that relativity is not a significant issue as most individuals lacking detailed education regarding cultural heritage landscapes would identify them as special places between the wilderness and the city. Historically, academics studying the topic have extolled the virtues of cultural landscapes, although little has been written concerning universal
assess the criteria. This is especially problematic to those that undertake research regarding potential cultural heritage landscapes as criteria must be developed for each specific jurisdiction.

Government policies have attempted to articulate definitions of cultural heritage landscapes that can be used to assess potential sites. In the United States, the National Parks Service (NPS) is widely regarded for providing leadership in the area of cultural landscape studies (Alanen, 2000). According to the NPS brief on the subject, cultural heritage landscapes are defined as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values” (Birnbaum, 1994). To aid in analysis, cultural landscapes are also classified by the NPS into four types. First, historic sites are those associated with a significant historic event or person (e.g., battlefields). Second, historic designed landscapes are those environments designed by a trained individual and representative of a particular past style or tradition of landscape/horticultural design (e.g., parks). Third, historic vernacular landscapes are those in which the land was used by people for a cultural function that shaped the environment (e.g., agricultural landscapes). Finally, ethnographic landscapes are those areas where the combination of nature and culture produced a landscape of particular importance to a specific group of people (e.g., ceremonial burial ground) (Birnbaum, 1994).

2.2 The Value of Cultural Heritage Landscapes

Issues regarding the value of cultural landscapes are featured prominently in the literature. Unfortunately, the benefits of cultural heritage landscape identification and conservation are not inherently viewed as valuable by many individuals the prospective cultural landscape researcher interacts with in the course of a study (Melnick, 2008). Invariably, the researcher will be confronted by the sceptical, frowning resident who, after hearing the research proposal shrugs and exclaims, “So what?” At the core of this question is the need to communicate values provided by cultural landscape conservation. Francaviglia (2000) addresses perceptions of value though arguing that cultural landscapes should be treated as a commodity. Heritage landscape experiences are consumed by members of the public and need to be sold by articulating the value provided by the identified place. Selling members of the public on the value of cultural heritage landscapes is especially important in rural areas, given a rural cultural prejudice against items from the past based on the wide-held belief by residents “that ‘old’
means poor, while ‘new’ means prosperous” (Stokes, Watson & Mastran, 1997, p. 46). Based on the literature, the author of this study believes that cultural landscape conservation has two types of value: soft value and hard value. Each of these types has sub-values that are discussed below.

The first soft value is knowledge of the past. As noted by Fairclough (2006), the study of cultural landscapes can provide information about the experiences and challenges faced by people in the past that resulted in landscape change. Therefore, the cultural landscape can provide an important link connecting local residents to the history of an area. Paul Shakel (2001) also states that cultural landscape studies can stimulate cultural continuity through the prompting of the memories of the place, fostering a broader collective memory that can bring people together. It is important to consider, however, which history and/or whose history is emphasized in studying cultural landscapes. Both Alanen and Melnick (2000) and Denis Cosgrove (1984) draw our attention to this fact and remind us that history is not a neutral description of the past – instead it is filtered through the perspective of researchers and authors.

Second, cultural landscapes provide soft value through fostering a sense of place. While of particular importance to planners seeking to nurture strong communities, a sense of place for cultural landscapes is also of interest to those in the fields of anthropology and archaeology. As Ludomir Lozny (2006) notes, cultural landscapes are frequently filled with symbols and meanings of the past experiences of communities. Sense of place also emerges from the feeling of belonging that can be gained by individuals associated with a cultural landscape (Stewart and Strathern, 2003; Matthews, 2006). Additionally, cultural landscapes provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to experience remnants of the past to gain a connection to the history of a place (Matthews, 2006). Cultural heritage landscapes are also intimately tied to issues of identity. As Paul Claval (2007) notes, cultural landscapes can serve as important catalysts in the articulation of the collective identity of those individuals associated with the area, which is becoming especially important given that many societies struggle with issues of identity. Finally, cultural landscapes can advance a sense of place due to the codification of the history of a community in landscape change, offering opportunities for interpretation of the past (Stewart and Strathern, 2003).

Hard value for cultural landscapes represents tangible benefits that can emerge from identification and conservation. The first concerns economic development of areas associated with cultural landscapes. Identified and recognized cultural landscapes provide opportunities for
heritage tourism. The sites can be marketed to attract visitors to a community. Heritage tourism has surpassed agriculture and industry as the major economic sector in many areas of the United States and has the potential to generate significant amounts of revenue for rural communities (Francaviglia, 2000). Cultural landscapes utilized for heritage tourism can thus stimulate small business development and encourage community revitalization (Alanen, 2000).

Cultural heritage landscapes also provide hard value through beneficial improvements to the landscape from conservation measures. Restoration and mitigation efforts can be directed towards defined sites through landscape management initiatives, ensuring that the cultural landscape is retained well into the future (Fairclough, 2006). Conservation of cultural landscapes also ties into natural areas conservation through advancing notions of sustainability (Melnick, 2008) and preventing environmental degradation (Landman, 2010). However, as Alanen and Melnick (2000) indicate, the management of cultural landscapes can create tensions between those seeking to restore sites to a natural state and those that wish to preserve evidence of human interaction with the land.

2.3 Tensions in Cultural Heritage Landscape Studies

In surveying the literature on cultural landscapes, several debates regarding research perspective emerge repetitively. These debates serve as tensions within the discipline – issues for consideration when conducting primary research on potential cultural heritage landscapes. Generally, these tensions are not made blatantly clear by the authors, but rather are discussed as an aside to be teased out by the reader. Four of the tensions that are mentioned frequently are discussed below.

In the field of geography, many scholars treat the concept of landscape as a value-neutral, objective and scientific means to study a collection of natural areas, buildings and inhabitants. However, Cosgrove (1984) reminds us of the important power dynamics that exist in developing an understanding of a landscape. According to Cosgrove, the landscape concept emerged from the economic and social elite of society that valued landscape paintings of pristine, natural and/or pastoral environments that portrayed a sense of order. This conceptualization of landscape endures both in paintings and in efforts to conserve landscapes. Instead, Cosgrove pushes students of cultural landscape studies to understand landscape as a way of seeing an environment. Landscapes are not neutral, but rather are social constructs that are interpreted by
individuals based on their respective socio-political perceptions of the world. As a result, it is important to use a landscape to see all facets of the area’s history, beyond a focus on an understanding of the elite members of the subject community. Finally, Cosgrove stresses the need for local residents to develop landscape conservation measures in order to avoid outside intervention by individuals who seek to emphasize aesthetically pleasing and economically privileged conservation subjects that are attractive to tourists and supportive of elite-driven cultural norms.

Privileging the built environment over cultural landscapes in the overall field of heritage conservation is a source of frustration for Longstreth (2008), William Murtagh (1993) and Robert Melnick (2008). As noted by Longstreth, efforts towards heritage conservation primarily focus on individual buildings based on the architectural merit or association with significant persons. This perspective is rooted in the history of the historic preservation movement which mainly examined buildings and monuments as candidates for preservation. Examination of the landscape for broader issues of context is often not considered or treated as secondary if addressed at all. Murtagh echoes the concerns of Longstreth about the marginalization of landscapes in heritage conservation studies in the United States. Further, Melnick voices his frustration of the lack of importance afforded to landscapes in heritage studies. It is apparent to the reader that Melnick is annoyed by the lack of regard provided to cultural landscapes by both members of the general public and practitioners, whereas architecture, artifacts and associations have managed to dominate the heritage domain. Concerns such as these provide a warning to the challenges that researchers in the area of cultural landscapes can face when studying a potential site. Although the Ontario PPS requires identification and conservation of cultural heritage landscapes, the prominence afforded to built heritage by members of the public and many heritage professionals presents the need for greater education concerning general information about cultural landscapes, issues of relativity in assessing significance, and justification of value as discussed above. While cultural landscapes offer great potential to inform us about human history and to foster a sense of place, their study is more difficult than that of built heritage due to limited public awareness and relatively recent arrival of the concept to the field of heritage conservation.

Another tension for consideration by researchers studying cultural landscapes is the expert-community member dichotomy in determining heritage significance and value. Authors
in the field of archaeology present this issue based on previous experience with cultural resource management. According to Christopher Matthews (2006), archaeologists conducting cultural landscape studies must avoid the pitfall of conducting research based on archaeological methods of site analysis and imposing findings of significance and value upon members of the community without prior consultation. Instead, he argues that basic research to assess the place and its value can be conducted by the professional archaeologist; however members of the community associated with the cultural landscape need to be engaged from the start in efforts to determine significance and value. Similarly, Lozny (2006) highlights the importance of understanding the politics of cultural landscapes. While archaeologists may have a perspective on the significance and value of a place, local residents may have differing opinions on these matters. Thus it is important to blend both the perspectives of the researcher and members of the public in assessing potential cultural landscapes. Fortunately, the Ontario PPS addresses the issue of tension between expert and community member by requiring an articulation of community value as part of the definition to qualify cultural landscapes (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005).

Finally, a tension is apparent in the literature concerning how the cultural landscapes should be managed following identification. The first perspective is that the cultural heritage landscape should be restored to its original state to treat the site as a cultural artifact of a particular time (Francaviglia, 2000). Others, however, argue that a cultural landscape should be conserved and permitted to evolve as efforts to restore the site produce “a contradiction in terms, since a landscape that is artificially sealed at a particular moment stops being a landscape that it was and becomes a new landscape” (O’Keefe. 2007, p. 10). This dichotomy is expressed by Fairclough (2006, p. 59) as the distinction between landscape planning (“deliberately changing landscape in an attempt to improve it”) and landscape management (“the regular and sustainable ‘upkeep’ of landscape”).
2.4 Applicability of Literature to the Hickson Trail Study

This literature review has engaged a number of the major issues emerging from the academic study of cultural heritage landscapes. It has provided an opportunity for consideration and reflection upon perspectives of terminology, value, and tensions existing in the discipline. As indicated in the information presented above, the concept of cultural heritage landscapes is complex, multi-disciplinary and contested. The debates presented frame the perspective of this author and should prompt necessary pauses by the author and the reader to consider connections between the chosen case study and general issues pertaining to cultural heritage landscape studies.

Figure 2.1: Artist’s Rendering of the Former Hickson Station
3.0 UNDERSTANDING “RAILSCAPE”

With foundational information concerning cultural heritage landscapes provided in the previous section, this study now turns to the consideration of railways as a type of cultural heritage landscape. Although there has been detailed discussion of cultural heritage landscapes in relation to farms (Alanen, 2000), battlefields (Longstreth, 2008), and townscapes (Groth, 1997), there is a dearth of study pertaining to industrial landscapes, let alone railway landscapes as a sub-field. A great deal of writing has been produced on the history of many Ontario and Canadian railways; however specific railway landscapes (what can be referred to as ‘railscapes’) have received limited attention to-date to assess respective heritage value. This section presents a description of railscape to enable the evaluation of railways as cultural heritage landscapes.

3.1 The Historic Importance of Railways on the Landscape

Railways have had a fundamental impact on the modern development of the Province of Ontario since the first lines came into service in the 1850s. The construction of railways revolutionized the passage of people and goods throughout the province to levels far greater than previous modes of transportation. Prior to the development of railroads, travel throughout Ontario was only possible by horse or stagecoach on roads and via boat along rivers and lakes. Travel by road, however was challenged by rudimentary road foundations that limited passage due to weather conditions (both rain and snow), the generally poor quality of the journey experienced by passengers, and the length of time required to reach destinations. Waterways were a means to avoid some of the pitfalls of road transportation, although they limited destination options due to the need to follow the natural course of the river or lake. Railway development was thus viewed as a means to overcome the challenges of road and waterway transportation. As a result, the direct and indirect impacts on the Ontario landscape of the rail lines were profound (McIlwraith, 1998; Mika, Mika & Wilson, 1986; Andreea, 1997; Keefer, 1972).

2 Some consideration has been given to historic mines in the United States of America by the National Parks Service (Alanen, 2000).
3.1.1 Direct shaping of the landscape

The construction of railways impacted both the physical and cultural landscapes of areas connected to the rail line. Railway rights-of-way were delineated through agricultural and natural lands which produced the shaping of a landscape corridor unique from its surroundings. Trees were felled; soil was excavated; bridges were built over watercourses and roads; and mounds of dirt and gravel were laid to create a subgrade upon which tracks were laid producing immense change upon the landscape in relation to what had existed prior. Indeed, railways consistently shaped and adapted the landscape to meet the needs of passage (Keefer, 1972). Rights-of-way created narrow ribbons of an industrial landscape that rotated between periods of intense use with the passage of trains to the dormant periods without use. Along the rail corridor, clusters were developed to provide focal points for structures to fuel trains; buildings for passenger use and the loading, unloading and storage of cargo; and to permit additional tracks to be laid for the maintenance of trains and storage of railcars (Andreae, 1997; McIlwraith, 1998).

Railways also had profound impact on the landscape that was culturally significant to those individuals associated with rail travel. Cities, towns and villages accommodated the physical locations of railway clusters, and rail yards became central to the lives of many residents of communities linked by a rail line. Rail yard construction frequently resulted in defining commercial and industrial nodes in settlements (Brown, 1994; Stilgoe, 1983). Additionally, rail corridors often provided a network for wooden poles and wires that brought telegraph services to stations with information for railway operators and for residents seeking communications with distant settlements. Finally, railway construction culturally impacted abutting agricultural landscapes as the chug of the steam engine and shriek of the steam whistle added a new artificial sound previously unknown to farm residents. Often farmers utilized the passage of trains to determine time, knowing that train operators sought to maintain departure schedules (Stilgoe, 1983).

3.1.2 Indirect shaping of the landscape: settlement

Although rail lines were frequently constructed to link together communities existing at the time of construction, the arrival of a railway produced dramatic ancillary changes that shaped settlements more than settlements shaped railway landscapes. Railroads brought new people to
stops located in cities, towns and villages. Immigrants from other countries, provinces and local communities utilized the railway to arrive at new locations to settle in. Further, individuals and families from nearby settlements and farms flocked to communities linked by the railroad as opportunities for new business enterprises grew (Armstrong, 1978). Settlements associated with railways prospered and developed as a new economy focused on serving distant markets emerged (Mika, Mika & Wilson, 1986). Businesses such as general stores, hotels, mills and warehouses also opened up to serve farmers, passengers and freight drawn to the railroad. In turn, nearby settlements that were not fortunate to be one of the chosen stops along the rail route witnessed a gutting of their community as residents and businesses packed up and moved to be located in the railway community. As a result, the Ontario landscape is dotted by many settlements that thrived prior to the railway, only now to be mere shadows of their former selves (McIlwraith, 1998; Brown, 1994).

Railways also permitted settlement in locations that were previously uninhabited. Rail lines provided access to new areas of the province that had previously lacked overland transportation routes. Thus, railway stops served as a beachhead for migrants that could utilize the rail stop to provide the core of a new community that would be built adjacent to the tracks. Additionally, railways caused new settlements to be formed in areas that had previously been farmland. Railway designers sought to provide regular stops along their route, and in the event that a chosen stop location did not have a settlement, one frequently emerged following the construction of buildings or yards to service the railway and its passengers. The railway company’s buildings were quickly joined by privately-owned stores, hotels and residences (Andreae, 1997; Brown, 1994; McIlwraith, 1998).

3.1.3 Indirect shaping of the landscape: agriculture, manufacturing and resource extraction

One of the primary benefits resulting from railway development was the connection it provided to new markets for raw materials and manufactured goods. Prior to the construction of rail lines, the Ontario economy was largely agrarian and localized, with some goods transported between communities via ship or horse-drawn cart. The continuous corridor provided by railways permitted goods to be loaded onto freight cars in one location and taken to a regional market along feeder lines or to be sent to settlements along main trunk lines that could carry the goods inter-provincially, to the United States or to far-flung ports to be transported overseas. As
a result, manufacturing plants, stockyards, mills and warehouses were constructed at nodes abutting the railway. The construction of rail lines thus intensified the use of areas near the railroad and created an industrial landscape that had not existed previously (Keefer, 1972; McIlwraith, 1998).

Resource extraction was another impact upon the landscape caused by railway construction. Market demand for timber and mineral resources prompted the laying of tracks into the Ontario hinterland to serve the lumber camps and mines that proliferated to take advantage of the province’s vast natural resources. Railways built for the purposes of resource extraction re-shaped natural areas, creating lasting alterations to the surrounding landscape (Brown, 1994; Andreae, 1997).

3.1.4 **Indirect shaping of the landscape: recreation and leisure**

Railways also altered the landscape by providing access to recreational and leisure opportunities for Ontario residents. Special rail lines (e.g., the London and Port Stanley Railway, the Guelph and Goderich Railway and the Victoria Railway) were constructed to transport passengers to communities that were blessed with beautiful Great Lakes beaches or serene lake-front properties for cottagers. Recreation and tourism businesses in these communities grew with the arrival of railways. Some rail lines, such as the London and Port Stanley constructed dancehalls to entice people to spend their leisure time outside of urban areas by taking an excursion ride on their railroad (Andreae, 1997; MacDonald, 1998).

3.1.5 **Railways, civilization and new opportunities**

While the construction of railways provided new opportunities for urban centres, the effects of railway development were especially revolutionary in rural areas. Railways were significant change agents that forced rural communities to adapt to new realities in population dynamics, economic structure, speed of communications, and freedom of transit. Although many area residents resisted the changes brought by a railway, there were a large number of boosters for its benefits and promise for the future. Writing in the 1850s during the first wave of railway construction, Thomas Keefer (1972) articulated arguments for the opportunities railways would provide to rural areas. One excerpt from his writings is a particularly useful narrative to understanding the two perspectives:
We will now suppose, (we would we could [sic] more than suppose), that two of our cities should be moved to unite by the iron bond of a Railway, which in its course will traverse the district just described. Excitement prevails in the ‘Hollow’; – sleep has deserted her peculiar people – the lifelong night is passed in mutual contemplation of farms ‘cut up’ or covered over – visions of bloody skirmishes between ‘Far downs’ and Corkonians – of rifled gardens and orchards, of plundered poultry yards and abducted pigs. The probable mother of a possible child bewails her future offspring ‘drawn and quartered’ on the rail by the terrible locomotive, and a whole hecatomb of cattle, pigs and sheep, are devoted by imagination to this insatiable Juggernaut. The Engineers who come to spy out the land are met with curses both loud and deep – the laws of property are discussed – the delinquent Member for the County denounced – until a handsome Rodman, by well-timed admiration of Eliza Ann, the rural spokesman’s daughter, succeeds in obtaining comfortable quarters for his party, with board, lodging, and washing, at 12s. 6d. per week. The work has commenced; the farmer is offered better prices for his hay and grain than he ever before received: – even milk and vegetables – things he never dreamed of selling – are now sought for; his teams, instead of eating up his substance as formerly as in winter, are constantly employed, and his sons are profitably engaged in ‘getting out timber’ for contractors; he grows a much larger quantity of oats and potatoes than before – and when the workmen have left, he finds to his astonishment that his old friend the storekeeper is prepared to take all he can spare, to send by the Railroad ‘down to town.’

And now some of the ‘city folks’ come out and take up a water privilege, or erect steam power, and commence manufacturing. Iron is bought, cut into nails, screws and hinges. Cotton is spun and wove, and all the variety of manufacturers introduced, because here motive power, rents and food are cheaper, and labour more easily controlled than in the cities, while transportation and distance have by the Railroad been reduced to a minimum. A town has been built and peopled by the operatives – land rises rapidly in value – the neglected swamp is cleared and the timber is converted into all sorts of wooden ‘notions’ – tons of vegetables, grains, or grasses, are grown where none grew before – the patient click of the loom, the rushing of the shuttle, the busy hum of the spindle, the thundering of the trip-hammer, and the roaring of steam, are mingled in one continuous sound of active industry. While the physical features of our little hamlet are undergoing such a wonderful transformation, the moral influence of the iron civilizer upon the old inhabitants is bringing a rapid ‘change over the spirit of their dreams’ (Keefer, 1972, pp. 8-9).

Although the above quote does reveal Keefer’s bias in favour of railway development, it provides an indication of the variety of views held by individuals within communities contemplating the effects of a railway’s arrival. There is clear apprehension amongst some of the “terrible locomotive” that will destroy the community. Conversely, the railway is anticipated to serve as the “iron civilizer” that will bring new wealth and social progress to rural communities as a result of spin offs from manufacturing plants established by “city folk.” These tensions serve as an important backdrop to the physical landscape changes resulting from the introduction of a railway. It is thus important to remember the competing historical perspectives as shaping the understanding of the landscape.
3.2 Railscape Components

Christopher Andreae (1997), a Canadian railway historian, describes the major physical components of the railscape in his book *Lines of Country: An Atlas of Canadian Railways and Waterways*. Andreae has identified the following railscape elements that can be utilized in assessing railways as cultural heritage landscapes:

- **Right-of-way**: The right-of-way consisted of the land owned by the railway company that was purchased from local land owners (willingly or through expropriation). The right-of-way took the form of a corridor through which the components of the railway were located and the train travelled. Typically, the right-of-way for a single track line measured the width of a land survey chain (66 feet/20.12 metres). Frequently, however, rights-of-way were larger than the standard width to permit stations, yards, embankments and additional track lines.

- **Subgrade**: Subgrade is a mound of earth that was constructed to provide a permanent foundation for the track and to enable drainage to counter the effects of frost and uneven settlement. The subgrade was the first element of the railway constructed following the purchase of the right-of-way. Generally, earth was mounded at the centre of the right-of-way to form the subgrade, elevating the track from grade level. Ditches were also constructed on both sides of the subgrade. The elevated positioning and ditches were essential to proper railway travel — both ensured that the ground supporting the track was as dry as possible as wet ground would result in the track sinking due to the weight of a passing train.

- **Ballast, ties, rails and fastenings**: Known collectively as the “track structure”, the ballast, ties, rails and fastenings provided the infrastructure upon which trains travelled. Properly constructed track structure was essential to the functioning of a railway due to the amount of weight and stress expended by a fully-loaded train. Ballast is the term used for the crushed rock that was placed on top of the subgrade. The crushed rock was necessary to hold the wooden ties in place and to diffuse the impact of a loaded train across a larger surface area. Ties of cut wood were laid on top of track ballast in order to provide a foundation for rails and to distribute the load of passing trains. As raw wood only had an expected duration of eight years, ties of creosote-treated lumber became popular by the turn of the 20th Century to reduce the amount of wasted wood. Train wheels travelled on two parallel iron or steel rails that were attached to other sections of rail and to ties with iron or steel clamps and spikes.
Rails were required to be thick enough to support the weight of the type of train that utilized the railway (e.g., heavier freight trains versus lighter passenger trains).

- **Rail yards:** At designated locations, additional railway lines were split off from the main track to form rail yards. The yards ranged from a single additional track to more than twenty depending on the purpose of the yard. Generally, rail yards were utilized to sort freight and to classify different trains. Tracks branching off from the main track were referred to as ‘lead track’ which direct trains to ‘ladder track(s)’ utilized as intermediaries to storage tracks. Storage tracks were frequently connected to nearby industries as the rail connections were important to unload and load goods destined for distant markets.

- **Associated buildings:** The most recognizable railway building was the train station. Not only were train stations the conduit for people arriving and departing a location, they were also important to the operation of railways. Stations provided signals and written orders to train crews along the course of the rail line. As well, train station offices served the surrounding community providing mail, telegram, and freight services. Train stations were generally located between 8-13 kilometres apart along the railway as this was based on the distance that area farmers would travel in a day to conduct business. Minor stops along the railway were afforded small, unattended stations, but more important locations with multi-tracked yards were frequently provided with a larger station staffed by railway employees. Larger stations contained an agent’s office, a passenger waiting room and a freight room. Several other buildings associated with the railway were common at train stops, either owned by the railway or by local residents. These included hotels, freight sheds, train repair facilities, and agricultural and manufacturing businesses (e.g., factories, mills, and stockyards). These associated buildings were not directly linked to railway operations, but were directly tied to the existence of the railway.

- **Associated structures:** The proper functioning of the railway required structures dedicated to servicing passing trains. During the steam era, many railway stops had both coal and water towers to fuel locomotives. Bridges were another essential structure to permit trains to be carried over streams and rivers. Generally, bridges utilized a truss or trestle design and were made of wood, steel, concrete or a combination of these materials. Wood was common in early railway bridges due to the limited weight of trains. Overtime, wooden bridges were frequently replaced with steel to provide greater ability to carry increasing train loads.
Concrete was often the chosen material for piers located in the water supporting the bridge and for culverts over small watercourses. The lifespan of bridges was limited and regular replacement was a common occurrence.

- **Minor elements:** Several minor elements were associated with railscape. Switches were components of the track that shifted the direction of a train between two or more different tracks. Crossings comprised both the crossing of two rail lines and when roads crossed over tracks. Signs and signals were also important components of railscape. Signs were frequently located at settlements to indicate the name of the community that the train passed through. Settlement name signs were generally located on station walls at visual height for train passengers. Signals consisted of flags and lights placed alongside of the track to communicate messages to train operators (e.g., a red flag or red light represented danger).

Signals were also placed at road crossings to warn motorists of approaching trains.

This study uses the components discussed above for identifying and assessing railscape characteristics (see Section 5). Given that the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway has been abandoned since the mid-1960s, it is doubtful that all of the elements of railscape are still in place. However, the existing characteristics will need to be considered when evaluating the integrity of the landscape in Section 7.

### 3.3 The Effects of Abandonment on Railscape

The advent of the automobile in the early 1900s resulted in major changes to the railway industry. Cars provided personal mobility that was not tied to designated stops along a corridor. People were now able to return to roaming freely across the landscape over numerous roads built to serve the automobile. The transportation of goods also began to shift from railcars to trucks that provided the same mobility and access benefits permitted by cars (Brown, 1994; Stilgoe, 1983). A key date in the shift from railway to road transportation was 1918 – the year that more railroad track was lifted than constructed due to the consolidation of railway companies in an effort to remain competitive (Andreae, 1997). The years following 1930 saw an increasing decline in the number of railways and tracks in use as widespread availability of automobiles and trucks made several lines unprofitable (Stilgoe, 1983). Although the original main rail lines are mostly still in operation, generally the branch lines were abandoned (the process of shutting down a rail line and removing track) that fed into the main lines of the Canadian National
Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway (Brown, 1994). Rural communities served by these decommissioned railroads were impacted by the removal of key landscape features (stations, tracks and minor elements) and frequently neighbouring manufacturing businesses shut down operations and moved to be closer to major truck transportation routes (Stilgoe, 1983). Abandonment began a process that dismantled railscape, and in many cases caused it to disappear completely.

Following a decision to abandon a railway, rail companies generally removed rails, fastenings, ties and metal bridges to be sold as scrap metal. Buildings were frequently left to decay or were demolished. The right-of-way, ballast and earthworks subgrade were retained in place as owners of the former railway sought to sell the property to abutting landowners or to provincial and municipal governments for conversion into recreation trails. Some abandoned rail lines, however, lay dormant and unused, resulting in the conversion of railscape into a natural landscape through the progression of time. Generally, most abandoned railways disappeared within 30 to 40 years after the last train ran along its tracks (Andreae, 1997; Brown, 1994; McIlwraith, 1998).
4.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

The assessment of the Hickson Trail as a cultural heritage landscape is impacted by a multi-layer land use planning and heritage conservation policy regime. Both provincial and local legislation and by-laws shape the physical environment containing potential cultural heritage landscapes. The following subsections explore the ways in which existing legislation and policy provides for a comprehensive framework that influences the results of this study.

4.1 Planning Act

In Ontario, the Planning Act (1990) provides a comprehensive framework for land use planning led by provincial policy. All land use planning documents prepared at the provincial or local level must adhere to the provisions outlined in the Planning Act. In particular, Section 16 of the Act permits municipalities to create Official Plans that outline “goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic and natural environment of the municipality...” (Planning Act, 1990). Additionally, Section 34 of the Act permits municipal councils to create zoning by-laws that can restrict land uses in order to achieve a variety of policy goals (Planning Act, 1990). The zoning by-law provides for property-specific permitted uses and yard setbacks deemed necessary to guide a desired built form. It is a means of implementing the municipality’s Official Plan.

Although the Planning Act establishes the provincial land use planning framework, it does not speak directly to cultural heritage landscapes. In fact, the Act only briefly addresses cultural heritage in general. Section 2 of the Act pertaining to areas of provincial interest recognizes the need for heritage conservation. According to the section, municipal councils are directed to have regard for provincial interest in “the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest” (Planning Act, 1990). Interestingly, the language of this section of the Act only requires municipalities to consider conserving cultural heritage, rather than requiring them to do so. Further, the focus of the provincial interest on the conservation of historical features does not recognize the composition of cultural heritage landscapes, which comprise a collection of inter-related heritage features.
4.2 **Ontario Heritage Act**

Updated in 2005, the *Ontario Heritage Act* provides a framework for the protection and conservation of heritage properties within the province. For the purposes of this study, there are two parts of the *Act* that are applicable to the Hickson Trail cultural heritage landscape assessment. First, Section 29 of Part IV articulates the process of designating individual properties due to their heritage value. Designation under the *Act* serves as public recognition of a heritage property and provides a process that must be followed when changes are proposed to the significant attributes of the heritage resource (Ministry of Culture, 2006a). Although criteria for the designation of heritage properties are not outlined in the *Act*, Ontario Regulation 9/06 provides multiple categories of significance. At least one of the categories must be satisfied in order for the property to be designated.³

Second, Part V of the *Act* permits groupings of connected heritage properties to be designated as a heritage conservation district. The *Act* requires a detailed study of the area to be completed prior to the preparation of a heritage conservation district plan that articulates policies and guidelines to “assist in the protection and enhancement of the cultural heritage values of the district” (Ministry of Culture, 2006b, p. 28). According to the Ontario Heritage Toolkit – a guideline to the provisions of the *Act* – there are three classes of heritage districts that can be conserved. These classifications and their characteristics are outlined in Table 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Heritage Conservation District Evaluation Classifications**

| Designed districts that are purposely planned and laid out by a single person or a group and whose original or early messages remain discernable. These districts are valued for the integrity and intactness of their original design. |
| Evolved districts that have grown over a period of time and their elements (component features) document the process of its evolution, which can be further classified as follows: |
| - Static (relic) districts where the evolutionary process has ended and its significant component features still reveal its mature material form. They are appreciated for their aesthetic value, or for their significance in commemorating persons and events important in the history of the community, province/territory or the nation. |
| - Dynamic (continuing to evolve) districts, which include those that have evolved over a long period of time and where the process of evolution is ongoing. The physical form and attributes of such districts exhibit the process of past development and maintain a continuum with the past to meet the needs of the present (and future) community. |

³ The O. Reg 9/06 criteria will be explored in detail in later sections of this study.
Associative districts, which comprise areas of mainly natural landscape that have a strong association with an historic event or person, where remaining cultural heritage features may be insignificant or even absent.

Source: Ministry of Culture, 2006b, p. 11

These classifications are valuable to identifying conservation measures that are appropriate for the respective landscape.

4.3 2005 Provincial Policy Statement

Under subsection 3(1) of the Planning Act (1990), the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is permitted to issue policy statements pertaining to areas of planning that are within the interest of the Government of Ontario. Accordingly, in 2005 the Minister introduced a new PPS to provide direction to municipalities regarding provincial positions on land use planning matters (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005). As stated in subsection 2.6.1 of the PPS, municipal governments are required to conserve significant cultural heritage landscapes. These heritage resources are described as a “defined geographical area of heritage significance which has been modified by human activities and is valued by a community. It involves a grouping(s) of individual heritage features such as structures, spaces, archaeological sites and natural elements, which together form a significant type of heritage form, distinctive from that of its constituent elements or parts” (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005). It is important to note that the PPS is tied to any action pertaining to land use planning (including heritage conservation) through the requirement of section 3 of the Planning Act that the exercise of municipal authority “be consistent” with the policies outlined in the PPS (Planning Act, 1990).

4.4 County of Oxford Official Plan

The County of Oxford Official Plan guides the physical development and land uses of the County and its constituent lower tier municipalities. The current Official Plan was approved by the Province of Ontario in 2008 and has a 20 year planning horizon. Of the planning principles outlined in Chapter 2 of the Plan, one pertains to cultural heritage: “The promotion of cultural heritage awareness and education is achieved by the preservation and enhancement of heritage elements such as buildings, structures, sites and landscapes through planning and urban design” (County of Oxford, 2008). Further, the principles of the Plan speak specifically to former
railway lines: “Abandoned rail lines will be considered for their possible use for infrastructure, environmental, recreational or cultural purposes” (County of Oxford, 2008).

Specific cultural heritage polices are outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3 of the Official Plan. As the Plan notes, the cultural heritage policies exist to provide for the conservation of cultural heritage resources through the land use planning process. As a result, the Plan establishes a goal for cultural heritage conservation: “County Council and the Area Councils will strive to aid the conservation of the County’s heritage resources by supporting conservation initiatives in Area Municipalities, integrated conservation of heritage resources into the County planning process, and providing leadership through proper stewardship of County-owned heritage resources” (County of Oxford, 2008). Additionally, sub-section 3.3 of the Plan provides for the application of the Ontario Heritage Act and the establishment of County land use policies to conserve heritage resources. Landscape conservation is only mentioned briefly in the policies of the cultural resources chapter with stated objective “[t]o encourage initiatives for the preservation and enhancement of the heritage resources including buildings, structures, sites, landscapes and heritage conservation districts in the County” (County of Oxford, 2008).

Two other components of the Official Plan are of note. First, an inventory of heritage resources for each township is included as a schedule of the Plan. The inventory does not include the Hickson Trail in the listed heritage resources for the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock. Second, the land use map for the Township (Map 4.1) does not identify the Hickson Trail as being a feature distinct from the abutting agricultural uses. The corridor of the Trail is not included on the map, thus providing no policy recognition of its existence and specific use.
Map 4.1: Township of East Zorra-Tavistock Land Use Map

Source: County of Oxford, 2008
5.0 METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodology that is employed by this study to evaluate a) whether the Hickson Trail is a cultural heritage landscape and b) whether the Hickson Trail should be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. Two primary research methods are employed to gather data: historical document analysis and a landscape survey. These methods generate information that is evaluated according to an adapted evaluative framework for cultural heritage landscapes. Also discussed in this section are limitations of this study identified by the author regarding potential bias, researcher abilities and access to data.

5.1 Methodological Precedents

Cultural heritage landscape assessment in the context of heritage planning is a fairly recent development in Ontario. Although the United States of America and several European countries have conducted studies on the topic for over twenty years, recently several Ontario municipalities have introduced policies to assess and evaluate potential cultural heritage landscapes within their boundaries. Three methodological frameworks have been employed. First, the Town of Caledon (Scheinman, 2003), Region of Waterloo (Scheinman, 2006), and the Town of the Blue Mountains (2009) have adopted frameworks that are based upon work conducted by the United States National Parks Service (NPS).4 These municipalities have used this framework to identify potential cultural heritage landscapes within their respective political boundaries using historical research and windshield surveys. Each of these municipal guideline documents has articulated the need for more detailed study for each of the identified landscapes, however it appears that little of such work has been completed.

Second, a cultural heritage landscape study was conducted in 2007 for a large portion of the County of Norfolk as part of the Lakeshore Special Policy Area Secondary Plan. This study involved historical research to ascertain potential cultural heritage landscapes as well as a windshield survey to locate the sites. However, the report only identified several landscapes of “historical interest” and no attempt was made to conduct a systematic evaluation beyond information regarding historical importance (County of Norfolk, 2007).

4 The NPS methodology is discussed in detail below.
Finally, Professor Robert Shipley and his colleagues at the Heritage Resources Centre at the University of Waterloo have been active in studying cultural heritage landscapes. Shipley’s research focus is directed at satisfying the “valued by the community” component of the PPS definition of cultural heritage landscapes, primarily through the use of focus groups and internet surveys. In the Region of Waterloo framework for identifying and evaluating cultural heritage landscapes, the West Montrose covered bridge was included as a potential candidate for conservation. Shipley and Professor Robert Feick engaged community representatives in focus groups to determine significance, community value and boundaries for the bridge and supplemented the data with an internet survey of area residents (Shipley & Feick, 2009a; Shipley & Feick, 2009b). These methods were more community-driven than expert-driven in contrast to the studies discussed above. Shipley’s subsequent study of the Goderich Harbour also involved significant community involvement; however he employed focus groups of area residents at the beginning of the process to identify and articulate the potential cultural heritage landscape and to determine community value, which was then supplemented by expert historical analysis and a windshield survey of the elements of the Goderich harbour (Heritage Resources Centre, 2010).

5.2 Description of Methods

Neither the PPS nor the Ontario Heritage Act provides methods for the purpose of identifying and evaluating cultural heritage landscapes. As a result, several municipalities have developed and adopted guideline documents that outline both methods to collect information about potential cultural heritage landscapes within their jurisdiction and criteria for use in evaluating the significance, integrity and boundaries of the identified area. These guideline documents are principally based upon a cultural heritage landscape assessment framework developed by the NPS, as articulated in “Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes” (also known as National Register Bulletin #30) (McClelland et al., 1999; Scheinman, 2003; Scheinman, 2006; Heritage Resources Centre, 2010). Since several Ontario municipalities have based their guidelines upon National Register Bulletin #30, this study uses the step-by-step framework outlined in the document to identify and evaluate the Hickson Trail. However, the NPS guideline document needs to be somewhat altered to be used for evaluating a single cultural heritage landscape, as the framework is setup to enable municipal-wide
identification and evaluation of all potential cultural heritage landscapes within the respective political boundaries.

5.2.1 Methods Utilized

National Register Bulletin #30 uses two methods to inform the identification of a cultural heritage landscape and its subsequent evaluation for significance, integrity and boundaries: historical research and a landscape survey.

Historical Research

Historical research is required to provide information on “events, persons, groups, and physical development that shaped an area’s cultural identity...” (McClelland et al. 1999, p. 8). For the Hickson Trail, historical research is targeted to important individuals, events, buildings and structures that impacted the study area and emerged due to the existence of the railroad. Although National Register Bulletin #30 provides some direction regarding recommended sources of information, additional guidance is drawn from Historical Research: A Guide by W.H. McDowell (2002) as a key resource in conducting research regarding the Hickson Trail. McDowell indicates the importance of using multiple historical sources (both primary and secondary) to gain a broad perspective of how the subject has been described in past accounts. According to McDowell, primary sources (those written at the time of the historical period in question) are generally the most accurate recording of historical events given the writing of the source account contemporary to the event. The importance of primary research is stressed by the author: “It is to the primary sources that you must turn to extend the boundaries of historical knowledge” (McDowell, 2002, p. 55). Primary sources thus serve as the best type of historical information and they are analysed to draw out conclusions needed for the respective study.

Secondary sources (those written at a later date) are useful in order to gather historical information, however they must be approached with caution by the researcher recognizing that the secondary source was written by an individual interpreting primary source information. McDowell recommends commencing research on a topic by consulting secondary sources of information in order to develop background knowledge about the research subject and to assess how previous historians have approached the topic. Examining secondary sources is also useful to gather information about which primary sources may be of value for the researcher’s study;
however, one must be mindful that additional searching is required to ascertain the existence of further primary source information relevant to the respective research subject. Overall, McDowell recognizes that researchers will not be able to master all primary and secondary sources of information, but he advises that efforts are needed to achieve a balance between primary and secondary sources to gain a clear assessment of the historic event. (McDowell, 2002).

For the purposes of this research project, several sources of information and locations of those sources have been identified. First, primary sources are examined such as historical newspaper articles, old maps of the area, and company records. Then, this information is supplemented with secondary source books and articles pertaining to the history of the study area and the railroad.  

McDowell also identifies two ways to organize the results of historic research. The first approach is a chronological listing of events based upon key dates when they occurred. Reporting research chronologically allows the researcher (and reader) to trace the year-by-year evolution of the research subject, however, it has the potential to focus on insignificant events due to the inability to categorize historical developments. In contrast to the chronological format, the second method is to describe historical research thematically. The thematic approach provides a compartmentalization of events; however it results in the repetition of events as they are tied to multiple themes (McDowell, 2002). Given the benefits and challenges of the two options described by McDowell, this report seeks to blend the two methods. The findings of the historical research pertaining to the Hickson Trail are outlined primarily thematically in Section 6, however a chronological listing of key dates in the development of the railroad is provided as an appendix.

**Landscape Survey**

A field survey is the second method identified by National Register #30 for assessing a potential cultural heritage landscape that is employed as part of this study. The NPS guideline document states the importance of field surveys and the aim for using such a method: “Field

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5 Primary source data was acquired at the Woodstock Public Library (in the local history sections for Hickson and the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock) and at the Oxford County Archives. Secondary source information was obtained from both the Queen’s University general collection, Lorne Pierce Special Collection and the University of Western Ontario’s local history archives.
investigations should be directed at identifying existing landscape characteristics and determining the extent to which historic properties and characteristics remain intact” (McClelland et al. 1999, p. 10). Further, landscape characteristics are defined by National Register #30 as the following: “Landscape characteristics are the tangible evidence of the activities and habits of the people who occupied, developed, used, and shaped the land to serve human needs; they may reflect the beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and values of these people” (McClelland et al., 1999, p. 3) Table 5.1 outlines eleven landscape characteristics that are provided by National Register #30 to be assessed following a field survey.

**Table 5.1: National Register #30 Landscape Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Characteristic</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Examples of Characteristic/Description of Characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Process</td>
<td>Land Uses and Activities</td>
<td>“Fields, pastures, orchards, open range, terraces, commons, cemeteries, playing fields, parks, mining areas, quarries, and logging areas.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Process</td>
<td>Patterns of Spatial Organization</td>
<td>“Overall pattern of the circulation networks, areas of land use, natural features, clusters of structures, and division of property.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Process</td>
<td>Response to Natural Environment</td>
<td>“Adaptations to climate and natural features seen in land use, orientation of clusters, construction materials, design of buildings, and methods of transportation.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Process</td>
<td>Cultural Traditions</td>
<td>“Land use practices, buildings and structures, ethnic or religious institutions, community organization, construction methods, technology, trades and skills, use of plants, craftsmanship, methods of transportation, and patterns of land division.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Circulation Networks</td>
<td>“Paths, roads, streams, or canals, highways, railways, and waterways.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Boundary Demarcations</td>
<td>“Divisions marked by fences, walls, land use, vegetation, roadways, bodies of water, and irrigation or drainage ditches.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Vegetation Related to Land Use</td>
<td>“Functional and ornamental trees and shrubs, fields for cropping, treelines along walls and roads, native vegetation, orchards, groves, woodlots, pastures, gardens, allees, shelter belts, forests, and grasslands.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These characteristics represent processes and components of the potential cultural heritage landscape that are tied to the historic themes of the municipality (McClelland et al. 1999). For the Hickson Trail cultural heritage landscape study, the discussion of landscape processes (land uses, patterns of spatial organization, responses to the natural environment, and cultural traditions) pertains specifically to the railway and the properties in the Village of Hickson linked to the railway. The general landscape components outlined in National Register #30, however, are modified with the specific railway landscape elements as discussed in Section 3 to be more applicable to the study’s unit of analysis. Table 5.2 presents the railscape characteristics used in the landscape survey of the Hickson Trail.

**Table 5.2: Railscape Characteristics Utilized in Examining the Hickson Trail**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Characteristic</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Process</td>
<td>Land Uses and Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Process</td>
<td>Patterns of Spatial Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Process</td>
<td>Response to Natural Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Process</td>
<td>Cultural Traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Right-of-Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Subgrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Ballast, Ties, Rails and Fastenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Rail Yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Associated Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Associated Structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Component</td>
<td>Minor Elements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although National Register #30 provides some general tips for conducting a field survey, additional methodological guidance is drawn from *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy: Beyond the Numbers* by John Gaber and Sharon Gaber (2007) and *Industrial Archaeology: Principles and Practice* by Marilyn Palmer and Peter Neaverson (1998). Gaber and Gaber state the importance of doing preliminary research prior to entering the field in order to ascertain what information should be gathered from the survey. The authors recommend identifying the variables of the site that are important to the research subject, to break the survey area into sub-areas and to develop a means by which to compare the variables from each sub-area. Also, it is recommended that field observations should be recorded by written notes and photographs, and tied to specific geographic locations (Gaber & Gaber, 2007).

As field surveys are a prominent method in the field of archaeology, Palmer and Neaverson provide helpful points to consider when on site. The authors state that field researchers must accept that their observations and recordings are subjective; however objectivity can be increased through the use of a created field research sheet documenting identified elements and their location as part of the research design. The information recorded serves as factual evidence of elements of the landscape that exist (and those that no longer exist) as well as the status of the identified features. The landscape elements are then assessed for integrity using grading criteria (Palmer & Neaverson, 1998).

In order to properly document the observations made during the field survey of the Hickson Trail, the author has developed a simple field observations form in order to record data (see Appendix 1). Given that the Hickson Trail is approximately 12 kilometres in length, the Trail is divided into three sections based upon road boundaries for the purposes of recording the landscape survey. For each section, a separate form is used to provide more precise observations and to enable comparison between the sections of the Hickson Trail. The form has several components. First, a hand-drawn map of the respective portion of the trail is created in order to permit general reference locations for identified elements. Second, elements of the railscape are

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6 No field observations form could be found for railscapes (or for individual cultural heritage landscapes in general). As a result, the form used for this study draws on Andreea’s (1997) railscape components and recommended field note elements discussed by McClelland et al. (1999), Gaber and Gaber (2007), Palmer and Neaverson (1998), and David Copps (1995).

7 Although a real map of the Trail would be preferable to a hand-drawn representation of the Trail to improve the accuracy in identifying railscape elements, no map of the Trail could be found. The hand-drawn map was created using the direction of the trail as indicated in an aerial photograph from Google Maps. Thus, the locations of identified elements on the landscape survey form represent approximate areas of the railscape components.
listed along with an integrity assessment based on three categories: ‘good’, ‘fair’ and ‘poor’. The railscape elements are derived from Andreae’s (1997) seminal work discussed in Section 3 of this study. The identification, location and assessment of degradation for these elements are the principal reasons for the landscape survey. Third, identified landscape elements are identified as ‘contributing’ or ‘non-contributing’ based upon their connection to the railway. Finally, a general notes section is included to record observations.

The field observations form is supplemented by the use of a journal and a camera to record photographs of identified elements. The journal permits additional notes and thoughts of the author when conducting the survey. Digital photographs of field observations are essential data sources to enhance written notes. The images permit a visual record of the location of elements as well as an indication of the level of integrity of identified features, useful in the evaluation of the railscape in Section 7.

Results of the landscape survey are outlined in Section 6. Palmer and Neaverson (1998) recommend that the report of a landscape survey should systematically summarize the location and condition of landscape components and be accompanied by photographs of findings. Gaber and Gaber (2007) emphasize the importance of identifying themes and trends that emerged from observations from each portion of a landscape survey, thus permitting geographic comparison. Based upon these recommendations, each portion of the landscape survey observations for the Hickson Trail is summarized, identified with photographs and assessed for recurring themes.

5.2.2 Evaluative Framework

Following the findings of the historical research and the landscape survey, an evaluation of the Hickson Trail as a potential cultural heritage landscape is conducted. National Register Bulletin #30 provides a comprehensive set of evaluative criteria to be used to assess cultural heritage landscapes (see Table 5.3). For the purposes of evaluating the Hickson Trail, several modifications to this framework have been made and are described below.

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8 Copps (1995) recommends the use of three condition categories for assessing the integrity of landscape elements during a field survey. The determination of integrity based on these categories is important to evaluating integrity in Section 7. It is important to recognize that the choice of which category of integrity that is selected for each element is chosen by the author of the study, and thus there is a degree of subjectivity in the determination of integrity.

9 Photographs also aid in permitting readers of this study to consider the author’s determinations of integrity, thus enhancing the validity of this study’s findings.
Table 5.3: National Register #30 Framework Components and Sub-components
Cultural Heritage Landscape Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework Component</th>
<th>Framework Sub-component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define significance</td>
<td>Apply National Register criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select Areas of Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Define Period of Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess historic integrity</td>
<td>Apply qualities of integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify changes and threats to integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classify contributing and non-contributing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weigh overall integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select boundaries</td>
<td>Define the historic property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decide what to include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select appropriate edges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(McClelland et al., 1999; Scheinman, 2006)

Significance

First, the potential cultural heritage landscape is assessed based on its historical significance. While the National Register Bulletin #30 utilizes American criteria of significance, this study utilizes those outlined in Ontario Regulation 9/06 Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (2006). The use of these criteria is common in other Ontario cultural heritage landscape studies. The Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria are as follows:

1. The property has design value or physical value because it,
   i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
   ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or
   iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

2. The property has historical value or associative value because it,
   i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,
   ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
   iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

3. The property has contextual value because it,
   i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,
   ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or
   iii. is a landmark (O Reg 9/06)
Once significance is established, the study area is assessed to determine the area of significance. According to National Register Bulletin #30, area of significance is defined as “that aspect of history in which a [...] property, through use, occupation, physical character, or association, influenced the development or identity of its community or region” (McClelland et al., 1999, p. 20). Ten thematic areas of significance are outlined in National Register Bulletin #30 and are outlined in Table 5.4. The guidelines, however, warn that cultural heritage landscape analysts should not assume that the land use of the subject landscape is the same as the area of significance. The significance of the landscape may be more than what is visually apparent at the present (McClelland et al., 1999). Although the areas of significance provided in National Register Bulletin #30 are targeted towards rural landscapes (i.e., farms), they are also largely applicable to the consideration of railscape.

Table 5.4: Areas of Significance Outlined in National Register Bulletin #30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Significance</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>“where land has been used for cultivating crops, raising livestock, and other activities that have contributed to the growth, development, and economy of a community during particular periods of its history.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>“where a collection of high-style or vernacular buildings and outbuildings, by historical association, function, design, spatial arrangement, or setting, are integrally related to large areas of landscape and are indicative of the physical development, materials, or land uses of a State, region, or community, or the building practices or traditions of the people who occupied it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>“where patterns visible upon the land or evident in subsurface remains can provide important information about land use and occupation of prehistoric or historic peoples.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Planning and Development</td>
<td>“where the spatial organization and character of the landscape are the result of either a consciously designed plan or vernacular patterns of land use or land division.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>“where the landscape has been the subject of an important stage, event, or development in the conservation of natural or cultural resources.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last component of the National Parks Service method for assessing the significance of a cultural heritage landscape is to define the period of significance. According to National Register Bulletin #30, a period of significance represents “the span of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, persons, cultural groups, and land uses or attained important physical qualities or characteristics” (McClelland et al., 1999, p.21). Although it has been identified that this study’s historic period of analysis for research purposes is 1870 to 1965, the period of significance is a specific time period (or periods) in which the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway (and its successors) was historically important in one or several of the areas identified above. National Register Bulletin #30 provides an important reminder that a continuous land use is not necessarily significant. Thus, periods of significance should be based upon “years when the property historically made important contributions to the areas of significance” (McClelland et al., 1999, p. 21).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>“where the landscape continues to reflect the exploration, establishment, or early development of a community or region.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>“where the landscape has been shaped or manipulated to provide goods or services, through activities such as lumbering, mining, milling and quarrying, that have contributed to the development of a community or society in general.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Architecture</td>
<td>“where the landscape contains sites, including gardens, farmyards, and parks, that have been based on established designs, or are the work of a master, having importance within the context of landscape design.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>“where the landscape has been the subject of research related to the advancement or understanding of agriculture, horticulture, silviculture, animal husbandry, or other scientific disciplines.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(McClelland et al., 1999, p. 21)
**Historic Integrity**

The second step in evaluating the Hickson Trail as a cultural heritage landscape is to conduct an assessment based on the integrity of the landscape. A consideration of the integrity of a cultural heritage landscape is important to determine the degree to which a property (or linked properties) has a similar spatial organization, landscape components and historic association that were prominent in the identified period of significance (McClelland et al., 1999). According to National Register Bulletin #30, a strong degree of historic integrity for a landscape requires many of the landscape components that existed during the period of significance must still be present and in a similar condition as they were historically. Although some degree of change of the landscape over time is expected, “[t]he general character and feeling of the historic period [...] must be retained [...]” (McClelland et al., 1999, p. 21).

National Register Bulletin #30 recommends a detailed examination of integrity based on the assessment of seven qualities of integrity and an evaluation of whether each landscape component contributes or does not contribute to the historic integrity of the property as a cultural heritage landscape. However, a more straightforward method for assessing the integrity of cultural heritage landscapes has been created for the Region of Waterloo. Several questions are posed in the Region’s guidelines to aid the analyst in determining integrity:

1. Is the site continuing in the same use and/or compatible use (compatible here refers to a use that doesn’t require the altering of key elements and their inter-relationship)?
2. Is there continuity of ownership or occupation of the site, dating to a historic period?
3. Have buildings and other built elements survived in their original form and in relatively sound condition?
4. Are historic complexes and their relationships to other elements such as yards and fields intact? To what extent have other built elements such as fences, walls, paths, bridges, corrals, pens survived?
5. Does the historical relationship to prominent natural features, e.g. cliff, stream, still exist both for the site as a whole and within the site?
6. Are ‘designed’ plantings such as hedgerows, windrows, gardens, shade trees still discernable and is their traditional relationship to buildings, lanes, roadways, walks and fields still discernable?

7. How closely does the existing view of the site compare to the same view captured in a historic photo? Can ruins and overgrown elements still convey a clear ‘message’? (Scheinman, 2006, p. 16)

These questions essentially capture the process identified in National Register #30 and permit an evaluation of the degree of integrity held by the landscape. As such, the above questions are used for the purposes of evaluating the Hickson Trail.

**Boundaries**

Finally, once significance and historic integrity have been established, boundaries for the Hickson Trail as a cultural heritage landscape are determined. The boundaries are based upon the area having historic significance and their location is informed by both the study’s historic research and field survey. National Register Bulletin #30 provides a three step process that is followed for determining boundaries. First, the study area identified for the Hickson Trail is condensed to properties directly tied to the period of significance. Second, the historic area is further restricted to geographic locations that possess both historic significance and integrity as determined by this study’s findings. In determining these geographic locations for the demarcation of boundaries, “[h]istoric landscape characteristics should predominate and occur throughout. Peripheral areas having a concentration of non-historic features should be excluded, while the impact of centrally located ones on historic integrity should be included” (McClelland, 1999, p. 25). Once the area containing the most historic significance and integrity is determined, edges are chosen to provide boundary lines. Table 5.5 provides examples from National Register Bulletin #30 of edges that can be used for cultural heritage landscapes, and these provide guidance for determining the edges of this study’s railscape boundaries. The determination of boundaries is an important step in the study of the Hickson Trail as the boundaries provide the area that would be designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* should the Trail be deemed to merit such protection.
### Table 5.5: National Register Bulletin #30 Examples of Boundary Edges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Edge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Historic legal boundaries of a single property, a group of properties, or an entire political jurisdiction when the historic property possesses continuity of historic landscape characteristics throughout, even though the ownership or division of land may have changed.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Boundary demarcations that are relatively permanent, such as stone fences, irrigation or drainage ditches, and mature hedge rows, when such barriers are based on historic land use or ownership and encompass the concentration of related historic landscape characteristics.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Rights-of-way, such as roads, established paths, and highways when they are separate areas of land that are historically significant from those that are either unrelated, insignificant, or not historic.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Natural features, such as rivers, lakeshores, ridges, plateaus, and contour elevations when such features limited the historic development of the land and continue to contain historic landscape characteristics.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Changes in the nature of development or spatial organization, such as the departure of a community having vast tracts of communally owned farmland from the typical Midwestern grid of 160-acre farms, when differences are related to significance.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Edges of new development, such as modern housing, limited access highways, or industrial parks.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Current legal boundaries, when they coincide with the area retaining historic landscape characteristics today. Acreage may be the same or smaller than that within the historic boundaries.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lines drawn along or between fixed points, such as stone walls, shorelines, or the intersection of two roads, when they contain the area retaining historic landscape features.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Long-standing vegetation that is visible at all seasons, such as a row of hardwoods, when it marks the edge of the area containing historic landscape characteristics.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(McClelland et al., 1999, p. 26)

### 5.3 Analysis of Methods

By utilizing the National Register #30, an assessment framework is employed that has been accepted in the heritage community as a means to evaluate potential cultural heritage landscapes. Given that the framework has been adopted as policy by multiple Ontario municipalities, it is deemed to be a reliable means to evaluate potential cultural heritage landscapes such as the Hickson Trail. However, due to the modifications that have been made to the methodology for this study, it is important to ensure that another researcher would come to the same conclusions as this study if the process was repeated (Yin, 2009). Thus, the Section 6 of this study pertaining to research findings outlines a clear chain of evidence that produces the answer to the research questions.
Section 6 of this report presents the results of the historical research on the former railway and the existing conditions of the landscape from the field survey. Although there is potential for researcher bias due to the subjective nature of the methods used, efforts to mitigate bias are employed. For the historic research, multiple sources of data are utilized and the reader is provided information about how the author accessed the data (i.e., archives, libraries, family friends, etc.). The findings of the landscape survey are based upon a field note sheet that was designed to present the evidence to the reader as objectively as possible (i.e., mapping components, pictures of components, etc.). These field notes are also included in the report as an appendix to enhance notions of reliability.

5.4 Relevance of Methods to Planning Research

The generalizability of the research methods identified above for assessing abandoned railways as cultural heritage landscapes is an important contribution to the planning profession made by this report. The NPS methodological framework is set up to be used both for general rural heritage landscape assessment and for a municipal-wide evaluation of multiple sites. This study, however, provides a refined methodology specific to a single cultural heritage landscape evaluation and to abandoned railways in particular. As a result, the method can be generalized to be used in assessing other potential railway cultural heritage landscapes. However, it is important to note that qualitative generalization for this study does not mean that all abandoned railway rights-of-way are cultural heritage landscapes should the Hickson Trail be found to be one (Yin, 2009).

5.5 Limitations of Research

There are three identified limitations of research conducted for the Hickson cultural heritage landscape study. First, the utilization of NPS methods is based upon the research question posed for this study. Given that the response to the questions requires historical interpretation and a descriptive physical evaluation of the site, the qualitative methods outlined above are the most appropriate (Yin, 2009). These methods, however, do not provide information concerning whether the Hickson Trail is “valued by the community” – a required component of the PPS definition for cultural heritage landscapes. In order to determine community value, additional methods are required beyond those being employed for this study.
As indicated previously in this section, Shipley and Feick utilized a mixed-methods approach to determine community value for a potential cultural heritage landscape in the Region of Waterloo. In order to maximize the sources of evidence, the researchers employed focus groups of residents and experts, and conducted a quantitative web-based survey of residents in the area of the cultural landscape (Shipley & Feick, 2009a).

While these additional methods would provide greater triangulation of evidence to strengthen the conclusions of the study and to reduce researcher bias (Yin, 2009), the author of this study has determined that the time frame given to complete this report does not allow for public engagement in addition to the historical research and field survey conducted. As a result, additional research beyond this study is necessary to determine community value and to mitigate potential researcher bias arising from the presented historical research and field survey. These are clear limitations of this study.

Second, the methods outlined above were chosen due to the external validation they have received in previous cultural heritage landscape studies (and heritage conservation assessment in general). For this study, the historical research and field survey are, however, completely dependent on a single researcher’s perspective. Potential researcher bias is thus the principal methodological limitation of the project. Although an adapted set of evaluative criteria is employed, the Hickson Trail cultural heritage landscape study would be improved with the use of multiple researchers, surveyors, and resident interviews. A more accurate determination of significance, integrity and boundaries could be attained, thus strengthening the answers to the research questions. However, both time and resource limitations do not permit this degree of comprehensiveness. As a result, sections of this report pertaining to methods, findings and analysis clearly present the research process and its limitations to provide a strong degree of academic and professional rigour to the report.

Finally, while the author of this report has extensive experience conducting documentation-based research, this is his first foray into conducting a landscape survey. Although the author is a well-trained graduate student knowledgeable in the areas of land use planning and heritage conservation, he is not a trained landscape architect able to comment in detail about landscape conditions, nor does he possess years of experience in heritage evaluation. However, every effort has been made to research proper procedures for conducting cultural heritage landscape assessments based upon academic literature and professional reports.
6.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following section provides the results of research conducted for the purpose of this study. First, historical research findings are outlined pertaining to the evolution of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway, its impact on the surrounding community, and historically important landscape components that comprised the subject railscape. Second, landscape survey results describe the existing conditions of the Hickson Trail, providing an inventory of landscape components and their state of integrity. These research findings form the basis of the cultural heritage landscape evaluation that is conducted in Section 7.

6.1 Historical Research

The Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway and its successors operated within the study area from 1876 to 1965 – a year short of 90 years. It was an important link for the surrounding community with distant settlements as well as a major conduit for the import and export of goods. The following sub-sections describe historical highlights of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway, its cultural impacts, and its legacy on the surrounding landscape. To aid the reader in charting the linear progression of the history of the former railway, a chronology of important dates related to the study area is provided in Appendix 2.

6.1.1 Historical Overview of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway

The Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway was a product of the large boom in railway construction that occurred in Ontario during the 1870s. While the 1850s had witnessed concerted efforts to build main railway lines from east-to-west across Ontario, an economic recession in 1857 caused a substantial decline in the amount of track that was laid across the province. Railway construction thus experienced a lull period until the 1870s when strong economic conditions produced a rush of investment to expand the Ontario rail network through

\footnote{Unlike many Ontario branch railways, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway has not received significant attention from railway historians. The author could not find a dedicated account of the history of the railway. There is a need for a comprehensive historical study of this railway that goes beyond the scope of this research report.}
north-south feeder lines linked to main branch lines to serve smaller communities and to access agricultural goods and natural resources for export (Andreae, 1997; Smith, 1982).

On March 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1872, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company was incorporated by an Act of the Legislature of Ontario and given a charter for operation by the provincial government (Hopper & Kearney, 1962). The charter permitted the railway to construct a line from the settlement of Port Dover, Ontario on the northern shore of Lake Erie to Stratford, Ontario – a distance of approximately 100 kilometres. The north-south rail line ran through four counties and several settlements including Port Dover, Simcoe, Burgessville, Norwich, Woodstock, Tavistock and Stratford.

Three principal factors prompted the construction of the railway and determined its overall route. First, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway was able to assume the remnants of the defunct Woodstock and Lake Erie Railway that had previously been incorporated in 1847 to build a railway from Woodstock, Ontario to Port Dover. Although the Woodstock and Lake Erie had largely not been constructed, its rights-of-way and some subgrade were in place permitting the Port Dover and Lake Huron to reduce construction costs (Currie, 1957). Second, the planned north-south route of the railway was strategically designed to intersect with five major east-west rail lines: the Grand Trunk Railway at Stratford (offering connections to all of Eastern Canada and the United States at Port Huron); the Great Western Railway at Woodstock (offering connections to Toronto and Detroit); the Credit Valley Railway at Woodstock (offering connections to Toronto and the rail hub at St. Thomas, Ontario); the Canada Air Line Railway at Simcoe (offering connections to Detroit and Buffalo); and, the Canadian Southern Railway at the Village of La Salette, Ontario (offering connections to Detroit and Buffalo) (Andreae, 1997; County of Oxford Archives, n.d.; Morden, 1983; South Norwich Historical Society, 1983). These multiple trunk-line linkages permitted a wide variety of goods, people and postal service

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\textsuperscript{11} As Randy Smith (1982) notes, 60\% of the 9081 kilometres of railway lines built in the history of Ontario were constructed in either the 1850s or 1870s. Interestingly, no rail lines were constructed between 1861 and 1867 and the peak of construction occurred in 1873 when 1074 kilometres of track was completed.

\textsuperscript{12} The Woodstock and Lake Erie Railway has an interesting history of its own. It was strongly promoted by Sir Francis Hinks, Premier of the Province of Canada and Member of Parliament for Oxford County. As premier, Hinks promoted the \textit{Guarantee Act} that provided consistent interest rates in the 1850s for companies to construct railways in the province. Although the Woodstock and Lake Erie had a board of directors composed of eminent local citizens and was well-funded by provincial and municipal governments, the railway went bankrupt with little construction having occurred. There were allegations of corruption and embezzlement of company funds, and a parliamentary committee conducted an investigation of the railway. The Woodstock and Lake Erie Railway scandal resulted in hesitation from both municipalities and local residents to investing in future railway construction. See Currie (1957) for more information.
to be transferred into and from settlements along the Port Dover and Lake Huron line. Finally, the northern and southern termini of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway were important factors. The city of Stratford was a major railway node in Ontario, and the main departure and destination point for railway lines to Lake Huron at Goderich, Ontario and to the northern portion of Southwestern Ontario in Bruce and Grey Counties. Goods from these areas could then be taken to Port Dover for shipment on the Great Lakes system as Port Dover had become an important port near the Welland Canal (Brown, 1994; Currie, 1957).

Construction on the railway proceeded in stages, with the section between Port Dover and Simcoe completed in July, 1875. Several months later the section between Woodstock and Simcoe was completed, for a total cost for the two segments of $34,000 as reported at the company’s first annual meeting (Weekly Review, 1875 February 5). To celebrate the opening of the southern portion of the railway, an excursion from Woodstock to Port Dover and back was held on October 5th, 1875 for the Warden and Council of Oxford County and their wives along with officials from the railroad. This event and the subsequent public excursion on October 8th of 15 cars loaded with excited passengers were very successful events and received strong media coverage (South Norwich Historical Society, 1983; Weekly Review, 1875 October 16).  

On February 3rd, 1876, the final segment of track was laid between Woodstock and Stratford, completing the railway line. A month prior, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway had held its annual meeting with 300 shareholders in attendance. The president of the railway,

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13 The newspaper account of the October 8th excursion also reported that there had been “[m]uch drinking and fighting aboard the train” (Weekly Review, 1875 October 16).
Gilbert Moore, informed the attendees that the company owned two locomotives that were employed in construction efforts (Weekly Review, 1876 January 14). The subsequent annual meeting on January 12, 1877 provided the first reporting of the completed railway in operation. The railway company had expanded its equipment with the purchase of an additional locomotive, two passenger cars, one mail express car, five box freight cars, and 21 platform cars. While the first year of operation had witnessed 20,311 tonnes of freight shipped, 35,639 persons transported, and total revenues of $37,091.76, these figures were deemed to be poor as a result of country-wide depression (Weekly Review, 1877 January 12; Andreae, 1997). However, the annual report of the following year indicated that the economic slump had ended and that the railway was now quite profitable (Weekly Review, 1878 February 22).

Although it began as a private company, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company experienced several amalgamations with competing lines and eventually became part of one of Canada’s largest railway systems. In 1879, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company began joint operation with the Stratford and Huron Railway Company, providing the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway with a true link to Lake Huron at Wiarton, Ontario (Andreae, 1997; Hopper & Kearney, 1962; Sentinel Review, 1880 February 20). By the 1880s, however, it was apparent that the massive expansion of railway service in Ontario had created route duplications and many smaller railway companies were struggling to survive with fierce competition from rival lines. As a result, amalgamations were sought by railway companies in the hope of remaining competitive (Smith, 1982; Andreae, 1997). In 1881, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway lost its independence as a locally-owned railway as it was purchased by the Grand Trunk Railway Company. Grand Trunk was a major Canadian railway company that was interested in aggressively expanding its network in order to ensure that its dominance of Southwestern Ontario would not be usurped by the growing Canadian Pacific Railway Company that was being subsidized by the Canadian Government at the time (Currie, 1957). In addition to the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway, Grand Trunk purchased the Stratford and Huron Railway and the Georgian Bay and Wellington Railway. All three rail lines were merged

14 Prior to the Grand Trunk purchase, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company had several prominent residents of Oxford County on its Board of Directors. Gilbert Moore, the company’s first president, was a leading businessman in Norwich – one of the thriving settlements in the County during that era. Moore had also served as Reeve of the Village of Norwich (Sentinel Review, 1904 July 2). Another director of note was Donald M. Sutherland, then Mayor of Woodstock. Sutherland was Board Chair during the final years of the Port Dover and Lake Huron prior to its absorption by Grand Trunk (Sentinel Review, 1880 February 20).
together into a subsidiary of Grand Trunk known as the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay and Lake Erie Railway. The newly-formed railway stretched throughout Southwestern Ontario and operated approximately 321 kilometres of rail lines (Currie, 1957; Hopper & Kearney, 1962; Andreae, 1997). By 1894, however, the Grand Trunk Railway absorbed its subsidiary, making the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway officially part of the parent company (Andreae, 1997). Finally, the Grand Trunk Railway Company experienced financial difficulty and was merged with several other railway lines by the Canadian Government into the Canadian National Railways System in 1923 (Stevens, 1973; Currie, 1957; Andreae, 1997).

While the multiple amalgamations changed the legal ownership of the former Port Dover and Huron Railway numerous times, little change occurred for the physical structure of the railway line until the 1930s. With the advent of the private automobile, an alternative mode of transportation began to compete with the railways for passenger and freight business. Municipalities began to invest considerable amounts of money to improve roads with the result of an improved overland transportation network that was not tied to a restrictive number of rail corridors and yards. Private freight operators using trucks to transport cargo via road were able to undercut the price of railway companies as trucking companies were not required to spend money from their revenues to maintain roads, unlike the railway companies that had to bear the full costs of railway right-of-way maintenance (C.N.R. v. Woodstock, et al., 1935b). Both the competition from freight companies and the Great Depression of the 1930s with its resultant decline in goods for export led Canadian National Railways to apply for permission from the Railway Commissioners of Canada to abandon several branch railways throughout Southwestern Ontario.

The former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway (now referred to as the Otterville Subdivision) was one of the company’s targets. On September 10, 1935, the Board of Railway Commissioners granted Canadian National permission to abandon its line from Hickson to Tavistock. The company indicated that no train service or maintenance had occurred since December 4th, 1932 and that there was no longer sufficient revenue to justify future maintenance of the rail line. Blame for the lack of revenues was placed on the use of trucks by local businesses for transportation due to the high-quality roads in the area. The decision of the Board, however, was not unanimous with concerns raised by a dissenting commissioner that the abandonment of the rail line would result in the permanent loss of rail service. This was deemed
to be the only reliable transportation service in existence given the authority of the Board over the railways. Further, the dissenting commissioner argued that the funds that had been spent by the province and the local municipality to construct the railway were also for its continued operation, suggesting that a contract existed through municipal by-law obliging the railway to exist. The economic claims of the railway, however, trumped these concerns (C.N.R. v. Woodstock, et al., 1935a).

Additional abandonments of the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway occurred in 1935. Canadian National made similar arguments concerning lack of use and future maintenance costs to justify the need to decommission its lines between Woodstock and Burgessville, and between Otterville and Simcoe. As in the hearing for the Hickson to Tavistock segment, the same dissenting commissioner raised concerns about the impact of the railway abandonment to no avail (C.N.R. v. Woodstock, et al., 1935b). By the end of the 1930s, the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway had been completely fractured and no longer existed as a cohesive railway. Only three portions of the original railway remained: Woodstock to Hickson, Burgessville to Otterville, and Simcoe to Port Dover (Andreae, 1997). The Woodstock to Hickson segment was the most commercially viable as it provided a direct link to Canadian National’s trunk line at Woodstock for shipment throughout Canada and the United States. This line was essential to the substantial turnip industry surrounding Hickson that exported by rail across Ontario and into the United States (Boyd, 1984; County of Oxford Archives, n.d.).

By the 1960s, Canadian National Railways once again sought to reduce its number of small branch lines. Given that the line between Burgessville and Otterville lacked access to a main rail line, the Board of Transportation Commissioners (the successor to the Board of Railway Commissioners) granted Canadian National permission to abandon the segment in July, 1963 based on the submissions of the railway without conducting a hearing (Griffin, 1963). However, two years later a proposal to abandon the Hickson Subdivision produced a hearing of the Board attended by attorneys for Canadian National Railways, S.T. Loveys Ltd. and Currah Mills Limited, along with the Member of Parliament for Oxford County, Member of Provincial Parliament for Oxford County, and the Clerk of the Township of East Zorra. These companies and individuals strongly opposed Canadian National’s application (Griffin, 1965).

The railway company provided evidence that shipments out of turnips by S.T. Loveys had declined substantially, from 74 rail cars in 1959 to four in 1963 (and none in 1964). Instead,
turnips were being shipped via truck with the exception of loads to Chicago. Also noted were the goods imported by S.T. Loveys through use of the rail line. In particular, coal and lumber were important sources of rail traffic, producing ten and four railway shipments respectively in 1964. According to Canadian National, the revenue generated from the shipment of these goods reduced the credibility of arguments for continued operation, especially since trucking companies could assume the role provided by the railway. In addition to arguments of detrimental business impacts from the closure of the railway made by S.T. Loveys, Ltd., both Currah Mills and the Member of Parliament for Oxford argued that the railway should be retained to provide opportunities for future use to import fertilizer from Saskatchewan and to import limestone for a steel company considering the construction of a manufacturing plant in the area. In considering the railway abandonment, the commissioners accepted the arguments that the current traffic on the rail line could not justify its continued operation and the uncertainty of future use was not sufficiently compelling. The commissioners’ decision to permit the abandonment, however, spoke of some hesitation on the proposal:

The annual operating loss [of Canadian National], in itself, is not large. If there appeared to be any reasonable prospect that the traffic on the line would increase, I might be justified in deferring a decision. The evidence does not support such an assumption. I must also bear in mind the relief that would result to the Railway Company if abandonment were permitted. The evidence shows, after the disallowances made above, that the Company could expect to benefit from an anticipated financial improvement of some $5000 per annum. Moreover, it has demonstrated to my reasonable satisfaction that, if the line remains, a large increase in annual maintenance would be required. Whether or not this would amount to as much as $1800 per mile, it is unnecessary to decide, but it has been shown that it would be a very substantial annual sum (Griffin, 1965, pp. 186-187).

With the Hickson Subdivisions no longer in operation, only a small rump portion of the original rail line remained. The final end to the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway came in 1988 when the final remnant portion between Simcoe and Port Dover was abandoned by Canadian National Railways (Andreae, 1997).

While most of the former railway corridor and yard lands were sold to abutting property owners, two segments of right-of-way remain intact and are used as trails. Originally, Canadian National Railways made an offer to Oxford County Council to purchase the abandoned Hickson Subdivision, however the County declined to do so (County of Oxford Archives, 1964; County of Oxford Archives, 1965b). The Woodstock Naturalists Society had lobbied both Gordon Pittock, the Member of Provincial Parliament for Oxford County and County Council for
preservation of the abandoned rail right-of-way to be used as a nature trail (County of Oxford Archives, 1964). Eventually, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources assumed ownership of the segment and permitted it to be used as a trail.

The Simcoe to Port Dover portion, however, was purchased by the Regional Municipality of Haldiman-Norfolk in 1991 as a site for potential corridor for water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. Since abandonment, the non-profit Lynn Valley Trail Association has devoted considerable attention to the former right-of-way, having it re-branded as the Lynn Valley Trail and renovated to serve as a recreational trail (Lynn Valley Trail Association, 2009).

6.1.2 Historic Themes

In examining the history of the study area, several themes emerge that impacted the development of the railscape. Further, the historic themes discussed below provide evidence of the significance of the railway on the community surrounding Hickson, Ontario.

Transportation

The primary purpose of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway and its successors was to facilitate the transportation of people and goods throughout Southwestern Ontario and beyond. Before the completion of the railway, the area surrounding Hickson was only accessible by gravel roads that provided linkages with major settlements in Stratford to the north, Berlin (later known as Kitchener) to the east, Woodstock to the south, and London to the west. With the construction of the main trunk rail lines in the 1850s, both passenger and freight rail service could be obtained in these settlements, but Hickson area residents were forced to endure time consuming and uncomfortable stage coach and wagon transportation to these destinations. The railway, however, revolutionized the speed and ease of transportation for the area by creating a north-south linkage between multiple overlapping rail lines. During the height of its operation in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the railway was a busy line with four passenger trains and numerous freight trains travelling up and down each day (County of Oxford Archives, n.d.). The railway also provided the benefit of winter transportation as snow plows were installed at the front of locomotives in order to clear covered tracks (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

While passenger transportation in rail cars provided enjoyable views of the surrounding landscape with warmth and light provided by pot-bellied stoves and kerosene lamps, the train did
suffer from derailment from time-to-time (County of Oxford Archives, n.d.). For example, on March 31, 1903, a significant train wreck occurred on the section between Braemar Side Road and Hickson when the train left its tracks. Substantial damage to the locomotive and rail cars was sustained, and while no passengers were seriously hurt, many were stranded with local farmers for a day or more until the wreck was cleared and another passenger train was able to take them to their destinations (Sentinel Review, 1903 March 31).

By the 1930s, private automobiles and trucks had grown so popular that interest in rail service declined, with the exception of long-distance transportation. Following the closure of the rail section between Hickson and Tavistock in 1935, the Hickson Subdivision witnessed declining passenger service to the point that the line was essentially used to transport freight to the village and products for export (Griffin, 1965). As stated above, costs associated with maintaining the rail line had outstripped revenues by 1965, and the railway was abandoned by Canadian National. Henceforth, transportation for both passengers and freight in the area surrounding Hickson has been exclusively conducted via automobile and truck.

Economic

Construction of the railway prompted substantial changes to the economic development of the area around Hickson. Although the village of Strathallan had contained several businesses prior to the arrival of the railway, these were small-scale enterprises such as shoemaking, carpentry, blacksmithing, tinsmithing and general stores (Taylor, 1966). However, with the selection of the Hickson site for a flag station for the railway, the intensity of businesses increased to larger-scale manufacturing capable of producing products for export, rather than simply servicing and supplying the local market. Formerly, this scale of manufacturing was only found in larger towns that benefited from trunk lines of railroad companies. The development of the Port Dover and Huron Railway thus enabled the industrialization of rural settlements such as Hickson, providing jobs for area residents that were not tied to primary agriculture or service-based businesses (Keefer, 1972).

In order to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the railway, businesses flocked to the location of Hickson’s flag station. The railway enabled access to new markets for

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15 A flag stop/station is a location that trains stop at on a requested or as needed basis in comparison to a regular stop where trains make scheduled departures and arrivals (Andreae, 1997).
entrepreneurs seeking to expand their operations and it provided a depot where exotic small goods could be imported by commercial enterprises hoping to capture spin-off benefits from being located near the tracks (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). Additionally, important staples such as coal were brought by rail to the village for sale from shipments across Lake Erie from the United States to Port Dover harbour (County of Oxford Archives, n.d.). Thus, a dense commercial and industrial node developed at the intersection of the rail lines and Oxford Road 8.

The agricultural sector was also shaped significantly by the construction and operation of the railway. Before the 1870s, area farms primarily operated as small, self-sustaining operations that existed primarily to feed a family with surplus crops, meat and milk being sold at local mills, village stores and farmers markets. The railway, however, provided an opportunity for area farmers to expand their operations to capture food demands from distant cities such as Toronto and Buffalo (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Wood, 2000). Increased numbers of livestock were raised to be shipped to urban meat packing plants and different vegetable and grain crops were grown exclusively for export. These products were brought by the farmers to Hickson for sale to middlemen who facilitated the export of the goods along the railway. For example, the area surrounding Hickson established itself as productive turnip-growing region, producing and exporting a peak of 8% of Ontario’s total production (County of Oxford Archives, n.d.). The exporting of turnips was a component of S.T. Loveys Limited for 40 years, and Hickson area-produced turnips were shipped via rail across Ontario and as far away as Chicago (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Williams, 1964). The advent of the truck, however, provided opportunities for direct export of goods from the individual farms without the need for transportation to the centralized rail node. As a result, the flexibility provided by truck transport resulted in a declining economic need for the railway (Griffin, 1965; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

**Cultural**

The concentration of businesses and residences in the Village of Hickson at the intersection of the railway and Oxford Road 8 produced a significant cultural node as well. It was a location where area residents came to interact with each other. Neighbours would converse with each other about local events and activities when purchasing goods. The area surrounding the rail yard also provided opportunities for diversion as farmers and local residents
observed the bustle of a livestock auction or the arrival of trains, curious as to what people and goods would be onboard (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). Additional entertainment was provided by dances and events at the township hall located immediately west of the rail yard. These events were important opportunities to celebrate milestones for the surrounding community such as weddings, holidays, and the conclusion of the crop planting and harvesting seasons (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). The creation of the railway stop at Hickson also resulted in the construction of school facilities near the railway to provide education for children in the surrounding area (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

Perhaps more importantly, the railway provided cultural opportunities external to the community for residents in the area surrounding Hickson. The railway enabled a level of mobility that was practically unthinkable prior to its construction. People were now able to access a local rail departure point to visit far away destinations or to move to seek employment in other communities. For example, one of the most popular cultural uses for the railway during its early era of operation was to provide excursion parties to Port Dover. Families would board specially-designated excursion trains and ride the railway south from Hickson to the beaches at Lake Erie (County of Oxford Archives, n.d.; MacDonald, 1998; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). Along the route, people could look out of the railcar windows and take in the natural beauty of the Southwestern Ontario landscape and compare the various villages and towns along the route to their home community. Special “hockey trains” were also organized when the Woodstock and Stratford teams would play against each other, and residents from the Hickson area would pack the railcars when the train stopped in the village en route to the larger settlements (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).
Finally, the rail served as an important conduit for obtaining advanced education. Children from the village and from farms around Hickson were able to take morning and evening trains to and from either Stratford or Woodstock to attend high school before school buses became common in the 1950s (County of Oxford Archives, n.d.; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). As a result, children could gain a level of education higher than their parents were able to obtain. This was especially important as high school attendance was the gateway to further education at university for those able to undertake advanced studies. While the speed of the railway permitted daily attendance at high school, students from the Hickson area had to ensure that they reached the station early enough in the morning to avoid being late for class. Frequently, the school day for most students lasted 14 hours (County of Oxford Archives, n.d.).

Settlement

Prior to the construction of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway, one of the larger settlements north of the Town of Woodstock was Strathallan. Originally formed from farm land subdivided by Andrew Kennedy in 1853 and called Alma, the village was re-named Strathallan in 1865. The settlement was located on the Woodstock and Huron Gravel Road (now Oxford Road 59) – a main north-south road that bisected Oxford County. At its height in the late 1860s, Strathallan was home to approximately 80 people living in 20 houses and contained two churches, a school, a company of the Oxford Rifles and more than a dozen businesses (Taylor, 1966; Boyd, 1984; County of Oxford Archives, n.d.). The village was a thriving, self-supporting settlement that generally only encountered visitors when people travelling the gravel road north by horse decided to spend the night at the local hotel (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).
The announcement of the construction of a railway north of Woodstock to Tavistock, however, profoundly changed the settlement. According to one historical source, “[t]he tranquility of Strathallan was really disturbed by the building of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway [...]” (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985, p. 65). Indeed, the announcement prompted large-scale real estate speculation as investors sought to secure lands around Strathallan, believing that the village would be connected to the railway. Land values proceeded to increase rapidly, however Andrew Kennedy’s declaration that he would not permit the railway to cross his land to connect with the settlement brought future growth for Strathallan to a halt (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 2003).

The Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company determined that a stop was still necessary between Woodstock and Tavistock. As a result, it was decided to place the stop at an intersection with Oxford Road 8 between the north-south roads of Oxford Road 59 and the 13th Line. Known in the area as “Harwood Corners”, a couple of residences and a blacksmith’s shop were located near this spot. When the railroad section between Woodstock and Tavistock opened in 1876, however, substantial settlement at the future Hickson stop had not yet commenced. Indeed, the Oxford County map published in the same year does not indicate any sort of settlement at the rail stop and instead provides an inset map of Strathallan as the only village of note in the township other than Tavistock (Wadsworth, Unwin & Brown, 1876). By the 1880s, however, settlement adjacent to the train stop was developing in earnest. In 1879, the Strathallan Cheese and Butter Manufacturing Company had completed construction of a factory immediately north-east of the intersection of the rail line and Oxford Road 8. Many other businesses followed and the proprietors were generally former residents of the Strathallan settlement who had “packed their belongings, loaded their houses on rollers or other moveable equipment and headed for the now rapidly expanding community one mile north” (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 2003, p. 48). While the “transplanting” from the “parent community” of Strathallan to the new settlement occurred over several years, the name of the
new settlement growing around the railway stop took several years to finalize (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

When the flag stop at the future village was established, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company sought an appropriate name for the location. A request was received, however, from Joseph Hickson, the General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway that the stop be named after himself (Wintemberg, 1925; Williams, 1964; Taylor, 1966; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Boyd, 1984; Oxford County Archives, n.d.). As the head of Canada’s largest railway at the time, Joseph Hickson was touring Southwestern Ontario when he made the request, however he did not visit the site of the future village (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). By 1883, however, the growing settlement’s name became official when a post office was established as “Hickson,” adopting the name of the railway stop (Wintemberg, 1925).

Although the post office provided formal recognition of the name of Hickson for the settlement, it took several years for area residents to identify it as such. Indeed, the minutes of the 1880 Annual Meeting for the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway published in the Woodstock newspaper reference the stop as Strathallan rather than Hickson (Sentinel Review, 1880 February 20). By 1899, competition for the identity of the area by Hickson and Strathallan began to fall off with the closure of the Strathallan post office leaving Hickson as the only source of mail for the area (Taylor, 1966). The construction of the new Hickson Methodist Church at the corner of Highway #59 and County Road #8 in 1901 was a further indication of the rise to prominence of the Hickson settlement. The newspaper article reporting on the opening of the church indicated the identity challenges the area had faced, with the dominance of Hickson on the rise:

The original place [Strathallan] is now almost a passing memory and its name has got moved around a good deal and sadly mixed up. The old village is still Strathallan. The corner a mile beyond at the blacksmiths shop is also Strathallan. The station half a mile east is Strathallan. But the cheese factory immediately opposite and the post office at Strathallan station go under the name of Hickson. And the new church to take the place of the old one which has been taken down

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16 The exact date of the naming of the Hickson railway stop is unknown. Several sources allude to a naming of the site with the opening of the rail line in 1876, however no evidence could be found that Joseph Hickson was associated with the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway until it was absorbed by Grand Trunk in 1881. As noted below, the minutes the 1880 annual meeting of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company refer to Strathallan with no mention of a settlement named Hickson. Thus, the author of this study believes that the stop retained the name Harwood Corners, was referred to as Strathallan or remained nameless until the purchase of the railway by Grand Trunk. If Joseph Hickson did indeed request that the stop take his name, it is unlikely such a request would have been made prior to 1881.
at the old village of Strathallan is to stand at the Strathallan corner and to be called Hickson church (Sentinel Review, 1901, p.3).

Three years following the construction of the church, Grand Trunk built Hickson’s first railway station. With the construction of the ornate Hickson station, the village had established itself as the dominant settlement in the area thanks to the intersection with the railway. Strathallan continued to wither until it became a small ghost town with only a handful occupied homes remaining (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

6.1.3 Historic Landscape Components

The following research findings pertain to the history of various landscape components contained within the study area. The information provides more detailed information on the evolution of the railscape that originally comprised the Hickson Trail.

Right-of-way: As stated above, the right-of-way between Woodstock and Hickson was part of the larger segment that stretched from Woodstock to Stratford, and was built following the completion of the southern portion from Woodstock to Port Dover. During the course of surveying the route for this portion of the railway in May, 1874, engineers determined that the area’s topography did not present difficulties for grading with the exception of the land surrounding Mud Creek that required substantial earthworks to establish the subgrade. It was also noted that a trestle bridge was needed to cross Mud Creek (Weekly Review, 1874 August 21). The railway company purchased land for the right-of-way from 28 area farmers ranging from 1 and 52/100ths of an acre to 11 and 28/100ths of an acre (Woodstock Public Library, 1874-1875). Originally, the right-of-way was to include a line to the village of Strathallan for the purposes of providing a station between Woodstock and Tavistock. However, the route was planned to pass through the farm of Andrew Kennedy, who refused to sell his land to build the rail line (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Boyd, 1984.).

Railway surveyors were also concerned about the uneven terrain surrounding Strathallan, and believed that it would be better

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17 Although Tony Duncan’s newspaper article on the history of the settlement of Strathallan and Hickson paints a picture of Kennedy’s refusal due to his desire to preserve agricultural lands, it is more likely that Kennedy tried to secure too high of a price for the land from the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company (Williams, 1964.). Kennedy had not demonstrated concern for agricultural land preservation when he subdivided a portion of his land that became the village of Strathallan. Additionally, he was one of the farmers that sold the railway company a portion of his land for the construction of the right-of-way as built.
to locate a station west of the village (Williams, 1964). Thus, the right-of-way was constructed between the Woodstock and Huron Gravel Road and the 13th Line, proceeding north to Tavistock (Wadsworth, Unwin & Brown, 1876).

During the history of its operation, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company and its successors kept vegetation within the right-of-way to a minimum. As indicated in aerial photographs from 1945 and 1950, most of the right-of-way was open to the surrounding agricultural landscape (with the exception of privately-owned woodlots) thus affording passengers on the railway expansive views from windows in the passenger rail cars (Department of Planning and Development, 1945; Department of Planning and Development, 1950).

**Subgrade:** As noted above, the relatively flat terrain surrounding the rail line permitted a consistent amount of subgrade to be installed along the line with the exception of the extra mounding needed in the area around Mud Creek. No additional information pertaining to the subgrade was found in the historical research conducted.

**Ballast, ties, rails and fastenings:** At the annual meeting of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company in 1877, the directors’ report indicated that a large amount of money was spent on gravel for ballast for the northern portion of the rail line. Additionally, both of the company’s locomotives were used to lay track and haul ballast during the course of construction. The final portion of the track structure was laid on February 3rd, 1876 (Weekly Review, 1877 January 12). At the Board of Transportation Commissioners hearing in 1965, the future maintenance of the track structure was the principal reason that Canadian National sought to abandon the railway. Considerable labour was needed to inspect and repair the track structure, as well as remove weeds and brush from the corridor. Due to the low volumes of traffic, it was
believed that the costs of maintenance of the rail line to ensure its safe operation were no longer economical for Canadian National (Griffin, 1965). At the time of abandonment, the railway company pulled up the track structure along the Hickson Subdivision. Given the nature of track structure as rail infrastructure to carry trains, there is little additional mention of it in the historical record. Although the track structure required continual maintenance, the removal of vegetation, and replacement over the course of the operation of the railway, its existence was merely a part of every-day life that managed to escape historical observations.

**Rail yards:** Hickson was the main location of rail yards for the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway between Woodstock and Stratford. At Hickson, both an eastern and western lead track branched off from the main track. The eastern lead provided a loading area for the grain elevators and storage for rail cars awaiting the loading or unloading of goods. The western lead was utilized by the village’s commercial and industrial operations (e.g., S.T. Loveys, Ltd., the feedmill, the cheese factory and the stockyards). Passengers boarded trains on the main line (Department of Planning and Development, 1950; Gladding, 1998; S.T. Loveys, Limited, c. 1916; S.T. Loveys, Limited, n.d.). The yard complex – both properties owned by the railway and those of private businesses – created a significant node at the core of the village. It was here that Hickson residents and area farmers brought their livestock for export, gathered agricultural supplies, purchased groceries, picked up mail, attended

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18 Although Tavistock was and is a much larger settlement than Hickson, the right-of-way for the Port Dover and Lake Huron passed east of Tavistock and was serviced by a small station. The Tavistock cheese factory eventually located beside the railway; however the area around the Tavistock station did not develop into a commercial/industrial node as occurred in Hickson.
dances and observed township council meetings. During its existence, the rail yard consisted of the main track and two lead tracks until the train station closure in 1962 resulted in the removal of the western lead track. Upon abandonment in 1965, the main line and eastern lead were removed as well and the former rail yard lands owned by Canadian National were sold to S.T. Loveys, Limited and Currah Mills (K. Kaufmann, personal interview, November 1, 2010).

**Associated buildings:** As stated above, the intersection of the railway and Oxford Road 8 served as an important commercial node for the Village of Hickson. Construction of the north-south railway across the east-west road prompted many commercial and industrial businesses to be established at the intersection. The area served as the heart of the village, and prompted residential development to radiate outwards both east and west from this central node. The buildings discussed below served as the principal constituent elements of the commercial, industrial and institutional operations that clustered at the intersection of the railway and the county road.

**Hickson station:** When the northern portion of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway began service in 1876, the company identified a need for a station to be located between Woodstock and Tavistock to serve the area in between those settlements (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). For almost 30 years, Hickson served as a flag stop along the railway without a station of its own. Passengers purchased tickets at the store on the north-west corner of the railway and waited for the arrival of trains in a provided waiting room (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 2003.). In 1904, the Grand Trunk Railway Company determined that there was a need for a railway station to serve the village and the surrounding community.
Pre-fabricated sections were shipped by rail car and the station was erected in a short period of time with a total construction cost of $2500 (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Gladding, 1998). The station was constructed on the south-east side of the intersection of the rail lines and Oxford Road 8 and was located a substantial distance south from the road.

Unlike the previously constructed stations for the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway in communities such as Otterville and Tavistock, the Hickson station was not a simple rectangular building with a gable roof. Instead, the station’s architecture reflected a strong Queen Anne style influence with a protruding two-level asymmetrical tower located on the western side of the building. The ornately designed tower also served a functional purpose beyond its stylistic contribution: station agents were able to view both north and south oncoming trains from a distance due to the second floor panoramic observation room and the protrusion of the tower outwards from the remainder of the station building (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). The red-painted station served as the “hub of the community” for much of its operation, with at least two passenger trains arriving and departing each day (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985, p. 205). Serving as the focal point for people arriving and departing the village, the station also was a receiving and transmission point for telegraph messages, money orders, and minor freight (Gladding, 1998).

The Hickson station continued to provide its many services until 1962 when it was closed by Canadian National Railways due to a lack of demand for passenger service on the railway. Rather than demolish the structure, the station was purchased by area resident Fred Alexander and converted into a private home. The top of the tower was removed and the roof was reconstructed to provide a consistent gable profile. In June, 1963, the station was raised from its foundation at the Hickson site and moved by truck to Lot 16, Concession 11 in the Township of East Zorra – a few kilometres west from the railway’s intersection at the Braemar Side Road (Sentinel Review, 1963; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985)
S.T. Loveys building: Although the Loveys family had operated a general store in Hickson since 1890, Stanley T. Loveys, a son of Thomas Loveys, purchased the lot at the south-west intersection of the railway and Oxford Road 8 and constructed a large brick building on the site in 1910. Stanley sold the family’s former store and relocated operations to the new building. The S.T. Loveys building quickly became a major commercial enterprise for the village. In the western half of the building, space was leased to the Standard Bank of Canada to provide financial services for the surrounding area. The eastern section of the building served as the store housing S.T. Loveys Limited – a diverse company that sold farm supplies, hardware, turnips, wire, twine, farm implements, animal feed, lumber, coal, automobiles, tractors and fuel (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). In the storey above the bank and the store, residential apartments housed the family of Stanley Loveys until 1922 as well as accommodation for the bank manager. The second floor apartments were rented until the 1960s when the space was converted to storage for S.T. Loveys, Limited (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). In the 1940s, the building’s rear veranda was enclosed to provide additional storage space for the company. As a result, only a very narrow passageway separated the S.T. Loveys building from the abutting feed mill (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). Since its construction, the S.T. Loveys building has served as a distinctive landmark for the village based on its location abutting the rail line, the prominence of the Loveys family in the community, and the importance of the business to the surrounding agricultural community.

Turnip waxing plant: By the 1930s, S.T. Loveys, Limited sought to expand its turnip exporting business to markets in Toronto and Chicago. In order to preserve the turnips for transport, a waxing process was adopted that required a dedicated facility. In 1938, a processing plant for Oxford Wax Pac Rutabagas (as the division was called) was constructed on a site south of the
S.T. Loveys building and the feed mill, between the feed shed and the fuel tanks. The plant was expanded over the years to include washing facilities and a mechanical unloading device. Several outbuildings were also constructed to store the turnips prior to transport. The turnip processing plant continued in operation until 1974 when a fire consumed the facility, ending the turnip division of S.T. Loveys, Limited (Boyd, 1984; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; County of Oxford Archives, n.d.)

**Storage sheds:** Several buildings were built on the Loveys property behind the S.T. Loveys building in support of the company’s many business divisions. Historical sources mention a shed used to store feed and cement, a coal storage building, lumber sheds, and a large building used to store trucks loaded with turnips (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Boyd, 1984). Due to the utilitarian nature of these storage sheds, dates of construction are unknown.

**Hickson Grist Mill:** Given the importance of agriculture in the area surrounding Hickson, a mill was constructed immediately adjacent to the railway. Located on the western side of the main rail line, the Hickson Grist Mill was constructed in 1902 (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Taylor, 1966; Gladding, 1998). The mill was originally powered by steam and processed both locally-produced and imported grains into animal feed. Located directly south of the S.T. Loveys building, the wooden-sided mill was an important landscape feature due to its height and bulk providing visual prominence for both those individuals arriving to Hickson via rail and by road. Further, it served an important economic function as both a source of agricultural feed stuffs and as an employer. The mill received several additions in its years of operation, including a large extension on the northern side of the building. In 1945 the Hickson Grist Mill was sold to Lorne Currah who operated it.

![Figure 6.9: The Hickson Grist Mill](image)
as Currah Mills Limited until 1969 when a new fertilizer and feed plant was constructed by the company on the western edge of Hickson at Oxford Road 59. The mill was used by Currah Mills for storage until 1974 when it was demolished (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

**Hickson cheese factory:** The first major commercial enterprise to open in Hickson was the cheese factory constructed by the Strathallan Cheese and Butter Manufacturing Company in 1879 (Williams, 1964). The majestic brick buildings comprising the manufacturing complex were built on the north-east corner of the intersection of the railway and Oxford Road 8, immediately east of the livestock yard. As indicated by the company’s corporate name, the cheese factory was a successor to a smaller facility located in Strathallan. Following the selection of the Hickson site as one of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway’s flag stops, the cheese manufacturing operation was relocated to be near the rail line as the new Hickson location would avoid the need to transport the finished products for export from Strathallan to be loaded on rail cars (Williams, 1964).

The Strathallan Cheese and Butter Manufacturing Company and its successors utilized the railway extensively to export their products to distant markets (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

Originally a co-operative business owned by local farmers, the Strathallan Cheese and Butter Manufacturing Company was producing 223 tonnes of cheese annually by 1903 (Taylor, 1966). Between 1908 and 1912, the cheese factory was re-named to the Hickson Cheese and Butter Company, and it was purchased from the co-operative shareholders by Canada Milk Products in 1916 (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Taylor, 1966). By the 1930s, the factory...
shifted its production from cheese to milk and cream to take advantage of the increasing volume of raw milk being produced by area dairy farmers. In 1931, the factory was purchased by the Borden Company, a large American corporation specializing in dairy products. Renamed Borden’s Creamery, the plant began extensive export of milk products by truck rather than via the railway (Williams, 1964; Taylor, 1966; C.N.R. v. Woodstock, et al., 1935a). By 1969, the Borden’s plant was deemed to be obsolete and was closed by the company. It was demolished in 1976 to provide land for several residential properties (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

Vance store: A large brick building was constructed circa 1883 on the north-west corner of the intersection of the railway and Oxford Road 8. Built for James and Susan Vance, the building was one of the first commercial enterprises in the new settlement of Hickson and served as a general store, post office and lumber dealer (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). In 1890, the property was purchased by Thomas J. Loveys who began to sell feed and salt in addition to the goods sold by the Vance’s. The store also sold tickets and provided a waiting room for the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay and Lake Erie Railway until the construction of the Hickson station in 1904 (Gladding, 1998; Williams, 1964; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). With the completion of the ST Loveys building in 1911, the general store was sold to Wilfred Rowe and continued to be operated as a mixed-goods commercial establishment offering products such as groceries, kerosene for oil lamps, socks, work shoes, dishes, hardware and yard goods (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

On March 17, 1912, a fire consumed the building without the loss of life. Given the prominence of the building and the danger posed by the fire, the bell was rung at the Hickson Methodist Church to alert the community of the fire and to notify area farmers that assistance was needed in the village (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). Following the fire, a new red brick building was built in
1912 in a similar style to the original Vance store. It was purchased in the late 1950s by Lorne Currah and became associated with the feed mill across the street to the south. Various agricultural products were sold from the store until 1969 when the building was sold and renovated into residential apartments. Its red brick exterior was covered with white aluminum siding in 1972 (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

**Township hall:** In 1905, the council of the Township of East Zorra purchased land from Thomas Loveys on a site located immediately east of the Hickson Grist Mill and behind the Russell blacksmith shop (Taylor, 1966; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). The original township hall in Strathallan was closed and a new brick building was constructed at the central node in Hickson. The township hall was utilized for council meetings and was rented out for community events. Its importance to area residents as a gathering place made the hall a key component of the village: “[The township hall] was the centre of the social life of the community for some time. Dances, parties and family get-togethers were enjoyed here” (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985, p. 208). In 1957, the hall was sold and converted into a branch of the Oxford County Library and a new township office was constructed at the corner of Oxford Road 59 and Oxford Road 8 (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; Taylor, 1966).¹⁹

**Russell blacksmith shop:**
Built prior to 1905, the Russell blacksmith shop was constructed by Thomas Loveys and was purchased by Tom S. Russell in 1907 (Gladding, 1998; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). The yellow brick building was located on the southern side of Oxford Road

¹⁹ Following a municipal amalgamation in 1972, the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock constructed its fourth municipal office on a site on Oxford Road 8 directly north of the S.T. Loveys building and the abandoned rail right-of-way.
8, west of the S.T. Loveys building (constructed at a later date) and north of the township hall. It was operated as a general repair garage until approximately 1939 when the then property owner, Warren McKeller, took the building apart in four sections and re-assembled it 30 feet back from the road and situated it east-west rather than north-south. The building was renovated with an automotive repair garage located in the eastern section and a variety store in the western portion. Gas tanks were installed in front of the building as well. It was purchased in 1970 by Fred and Elaine Todd and the post office was transferred to the new operation (named ‘Todd’s Place’) in 1971 (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985).

** Converted grain shed:** Following the construction of the Hickson station, a grain shed was built to the immediate south along the eastern lead track (Gladding, 1998; Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985). At an unknown date, this building was moved and relocated to the property on the western side of the Russell Blacksmith Shop (Hickson Women’s Institute, c. 1985; County of Oxford Archives, n.d.). An early example of a building adapted for re-use, the former grain shed was converted into a house and received a red brick exterior at some point following its conversion. This house demonstrates the evolution of the railscape over time and the retained value of its components by the local residents.

** Associated structures:** The Mud Creek bridge is the only structure of note in the historical record. Originally constructed of wood, the bridge was never replaced with one made of steel likely due to the relatively small span of the Mud Creek. As stated previously, the bridge was a
trestle design. When the Hickson Subdivision was abandoned in 1965, the Mud Creek bridge was removed completely in conjunction with the removal of the rail line’s track structure. Wooden retaining walls and bridge support posts located in the creek bed were the only components of the bridge left in place (Sentinel Review, 1965).

**Minor elements:** Three minor elements of the railscape are noted in the historical record. The Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway right-of-way served as an important corridor for telegraph service to the Village of Hickson. Telegraph poles were located along the eastern edge of the right-of-way and wires carried telegraph messages from the Woodstock Grand Trunk Railway station to the Hickson station. As a result, the station served as the area’s communications hub for inbound and outgoing messages for area residents and for rail staff seeking updates about the status of trains en-route (Gladding, 1998). Another minor element was the gardens and orchard on the eastern side of the train station (Gladding, 1998). This garden was tended by the railway station man and it served as important green space in the surrounding commercial and industrial landscape. Finally, a concrete sidewalk was a significant feature associated with the railway. In 1909, the Township Council paid $225 towards the construction of the sidewalk from the then recently-constructed Hickson station to the corner of Oxford Road 59 and Oxford Road 8 (Taylor, 1966). This sidewalk served as a touch of urbanity for the residences of the village and provided a link between the station and the Hickson Methodist Church that was constructed at the corner of Oxford Road 59 and Oxford Road 8 in 1901. These two buildings provided the eastern and western anchors of the village, serving an institutional purpose as important places for public gathering. When the railway was abandoned all minor elements with the exception of the sidewalk were removed.

### 6.2 Landscape Survey Results

On November 1st, 2010, a field survey of the Hickson Trail and the central portion of the Village of Hickson was conducted by the author of this study to determine the existing conditions of the railscape. The survey was conducted on foot and commenced at the southern portion of the Trail on the outskirts of the City of Woodstock and proceeded north to the Village of Hickson. Examination of the railscape commenced at 1:30 p.m. in the afternoon and
concluded at 5:30 p.m. As noted in Section 5 of this study, the author utilized self-prepared field survey note forms to record observations.

The following sub-sections describe the findings and conditions for each of the four segments of the survey (see Map 6.1 for a visual rendering of the survey segments). While the segments are compartmentalized for ease of data collection and analysis, it is important to recognize that they collectively comprise the railscape of the Hickson Trail.

**Map 6.1: Segments of the Hickson Trail Landscape Survey**
6.2.1 Survey Segment #1 (Oxford Road 17 to Oxford Road 33)

Segment #1 consists of a three kilometre portion of abandoned rail right-of-way. It is currently being used as a walking trail, and is the closest portion of the Hickson Trail to the City of Woodstock. In recent years, several new residential subdivisions have been built to the south of Segment #1 given the northern boundary of the city being Oxford Road 17. The land uses abutting this segment are agricultural lands for its entire length. Overall, the segment is intact as a linear corridor. Plates 3.1.1 through 3.1.16 of Appendix 3.1 provide visual evidence of the conditions of Segment #1 as noted during the landscape survey.

Landscape Components

Right-of-way: The right-of-way is intact for the entire length of the segment. A mixture of brush and trees lines the edges of the trail and in many areas the vegetation is dense between the trail and the outside boundaries of the right-of-way (Plates 3.1.1, 3.1.6 and 3.1.10). There is, however, considerable variation in the amount of vegetation lining the edges of the trail and in several spots the view from the trail to the abutting agricultural lands is unobstructed (Plate 3.1.7 and 3.1.14). Evidence of tree planting from the period following abandonment to present is demonstrated in a collection of pines (Plates 3.1.13 and 3.1.14) as well as several young deciduous trees at the northern outlet of Segment #1 (Plate 3.1.15). Evidence of fences at the eastern and western boundaries of the right-of-way is apparent in several areas along the segment, but not universally throughout (Plate 3.1.3). The integrity of the right-of-way for Segment #1 is deemed to be good.

Subgrade: Evidence of the remnant subgrade is not consistent throughout the length of the segment. The southern half of Segment #1 contains a standard railway subgrade – a centre mound raised from grade-level and ditches on both sides of the mound. However, northern portions of Segment #1 do not demonstrate clear evidence of subgrade. The trail is at or below the same grade as the surrounding landscape and there is either no physical separation between the trail and the abutting agricultural lands or earthen berms frame the outer edges of the trail. The integrity of the subgrade for Segment #1 is deemed to be fair.
**Ballast, ties, rails and fastenings:** Little evidence of the former track structure is found in Segment #1. Rails and fastenings are no longer present and were likely stripped from the segment and melted down when the railway was decommissioned in 1965. Three ties along the periphery of the trail are exposed amongst grasses and brush. The ties appear to have been removed from the track and thrown off to the side as the railway was converted from a rail line to a trail (Plates 3.1.2, 3.1.8, and 3.1.11). Multiple portions of the trail are covered in crushed gravel, which is likely remnant ballast (Plate 3.1.12). However, the bulk of the trail has a dirt covering. The integrity of the track structure for Segment #1 is deemed to be poor.

**Rail yards:** Given that Segment #1 consists of the former rail corridor linking the City of Woodstock to the Village of Hickson, there is no evidence of a former rail yard.

**Associated buildings:** Segment #1 does not contain any buildings directly tied to the operation of the former railway. A stone farm house, however, is located approximately 30 metres from the western edge of the right-of-way (Plate 3.1.5). Given the type of materials used in the construction of the house and its proximity to the abandoned rail line, the house likely pre-dates the operation of the railway. It appears to be occupied and has been expanded with an addition over the years. The house could be considered to be contributing to the historic period as the location of the railway in relation to the house would have significantly impacted the quality of life of the residents while the railway was active. The integrity of the stone house located in Segment #1 is deemed to be good.

**Associated structures:** No evidence of any structures can be found for the length of Segment #1. Other than minor water features, no natural landscape qualities necessitate the use of structures to carry the former railroad.

**Minor elements:** Four concrete culverts bisect the trail throughout the length of Segment #1. The condition of the culverts ranges from stable (3.1.4) to deteriorating (3.1.9). The integrity of the culverts for Segment #1 is deemed to be fair.
Recent installation of gates for crossings between farm fields at two locations along the trail are minor elements that are non-contributing to the historic periods (Plate 3.1.6). The gates are also located at the southern inlet and northern outlet of Segment #1 (Plates 3.1.1 and 3.1.16).

6.2.2 Survey Segment #2 (Oxford Road 33 to Braemar Side Road)

Segment #2 is a three kilometre portion of the abandoned right-of-way. It is currently being used as a walking trail and its northern terminus on Braemar Side Road is the furthest northern point of the trail as currently maintained. The adjacent eastern and western land uses are primarily agricultural lands (Plate 3.2.9) with the exception of the Oxford Golf and Country Club, located on the northeast portion of Segment #2, that was constructed in 1955 (Plate 3.2.14). The segment is fully intact as a linear corridor. Plates 3.2.1 to 3.2.20 of Appendix 3.2 provide visual evidence of findings as noted during the landscape survey.

Landscape Components

**Right-of-way:** The right-of-way is completely intact for the entire length of Segment #2. Most of the right-of-way runs north-to-south, with the exception of an east-bound bend as the trail approaches Braemar Road (Plate 3.2.11). At the southern entrance, a historically non-contributing gate controls access to the trail. Also, the segment entrance has extensive brush and crab apple trees located on both the eastern and western sides of the trail (Plate 3.2.1). The trees and vegetation have grown to provide an enclosed arched, tunnel-like opening that signals the entrance of the trail. Extensive brush and trees are found on both sides of the trail throughout this segment, with the exception of a few treeless portions (Plates 3.2.6, 3.2.7, 3.2.10, 3.2.12). Several farm woodlots are located abutting both the eastern and western sides of the right-of-way, providing a natural corridor feel to Segment #2. Additionally, a single row of pine trees has been planted on the eastern side of right-of-way of a portion of the segment (Plate 3.2.8). This stands out from the deciduous trees and leafy brush primarily comprising the vegetation of this segment. Finally, evidence of a former private dump is found on the western side of the right-of-way attached to the Oxford Golf and Country Club (Plate 3.2.13). The items included in the dump appear to be from the years following the abandonment of the rail line, and are thus historically non-contributing. Overall, the integrity of the right-of-way for Segment #2 is deemed to be good.
Subgrade: Evidence of the rail subgrade is clear and consistent throughout the entire segment (Plates 3.2.2, 3.2.6, 3.2.7, 3.2.10, 3.2.17). Earth has been mounded in the centre of the right-of-way and raised from grade level. Small ditches are located on both the eastern and western sides of the subgrade to facilitate drainage. The subgrade is raised up from grade without berms located on either the eastern or western edges of the right-of-way. The subgrade does not appear to have been altered since abandonment.

At the northern terminus of Segment #2, the landscape terrain changes significantly. Generally, Segments #1 and #2 run through flat land with only minor hills and depressions that are addressed through minor alterations to the subgrade. However, adjacent to Braemar Side Road, the eastern terrain is uneven with rolling topography and a significant downward slope approaching the Mud Creek stream valley (Plate 3.2.15). In order to address these terrain changes, the subgrade has been raised significantly to provide a relatively level approach to Segment #3 (Plates 3.2.17, 3.2.18, 3.2.19, 3.2.20). Overall, the integrity of the subgrade for Segment #2 is deemed to be good.

Ballast, ties, rails and fastenings: A single tie and a patch of ballast are the only elements of the track structure found along Segment #2 (Plates 3.2.12 and 3.2.10). The tie is located on the eastern side of the subgrade before the east-bound curve of the right-of-way (Plate 3.2.11). Like the ties located in Segment #1, this tie appears to have been thrown to the side of the subgrade at the decommissioning of the railway. Generally, the trail path is comprised of dirt with only a small patch of gravel ballast as indicated above (Plate 3.2.3). Thus, the integrity of the track structure for Segment #2 is deemed to be poor.

Rail yards: Segment #2 is a continuation of the rail line that travelled north from Woodstock. There is no evidence of a rail yard along this portion of the trail as the yard was located further north in Hickson.

Associated buildings: No associated buildings are present throughout Segment #2. Farm residences are a considerable distance from the trail, located along the parallel county and township roads.
**Associated structures:** There are no associated structures contained within Segment #2. No evidence of previously existing structures was found.

**Minor elements:** Three cement culverts are located along Segment #2 that bisect the trail. None of the culverts have water flowing through them. The southern-most culvert is quite large, and at one time carried the subgrade over a small stream (Plate 3.2.4). Since the time of the construction of the culvert, however, the stream has been diverted by the use of tiling, which now provides the source of the stream (Plate 3.2.5). As a result, the culvert is no longer in use and is completely dry. In addition to the culverts, a single farm crossing gate is located along the trail near Braemar Side Road (Plate 3.2.16). It is historically non-contributing. The integrity of the minor element culverts is fair.

### 6.2.3 Survey Segment #3 (Braemar Side Road to S.T. Loveys)

Segment #3 is a three kilometre portion of abandoned right-of-way between Braemar Side Road and the S.T. Loveys property. A landscape survey of Segment #3 could not be fully conducted. Access to the right-of-way from the southern entrance off of Braemar Side Road has been compromised by the removal of a bridge crossing the Mud Creek immediately abutting the north side of the road. No formal entrance to the trail exists off of Braemar Side Road as a result. Equally problematic, the northern terminus of the right-of-way at the rear of the S.T. Loveys property does not provide public access from the trail to Hickson, and individuals seeking to hike the trail are forced to trespass across private property.\(^\text{20}\) As a result of these two barriers to access, Segment #3 has received very limited use as a trail in the years following abandonment and both the southern entrance and northern terminus of the segment are completely overgrown with trees and brush. The vegetative growth is so severe that Segment #3 is no longer easily navigable as a trail and has essentially reverted to a natural state. Unfortunately, the author of this study was not able traverse Segment #3 to gather observations of landscape components with the exception of the most southern and northern points of the segment.

\(^{20}\) For the landscape survey conducted as part of this study, permission to access the S.T. Loveys property was generously granted by Barbara Loveys, the owner of the property.
While Segment #3 is visually consistent in aerial photographs with the other linear segments of the Hickson Trail, in reality at ground level it no longer forms a portion of the Hickson Trail. Given that this segment was the final approach of the railway travelling north to Hickson from Woodstock, its loss essentially separates the linear landscape into two sub-groupings: the Hickson Trail abandoned right-of-way from Oxford Road 17 to Braemar Side Road, and the former rail node centred upon the S.T. Loveys property in Hickson (discussed further in Segment #4). Plates 3.3.1 to 3.3.12 of Appendix 3.3 provide visual evidence of Segment #3 as noted during the landscape survey.

**Landscape Components**

**Right-of-way:** The existence of a former rail right-of-way is not readily apparent when approaching the southern entrance to Segment #3 from Braemar Side Road (Plate 3.3.1). Walking in a straight line north across Braemar Side Road from the terminus of Segment #2 and through the trees lining the road, an embankment is evident indicating the location of the former bridge crossing of Mud Creek (Plate 3.3.2). Looking north across Mud Creek, the boundaries of the right-of-way are not visually discernable from the surrounding landscape. Across Mud Creek to the north, evidence of the right-of-way has been lost as the trail has blended completely with the surrounding trees and brush. The researcher had a difficult time identifying where the right-of-way was located in relation to the abutting parcels (Plate 3.3.7). Further evidence of the right-of-way is undetectable in the southern portion of Segment #3 as the width of the right-of-way has overgrown completely with dense trees and brush, resulting in a merging of the right-of-way with the abutting private woodlots (Plates 3.3.8 and 3.3.9). Further assessment of the right-of-way was not possible due to the inability to access the trail.

Access to Segment #3 was attempted at the northern terminus from the rear of the S.T. Loveys property. Evidence of the right-of-way is minimal as it is difficult to identify the right-of-way from abutting agricultural lands both in production and those lying fallow. The portion of the right-of-way that can be identified is covered with tall grass and has trees at the periphery (Plates 3.3.10 and 3.3.11). Beyond the grassed area proceeding south, however, the trees and brush have overgrown the trail in a similar fashion to the southern entrance (Plate 3.3.12). This dense vegetation renders the trail impassable. The only remaining means of identifying the right-of-way is the visual distinction of a vegetative strip buffer between the eastern and western
abutting agricultural lands. Due to these landscape conditions, the integrity of the right-of-way for Segment #3 is deemed to be poor.

**Subgrade:** Evidence of subgrade for Segment #3 is minimal. At the southern entrance to the segment, the raised earth mound abutting Braemar Side Road indicates the subgrade approach to the former bridge, however no subgrade is visually apparent across Mud Creek where the railway would have proceeded north. The researcher experienced substantial difficulty discerning the location of the subgrade from the abutting parcels and could not tell where the railway would have proceeded north towards Hickson. The same problems were encountered in attempting to locate the subgrade at the northern terminus of Segment #3. Due to these landscape conditions, the integrity of the subgrade for Segment #3 is deemed to be poor.

**Ballast, ties, rails and fastenings:** No elements of track structure were found at the southern entrance and northern terminus of Segment #3. Due to the inability to access this portion of the trail, the researcher is unable to provide an assessment of additional elements of track structure located along this segment.

**Rail yards:** No evidence of rail yards was found at the southern entrance and northern terminus of Segment #3. Due to the inability to access this portion of the trail, the researcher is unable to provide an assessment of additional yard evidence located along this segment.

**Associated buildings:** No evidence of associated buildings was found at the southern entrance and northern terminus of Segment #3. Due to the inability to access this portion of the trail, the researcher is unable to provide an assessment of additional building evidence located along this segment.

**Associated structures:** The wooden retaining wall that supported the former bridge is still in existence on the southern side of Mud Creek; however it is experiencing substantial decay due to age (Plate 3.3.3 and 3.3.4). Several former wooden support posts for the bridge are still *in situ* in the creek bed and protrude above the water (Plate 3.3.6). Mud Creek presents a substantial
natural barrier to accessing the remainder of the trail and the narrowest section of the creek appears to be where the bridge was originally located (Plate 3.3.5).

Removal of the bridge across Mud Creek has had a significant impact on the development of Segment #3 since abandonment. Given the inability to access the trail from Hickson without trespassing on private property, the entrance to the trail from Braemar Side Road was essential for individuals to utilize this segment for recreation purposes. Without bridge access, both informal maintenance from pedestrian use and formal maintenance of the trail are not possible. Overall, the integrity of the bridge is deemed to be poor.

**Minor elements:** A sign indicating the existence of a walking trail is still located at the northern terminus of the trail (Plate 3.3.11). This sign is historically non-contributing to the operation of the railway; however it is an important indication of the presence of a land use different from the surrounding agricultural land uses. Further, it indicates that the wooded corridor is not a private woodlot. No further evidence of minor elements was found at the southern entrance and northern terminus of Segment #3. Due to the inability to access this portion of the trail, the researcher is unable to provide an assessment of additional minor elements located along this segment.

6.2.4 **Survey Segment #4 (S.T. Loveys and the Village of Hickson)**

Segment #4 consists of the S.T. Loveys property and other parcels located in the Village of Hickson that abutted the former railway. Originally, these parcels comprised a node at Hickson that included the station, rail yard, commercial operations, manufacturing facilities, and institutional uses. In the years following the abandonment of the railway, the owners of S.T. Loveys, Limited purchased many of the small lots abutting the railway that were former commercial and manufacturing enterprises. Today, the node is a commercial and institutional focal point of Hickson with the S.T. Loveys general supply store, a fuel distribution business, the post office, the township office, the library, and several multi-unit residential properties. Plates 3.4.1 to 3.4.22 of Appendix 3.4 provide visual evidence of Segment #4 as noted during the landscape survey.
Landscape Components

Right-of-way: Evidence of the rail right-of-way throughout Segment #4 is very difficult to discern. Looking north towards Hickson from the terminus of Segment #3, the right-of-way has been lost with the cultivation of agricultural lands between the Hickson Trail and the S.T. Loveys property (Plates 3.4.1 and 3.4.2). During the railway era, most of the S.T. Loveys property was included within the rail right-of-way. However, the combination of gravel lanes and large trees within the site and at the rear edge of the property provide an impression that the property has always existed as single entity, served by Oxford Road 8 and devoted to vehicular use of the site. As a result, the integrity of the right-of-way for Segment #4 is deemed to be poor.

Subgrade: No rail subgrade is apparent on the S.T. Loveys property and within the Village of Hickson. Areas where subgrade was located have been leveled and graveled for the use of automobiles and trucks.

Ballast, ties, rails and fastenings: No elements of track structure are evident in Segment #4. Given the continuous commercial and industrial uses of S.T. Loveys since the abandonment of the railway, it is likely that elements of track structure were quickly removed following the end of the railway era to facilitate different uses of the property to support business operations.

Rail yards: Although virtually the entire S.T. Loveys property was part of the original rail yard, the location of the former rail tracks is only visually evident from the location of buildings and width of laneways on the S.T. Loveys site (Plates 3.4.4 and 3.4.12). Many of the former buildings within the yard (i.e., the station, the feed mill, the grain storage buildings) have been removed since the abandonment of the railway. Areas within the former yard have been gravelled for truck use or been covered in grass. As a result, the integrity of the rail yard for Segment #4 is deemed to be poor.
**Associated buildings:** Several associated buildings are located on the S.T. Loveys property and on adjacent properties in Segment #4:

- **S.T. Loveys building (Plates 3.4.5, 3.4.6, 3.4.7, 3.4.8, 3.4.9, 3.4.10 and 3.4.11):** The S.T. Loveys building is currently being used by S.T. Loveys Limited as a general goods store serving the local agricultural community as it did during the railway era. The eastern addition (Plate 3.4.9) is historically non-contributing as it was constructed during the 1970s as a branch location of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. The original building also received a rear addition during the railway era as a former porch was enclosed to provide additional storage (Plate 3.4.10). No windows are located at the rear of the building as it abutted the former feedmill with only a narrow passage way separating the two buildings. Weigh scales for trucks are located on the western side of the building; however they are no longer in use. Overall, the exterior of the S.T. Loveys building is in good condition and has been well maintained. With the exception of the 1970s addition, the S.T. Loveys building is a fine example of a commercial building in a style reflective of the early 20th Century. The integrity of the S.T. Loveys building is deemed to be good.

- **Feed shed (Plates 3.4.3, 3.4.4 and 3.4.12):** The multi-bay white feed shed is currently being used for general storage. The feed shed is one of the three remaining buildings on the S.T. Loveys site that were constructed to store goods unloaded from the railway. The feed shed is structurally intact; however its white metal siding is rusting in several locations. The integrity of the feed shed is deemed to be fair.

- **Coal shed (Plates 3.4.4 and 3.4.15):** The metallic-sided coal shed is currently being used for general storage. It is one of only three remaining buildings on the S.T. Loveys property built to receive and store goods delivered by railway. The coal shed is completely intact; however its exterior covering is rusting in several locations. The integrity of the coal shed is deemed to be fair.

- **Yellow brick building (Plate 3.4.13):** A yellow brick shed is located on the S.T. Loveys property and is used for general storage. Its exterior is in excellent condition. Given its size and brick exterior, the yellow brick building will likely experience a long life as an outbuilding as it is highly durable and easily adaptable to a variety of uses. The integrity of the yellow brick building is deemed to be good.
• Lumber sheds (Plate 3.4.14): Several brown sheds are located at the rear of the S.T. Loveys property and are former storage buildings for lumber that was sold at S.T. Loveys, Limited. Currently, nothing is stored in the lumber sheds. The roofs of several of the sheds are sagging and it appears that these buildings have not been well-maintained. It is likely that the brown sheds will collapse in the future or be torn down. The integrity of the lumber sheds is deemed to be poor.

• Storage shed (Plate 3.4.16): A storage shed is located on the S.T. Loveys site. It is currently being used for general storage. Any possible link to the railway is unknown. As a result, it is deemed to be historically non-contributing.

• White siding apartment building: The white siding apartment building located directly across the street from the S.T. Loveys building and it is the successor building for the original general store that was destroyed in a fire in 1912. Currently, the building is being used for residential apartments. Alterations to the building including its windows and door positions in addition to the aluminum siding were also likely made at the time of conversion to residential apartments. The integrity of the white siding apartment building is deemed to be fair.

• Hickson library (Plate 3.4.22): The Hickson library building is the former township hall. Currently, the building is being used as a branch for the Oxford County Library. Its exterior has not been altered in the years since its conversion to the library. The brick exterior surfacing is somewhat crumbling and the shingled roof requires replacement. The integrity of the Hickson library is deemed to be fair.

• Post office building (Plates 3.4.19 and 3.4.20): The post office building is the former Russell blacksmith shop that was repositioned and renovated in 1939. Currently, it is being used as a small postal outlet and minor retail store. Its exterior has been altered several times since construction as it has been adapted to serve several uses. Structurally, the building is in good condition and has been well maintained. The integrity of the post office building is deemed to be fair.

• Red brick house (Plates 3.4.18, 3.4.19, 3.4.20): The red brick house was originally a grain storage shed that was moved and converted into a residence. The house retains its original rectangular shape and pitched roof. A front porch has been added in the years since its conversion. The positioning of the front-facing windows on the second storey is unique to
the building in relation to other adjacent homes. The windows are close together on the western side of the north face of the building and no windows exist on the eastern portion of the facade. The building, however, provides little indication of its former use from its exterior. The integrity of the red brick house is deemed to be good.

- Township of East Zorra-Tavistock office (Plate 3.4.21): The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock occupies a building on the north side of the street directly across from the S.T. Loveys property. It is currently used as the administrative offices and council chamber for the township. The building was constructed in the 1970s in a position that straddles the former railway line that ran from Hickson to Tavistock, if it were still in existence. Its site is also where the former stock yard was located. The township office, however, is not connected to the railway era and is deemed to be historically non-contributing.

**Associated structures:** Three large bulk fuel tanks are located at the rear of the S.T. Loveys property and are the only structures located within Segment #4 (Plate 3.4.4). These tanks were used during the railway period to store fuel off-loaded from bulk fuel railcars (K. Kaufmann, personal interview, November 1, 2010). Fuel is still stored in the tanks to be used for the diesel fuel sales division of S.T. Loveys Limited. This division supplies area farmers with diesel fuel for farm machinery as it did during the railway era. The integrity of the fuel tanks is deemed to be fair.

**Minor elements:** No minor elements associated with the railway are found in Segment #4.
6.2.5 General Landscape Survey Findings

The landscape survey permits general observations about landscape processes in existence for the Hickson Trail. The landscape processes represent holistic conditions for the entire trail rather than looking at the landscape components in isolation.

Landscape Processes

Land uses and activities: The Hickson Trail itself is used as a nature trail and, with the exception of the portion from Braemar Side Road to the S.T. Loveys property, is well maintained. It is used extensively for recreational purposes such as walking and hiking, however there is some evidence that all-terrain vehicles are using the trail. The lands surrounding the trail are principally used to grow agricultural cash crops such as corn, wheat, soybeans and hay. Finally, the area in the Village of Hickson that used to be associated with the railway contains a number of commercial and institutional buildings serving the village and the surrounding community.

Patterns of spatial organization: As a former railway, the Hickson Trail is a linear corridor running north-south with a central node in the Village of Hickson. As stated above, the node served as the former rail yard and contained a variety of commercial, industrial and institutional uses. The trail is divided into segments due to a series of east-west roads located within the study area. Currently, there are only two property owners for the former railway lands: the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (owner of the trail lands) and S.T. Loveys, Limited (owner of the S.T. Loveys property).

Response to natural environment: The location of the rail line was specifically chosen to avoid terrain alterations in the construction of the railway. Only the area surrounding the Braemar Side Road intersection required extensive earth works to overcome the hilly terrain. The land containing the former rail line is quite flat, with only minor ridges. Several minor brooks of water were addressed through the use of culverts and a bridge was installed to cross the Mud Creek. While the right-of-way contained very little vegetation during the railway era, extensive tree and brush growth has occurred in the years following abandonment. As a result, the Hickson Trail has become a natural corridor linking the many private woodlots located
throughout the length of the trail. This natural linkage supports a larger ecosystem than what would be possible if the trail did not exist.

**Cultural traditions:** The buildings in the Village of Hickson that were associated with the railway are strongly reflective of designs popular during the early part of the 20th Century. They are an excellent collection of rural commercial- and institutional-style buildings. The collection of buildings in a node not attached to a road intersection is unique and indicates that there was a cultural purpose for their location that is no longer visually apparent due to the removal of the railway elements. This pattern leaves visitors to the village with no information regarding the former railway to speculate as to why Hickson’s development pattern evolved as it did.
7.0 ANALYSIS OF THE HICKSON TRAIL

Based on the historical research and landscape survey outlined in the previous section, an evaluation of the Hickson Trail as a cultural heritage landscape is presented below. The evaluation follows the format described in Section 5 of this study. First, the significance of the Hickson Trail is assessed to determine the historical value of the landscape. Second, an evaluation of landscape integrity is conducted to consider the condition of the Trail and the railway node in the Village of Hickson. Finally, boundaries for the cultural heritage landscape are selected within the study area. This structured evaluation method is important to ensure that the assessment of the Hickson Trail is conducted in an objective, consistent and defensible manner necessary for the consideration of this study’s research questions.

7.1 Significance

Determining the historical significance of a landscape is perhaps the most important element in the evaluation of a cultural heritage landscape. Both the Ontario Heritage Act (1990) and the Provincial Policy Statement (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005) stress the importance of assessing the significance of a landscape in order to apply land use conservation policies and by-laws. Thus, the evaluation of the significance of the Hickson Trail follows the criteria laid out in Ontario Regulation 9/06 and additional significance criteria derived from National Register #30.

7.1.1 Ontario Regulation 9/06 Criteria

In order for properties to be designated by municipal by-law under the Ontario Heritage Act, one or more of the criteria outlined in Ontario Regulation 9/06: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest must be satisfied. This is a key requirement to ensure that the rationale for the determination of the significance of a property is sufficiently rigorous and consistent throughout the province (Ministry of Culture, 2006c). According to the Ontario Heritage Toolkit, a property is deemed to have cultural heritage value based on the number of 9/06 criteria that it satisfies. Thus, the rationale for conservation of a property is

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21 For the purposes of evaluating the Hickson Trail, the use of the word “property” in Ontario Regulation 9/06 is deemed to be applicable to the entire railscape within the study area.
strengthened as the number of satisfied significance criteria increases (Ministry of Culture, 2006c).

The criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06 are listed in detail in Section 5 of this study. Based upon the historical research and landscape survey conducted, it is the opinion of the study’s author that the Hickson Trail satisfies three of the nine criteria. The criteria not discussed below are either not applicable to the Trail or are not supported by the research findings outlined in Section 6 of this study. The applicable 9/06 criteria are as follows:

2(i). The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

One theme and two people associated with the Hickson Trail are historically significant to the community surrounding Hickson. First, the development of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway represented the beginnings of industrialization and modernity, creating a distinction from the community that had existed prior to the railway. The arrival of the railway restructured larger portions of the area’s economy through the ability to transport goods quickly to distant markets and to import goods that were previously unavailable. As a result, industrial and commercial operations in the Village of Hickson (e.g., the Strathallan Cheese and Butter Manufacturing Company, the general stores, and the feed mill) were larger than their predecessors in Strathallan that had exclusively served the immediate community. Agriculture around Hickson also shifted to being more export-oriented with cash crops and large numbers of livestock raised to be shipped via the railroad. Additionally, social impacts occurred with the development of the railway: children were able to attend high school, day excursions to the Great Lakes were possible, mail was transported more quickly, and area residents experienced substantial increases in mobility in relation to the limited opportunities that had previously existed from road travel.

Second, the Hickson Trail is associated with Sir Joseph Hickson, of whom the Village of Hickson is named. Joseph Hickson is an individual with national historical significance. A major figure of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, Hickson rose through the ranks to become general manager of the company’s North American operations in 1874 (Currie, 1957). His

22 The Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria are outlined on page 41.
tenure as general manager came at a pivotal time for Grand Trunk. In 1881, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was chartered to build a rail line to the Pacific Ocean. The CPR was originally supposed to have an eastern terminus at Lake Nipissing, Ontario; however, soon after its construction out west, the CPR began purchasing railways in Eastern Canada. Recognizing the threat posed by CPR, Hickson voiced his objection to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, whose government was backing the CPR. After receiving unsatisfactory responses to his concerns, Hickson pursued an aggressive expansion of the Grand Trunk system by purchasing large numbers of branch railway lines in Southwestern Ontario in an attempt to consolidate the region’s rail network, thus creating a monopoly for his company. Between 1881 and 1890, Hickson secured control of 15 railway companies in Southwestern Ontario and a total of 1900 miles of railway line (Baskerville, 2000; Stevens, 1973). One of these companies was the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway, which was merged with three other companies to create the subsidiary line of the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay and Lake Erie Railway Company. By the time of Hickson’s retirement in 1890, he had greatly expanded the scope of Grand Trunk’s operations in Southwestern Ontario, secured a direct rail linkage between the Atlantic Ocean and Chicago, Illinois and had initiated the construction of the St. Clair tunnel, which became one of the world’s greatest engineering achievements of the 19th century (Baskerville, 2000; Gilbert, 1991).

Given his prominence as a railway builder, the naming of the Village of Hickson after Joseph Hickson provides a direct recognition of the importance of the railway upon the new village.

Finally, the association between Thomas Loveys and the railway was regionally significant to the Village of Hickson. Loveys was a local entrepreneur that utilized the railway to amass a large business conglomerate that has continued in existence to the present. As noted in Section 5 of this study, Loveys owned and operated a general store, constructed the blacksmiths shop, and sold the land to the Township of East Zorra for the construction of the township hall. His descendants increased the prominence of the Loveys company by adding the ST Loveys building, providing space for the village’s bank, creating the turnip processing division, and utilizing the railway to provide goods such as coal, feed and lumber to be sold to the surrounding community. As a result, Thomas Loveys can be considered the most significant person to capitalize upon the benefits provided by the railway to the Village of Hickson. In recognition of his importance to the community, the portion of Oxford Road 8 that runs through the village is informally known as “Loveys St.”.
2(ii). The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.

As noted in Section 6 of this study, the Hickson Trail is of fundamental importance to the understanding of the historical development of the villages of Hickson and Strathallan. The physical layout of the rail line bypassed Strathallan and the construction of a railway stop in the location of what became Hickson signaled the demise of the once vibrant settlement located on Oxford Road 59. Had the railway not been constructed, it is most likely that no settlement would exist where Hickson is now located and Strathallan would have grown further while continuing to serve as the seat of government for the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock. Thus, the Hickson Trail has significant historical value to both the settlements of Hickson and Strathallan and the railscape provides a physical reminder of the importance the arrival of the railway had upon the settlement of the area.

3(i). The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.

The built form in the Village of Hickson has been largely determined by the existence of the former railway. Although many rural villages developed around the intersection of two major roads, the junction of Oxford Road 59 and Oxford Road 8 has not served as the focal point for Hickson. Rather, the core of the village is located approximately 700 metres east of the road intersection. It is at this location that most of the community and commercial operations are located: the township hall, the library, the ball park, the post office, and the S.T. Loveys store. The existence of this community node is directly attributable to the former railway that bisected the village. As noted in the previous section of this study, knowledge of the former railway’s existence is necessary to understand why the village core is located so far east from the intersection of the two major roads. The railscape of the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway is thus significant to understanding the development pattern of the Village of Hickson.
7.1.2 Selection of Areas of Significance

Of the areas of significance outlined in Section 5 of this study, four are applicable to the Hickson Trail landscape. First, the development of the railway had a significant impact on the structure of agriculture surrounding Hickson. Farmers were able to take advantage of the processing and storage depots such as the cheese factory, the mill and the stockyard located within the village. Rather than relying on local markets for surplus crops, milk and livestock, farmers benefited from the proximity to the railway which enabled speedy transport for agricultural goods to major urban centres. As a result, farmers located near the railway had an opportunity to gain wealth at levels greater than their colleagues near other settlements that lacked access to a railway.

Second, the community planning and development area of significance is demonstrated by the spatial organization of the railscape. The railway was purposefully designed to avoid the uneven terrain in the area of Mud Creek. This was due to the desire to limit the need for major earthworks required to produce the necessarily level subgrade for train passage. Additionally, the railway route was designed to by-pass Strathallan due to the unwillingness of Andrew Kennedy to sell the railway company the land needed for a connection to the settlement. Community planning and development is also apparent in the land use pattern in the Village of Hickson with the commercial and industrial node that emerged at the intersection of the railway and Oxford Road 8.

Third, engineering as an area of significance is apparent from the railscape. The continued existence of the railway components within the Hickson Trail right-of-way as outlined in the previous section of this study provides evidence of the engineering that was required to layout and construct the former railway. Individuals traversing the Hickson Trail can gain an appreciation of the rationale for the establishment of the subgrade and culverts for drainage necessary to support train travel.

Finally, the railscape demonstrates a former industrial character distinct from its surrounding. The right-of-way corridor provides for a trail that is not contained within a forested area. It is a linear landscape surrounded to the east and west by farmland. Thus, individuals utilizing the trail are able to deduce that the Hickson Trail once served as a railway corridor between Woodstock and Hickson. The terminus of the trail at the rear of the S.T. Loveys
property indicates that an industrial node once existed that served the area surrounding the Village of Hickson.

7.1.3 Defined Periods of Significance

Linked to the areas of significance identified above are the defined periods of significance. As noted in Section 5 of this study, the periods of significance are timeframes when the railway was important to the areas of significance. In reviewing the historical record of the railscape as outlined in Section 6, there are four periods of significance that are apparent. The first historical period occurred between 1874 and 1901. This era represented the initial planning and development for the northern segment of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway and the early formation of the Village of Hickson with the reliance on the Vance store as the flag stop location for train service. It was during this period that the transition between the settlements of Strathallan and Hickson occurred as a result of the economic and social opportunities presented by the railway. The end date of this era has been chosen to reflect the construction of the Hickson Methodist Church in 1901. Construction of the church from components of the old Methodist church in Strathallan represents a clear signal of the success of the Village of Hickson given the location choice and prominence of such an important public institution.

Second, the historic period from 1901 to 1923 represents what could be considered the ‘golden age’ of the railway village at Hickson. It was during this period that the ornate Hickson Station was constructed as well as when the other prominent village core buildings were constructed (i.e., the S.T. Loveys building, the township hall, the grist mill, the blacksmith shop). Hickson’s residents and area farmers took advantage of the benefits provided by the railway, which by this point was no longer a novelty, but necessary infrastructure of daily life that was taken for granted. The village flourished as a railway community during this period.

The third era from 1923 to 1935 begins with the consolidation of the Grand Trunk Railway Company into the newly formed Canadian National Railways. This event broadened the network to which the Hickson railway segment now belonged to. The most significant development during this historic period, however, was the emergence of automobiles and trucks that provided personal and flexible transportation of people and goods in direct competition with the railway. Municipal investment in road improvements also aided in increasing the number of
vehicles utilizing the roads surrounding Hickson. As a result, the mid-1930s witnessed the dismantling of the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway line with the loss of the segments between Hickson and Tavistock and Burgessville and Woodstock due to Canadian National’s inability to compete with automobiles and trucks.

Finally, the historic period of 1935 to 1965 represents a time period where the rail line between Woodstock and Hickson existed as its own independent sub-division of Canadian National. During this era, the railway declined in direct importance to the residents of Hickson and its surrounding area. There was decreasing use of the railway for passenger service; however, the railway continued to serve as a conduit for the import of goods to be sold at the S.T. Loveys business operations. Perhaps most significantly, the railway was used extensively during this period to transport turnips to distant markets following the construction of the turnip waxing plant in 1938. Thus, the fourth historic period witnessed the railway serving a greater commercial role rather than being the balanced passenger-commercial transportation link that it had previously served. The abandonment of the Hickson Sub-division by Canadian National in 1965 represents the end of this historic period.

7.2 Integrity

Through an evaluation of the integrity of the Hickson Trail, an understanding of the degree of change between the historic periods and the present can be established. Table 7.1 summarizes the results of the landscape survey as outlined in Section 6 of this study.

Table 7.1: Summary of Landscape Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAILSCAPE COMPONENT</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>FAIR</th>
<th>POOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Segment #2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #3</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subgrade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Segment #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While it is fully recognized that the railscape elements have been modified over time, an assessment of the landscape’s integrity is fundamental to establishing if a sufficient number of components remain in place to warrant conservation under the Ontario Heritage Act. While the Act does not require an assessment of integrity, the Ontario Heritage Toolkit does recognize the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ballast, Ties, Rails, Fastenings</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segment #1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #2</td>
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<td>Segment #3</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rail Yards</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segment #1</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Segment #3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4</td>
<td>X</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Buildings</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Segment #1 - Farm house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Segment #2</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Segment #3</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Segment #4 - ST Loveys</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4 - Feed Shed</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4 - Coal Shed</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4 - Yellow Brick Bld</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4 - Lumber Shed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4 - White Apt. Bld</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4 - Hickson Library</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4 - Post office</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4 - Red brick house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Structures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segment #1</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minor Elements</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segment #1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment #4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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importance of considering the impact of the removal of historic components on the cultural heritage value of historic properties (Ministry of Culture, 2006c). It is the opinion of this author that integrity is an important consideration in establishing if the heritage character of the landscape remains to a degree that warrants land use controls.

7.2.1 Assessment of Landscape Integrity

To assess the integrity of the Hickson Trail railscape, the landscape evaluation questions prepared by Scheinman (2006) for the Region of Waterloo are utilized below:

1. Is the site continuing in the same use and/or compatible use (compatible here refers to a use that doesn’t require the altering of key elements and their inter-relationship)?

Although the railway was abandoned in 1965, the Hickson Trail and the properties in the village node remain in compatible uses to their historic land uses during the periods of significance identified above. The Hickson Trail between Oxford Road 17 and the Braemar Side Road continues to serve as a transportation corridor, but rather for hikers, cyclists and horseback riders than for trains. Within the right-of-way, a pathway continues to be maintained that provides a similar character to that which existed during the periods when the railway was in operation. With the exception of the portion between Braemar Side Road and the S.T. Loveys property that has been lost to vegetative overgrowth, the Hickson Trail remains in essentially the same layout as existed in the historic periods.

Although the right-of-way and most of the railway components have been removed from the Village of Hickson, many of the historically associated buildings remain in compatible uses from the periods of significance. The S.T. Loveys property continues to serve the area surrounding Hickson as a commercial enterprise providing agricultural goods and fuel for farm vehicles. Several of the storage buildings on the property are still actively used. The former township hall still exists as an institutional use, shifting from a civic building to a public library. However, both the former blacksmith shop and the building that replaced the Vance store have changed usage: the blacksmith shop now serves as a postal outlet and the store has been converted into residential apartments.
2. **Is there continuity of ownership or occupation of the site, dating to a historic period?**

The S.T. Loveys property is the only site linked to the Hickson Trail railscape that has remained in continuous ownership since the abandonment of the railway. The Loveys family has passed along the property to each succeeding generation with the ownership of the S.T. Loveys business. However, the ownership of the Hickson Trail by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources can be considered to have a continuity of ownership to a historic period in spirit if not in the law. During the eras that the Hickson Trail was owned by Canadian National Railways, the company operated as a corporation owned by Her Majesty’s Canadian Government. Thus, the Trail has remained in public ownership since the demise of the Grand Trunk Railway Company in 1923.

3. **Have buildings and other built elements survived in their original form and in relatively sound condition?**

As noted in Section 6 of this study, a significant number of the historic buildings and structures are no longer in existence at the commercial/industrial node in Hickson. Most importantly for the character of the railscape, the Hickson Station has been substantially altered and relocated to serve as a private residence. The loss of the cheese factory/milk plant, the mill and the turnip factory to demolition and fire in the 1970s resulted in the diminishment of railscape elements at the village node. Collectively, these were important buildings that demonstrated the historic importance of the railway to the Village of Hickson. Finally, the loss of the bridge traversing Mud Creek had a strong impact on the integrity of the right-of-way comprising the Hickson Trail and resulted in the loss of the segment between Braemar Side Road and the S.T. Loveys property to vegetative growth.

Of the buildings comprising the railscape that remain, most are in good condition. The landscape survey evaluation determined that the S.T. Loveys building, the sheds, the Hickson library, the apartment building, the red brick house, and the post office are in either fair or good condition. Only the lumber shed was deemed to be in a poor state of repair. A large number of the buildings have been altered from their original form, however. The apartment building and the red brick house have been renovated from being a general store and feed storage shed, respectively. Further, the post office is the former blacksmiths shop that witnessed substantial
change including the re-orientation of the building, and interior and exterior renovations. Only the S.T. Loveys building and the Hickson library have remained in their original form based on historical photographs.

4. **Are historic complexes and their relationships to other elements such as yards and fields intact? To what extent have other built elements such as fences, walls, paths, bridges, corrals, pens survived?**

The Hickson Trail railscape has two historic complexes: the rail corridor and the node in the Village of Hickson that contained the rail yard and the associated commercial and industrial operations. Unlike most of the former Port Dover and Lake Huron rail line that ran from Port Dover to Stratford, the portion consisting of the Hickson Trail is one of only two remaining intact rights-of-way. Fortunately, the Trail was purchased by the Ministry of Natural Resources as a whole and the right-of-way was not broken up and sold to abutting property owners like most of the other segments of the line. However, the loss of the Mud Creek bridge has resulted in the inability to traverse the Trail between Braemar Side Road and the S.T. Loveys property. As a result, this portion of the right-of-way exists on maps, but in reality has become a forested natural corridor. The Trail portions between Oxford Road 17 and Braemar Side Road remain distinct from the abutting agricultural properties; however, the growth of trees and brush at the edges of the right-of-way are not consistent with the open railscape that existed during the period of the railway’s operation that provided unobstructed views of the country-side except in locations of farmer woodlots.

Second, the railscape node in Hickson has been altered substantially. All components of the former track structure have been removed from the S.T. Loveys property. As noted above, many buildings that once existed at the node have been demolished since the abandonment of the railway. With the exception of the wide laneway gaps on either side of the S.T. Loveys building, it is difficult to visually discern at the present that a railway once ran through the village. Thus, while some buildings still comprise the nodal complex that existed at the former junction of the railway and Oxford Road 8, there are currently few indications of the presence of the historic railway.
5. **Does the historical relationship to prominent natural features, e.g. cliff, stream, still exist both for the site as a whole and within the site?**

The Hickson Trail continues to be shaped by prominent natural features that were historically important in the construction of the railway between Woodstock and Stratford. The uneven terrain adjacent to Mud Creek required the installation of additional earthworks to support the track structure of the rail line. The Trail subgrade abutting the Braemar Side Road is still raised and flat, rendering it distinct from the surrounding landscape.

During the periods of significance, the existence of a bridge over Mud Creek was essential for the operation of the railway. As mentioned previously, the removal of the bridge has significantly impacted the integrity of the railscape. Individuals utilizing the Hickson Trail have faced difficulties in traversing Mud Creek without a bridge, thus rendering the portion north of Braemar Side Road infrequently accessed. The lack of a bridge over Mud Creek has fractured the Trail as a continuous transportation corridor, significantly impacting the integrity of the railscape.

6. **Are ‘designed’ plantings such as hedgerows, windrows, gardens, shade trees still discernable and is their traditional relationship to buildings, lanes, roadways, walks and fields still discernable?**

No designed elements linked to the railscape appear to be in existence. With the exception of an orchard located adjacent to the railway station, there does not appear to have been any purposefully designed natural landscape elements that were associated with the railway. The orchard no longer exists.
7. How closely does the existing view of the site compare to the same view captured in a historic photo? Can ruins and overgrown elements still convey a clear ‘message’?

Historic photographs of the railscape that have been obtained by the author of this study pertain to the village node at Hickson only. Other than aerial photographs, no historic pictures have been found for the railway corridor between Woodstock and Hickson. Most of the pictures are focused on the Hickson Station given its historic prominence as a landmark building within the community. Pictures of the streetscape at the nodal point showcase several railscape components, including the track structure, telegraph lines and several buildings (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2). Of the components apparent in the historic photographs, only the S.T. Loveys building and the white siding apartment building provide a similar view at present. They both contain the same commercial building design that existed during the historic period, even though the brick exterior of the apartment building has been covered. The track structure and telegraph poles have been removed, and the former blacksmith building has been re-oriented. The present ability of the node to convey the message of a former railway junction has been substantially diminished with the alternations that occurred following the abandonment of the railway.

7.3 Boundaries

As noted in Section 5 of this study, the determination of boundaries for cultural heritage landscapes as established by National Register #30 is a three step process. Based on the evidence compiled from the historic research and landscape survey of the Hickson Trail, it is...
possible to determine properties that are tied to periods of historic significance. Next, the scope of the railscape is refined by identifying which areas of the identified properties have retained sufficient integrity to constitute a cultural heritage landscape. Finally, the boundaries of the potential cultural heritage landscape can be established.

7.3.1 Properties Linked to Periods of Significance

The Hickson Trail railscape contains two geographic areas linked to the periods of significance – the corridor containing the Trail and the commercial/industrial node located in the Village of Hickson. The following properties within these geographic areas are directly tied to the periods of significance:

- The Hickson Trail: The Hickson Trail consists of the right-of-way that was once owned by the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company and its successors. The Trail was linked to all of the historic periods of significance as identified above. As it has been noted in this study, only the portions of the Trail between Oxford Road 17 and the Braemar Side Road remain intact and accessible, while the northern most portion has essentially become a natural wildlife corridor.

- The S.T. Loveys property: The rail yards, station, and most of the commercial and industrial properties associated with the railway were once contained within the property owned by the Loveys family. The property is linked to all periods of significance and has been formed as a result of a consolidation of land once owned by multiple enterprises. Most of the remaining buildings associated with the former railway are located on the Loveys property.

- The Hickson library property: Located immediately west of the S.T. Loveys property and behind the post office property, the Hickson library remains in its original location. Constructed circa 1905 as the township hall, the library property is linked to all periods of significance beyond 1901. It continues to be used as a public facility, paying homage to its original use as a centre for community congregation at the centre of the village and adjacent to the railway.

- The post office property: The post office property is immediately west of the S.T. Loveys property and contains the building that was once the blacksmiths shop. Originally constructed to take advantage of the commercial cluster that formed around the railway, the blacksmiths shop is linked to all periods of significance post 1901. Although the alignment
of the building was altered in the 1930s, it continued in a commercial use throughout the historic periods.

- The red brick house property: Located immediately west of the post office property, the red brick house is a converted grain storage shed that was originally located behind the Hickson Station. The date of its construction is unknown, and it is not known when it was moved to its present location and given a brick exterior. A photo of the station from the early 1900s, however, permits an association of the grain shed with the 1901 to 1923 period of significance. It is noteworthy that the former grain shed is the only building remaining in the Village of Hickson directly linked to the former railway company.

- The white siding apartment building property: Although it is a replacement building for the original Vance general store, the apartment building located directly north-west from the S.T. Loveys building was used for commercial purposes until the late 1960s. Constructed in 1913 to replace the general store lost to fire, the apartment building is associated with all periods of significance after 1901. Along with the S.T. Loveys building, the apartment building served as an anchor for the commercial core of the Village of Hickson. Under its current white siding exterior, the apartment building is composed of the same red brick surfacing that is found on the S.T. Loveys building. The design and massing of the two buildings is very similar.

- The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock office property: The property directly north of the S.T. Loveys building containing the office building of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock is linked to the railway in two ways. First, the property was once part of the right-of-way for the railway line that went north to the Village of Tavistock. Second, the property contained a portion of the stockyards that abutted the rail line. With the abandonment of the northern portion of the railway line in 1935, this property ceased to be associated with the railway; thus, the property was linked to the periods of significance from 1874 to 1901, 1901 to 1919, and 1919-1935. However, it currently contains no evidence of its former association with the railway.

- The properties immediately east of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock office: The former cheese factory/milk plant was located immediately east of the current township office. After the original buildings were demolished in the 1970s, the property was subdivided into two
parcels for residential lots. Two ranch houses are now located on the former cheese factory property and there is no existing evidence of association with the former railway.

7.3.2 Sub-areas of Properties Comprising the Potential Cultural Heritage Landscape

Based upon the significance and integrity evaluations conducted above, there are several properties deemed to be associated with the Hickson Trail railscape. Within the Village of Hickson, the following properties are components of the potential cultural heritage landscape: the S.T. Loveys parcel, the Hickson library, the post office, the red brick house, and the white apartment building. These properties contain railscape components that were once associated with the commercial node at the centre of the village.

In regards to the Hickson Trail itself, only the portions between Oxford Road 17 and the Braemar Side Road have retained sufficient integrity to demonstrate railscape character. While the entire Trail is historically significant, the loss of the bridge over Mud Creek limited access to the portion of the Trail between Braemar Road and the S.T. Loveys property, resulting in the re-naturalization of the corridor segment. The lack of a replacement bridge has damaged the integrity of the Trail to an irreparable level.

7.3.3 Determination of Boundary Edges

Maps 7.1 and 7.2 present the boundaries of the potential Hickson Trail cultural heritage landscape. The edges of the boundary were primarily based upon current legal boundaries of the properties identified above. As demonstrated in Map 7.1, it is the opinion of this author that a single cultural heritage landscape does not exist; rather, there are two independent landscapes: the node within the Village of Hickson and the right-of-way corridor between Oxford Road 17 and the Braemar Side Road. As noted earlier in this section, the determination of these boundaries is based upon the existence of two distinct landscape segments possessing sufficient integrity, rather than a single, continuous cultural heritage landscape.
Map 7.1: Boundaries of the Potential Hickson Trail Cultural Heritage Landscape
Map 7.2: Enlarged Village of Hickson Portion of the Potential Cultural Heritage Landscape Boundaries
8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While in existence as a railway, the Hickson Trail had a major influence on the physical, economic, cultural and social development of the Villages of Hickson and Strathallan, as well as the surrounding agricultural area. For 89 years, rail service along the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway and its successors provided a vital transportation link to regional, provincial, national and international destinations. As recognized in Section 6 of this study, the railway provided new opportunities to the Hickson area, clearly distinct from the previous era. Further, the railway generated benefits that were not experienced in other Southwestern Ontario rural communities that lacked a rail connection. One cannot ignore the importance of the Hickson Trail railscape to the history of its surrounding area.

At the beginning of this study, two research questions were articulated to frame the determination of the cultural heritage value of the Hickson Trail and whether protective measures are desirable to recognize the importance of the railscape as a heritage resource. Thus, the central purpose of this section is to explore the research questions based upon the results of the cultural heritage landscape assessment conducted previously in this study. The conclusions reached about the research questions can then inform the recommendations of the author for the recognition of the heritage value of the Hickson Trail. These recommendations are directed to area governments, property owners and members of the Hickson community. Finally, this section concludes with a commentary by the author regarding the evaluation and conservation of railscapes in Ontario and the need for further research.

8.1 Is the Hickson Trail (the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway) a cultural heritage landscape as defined by the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement?

As noted earlier in this study, the PPS requires all planning matters to be consistent with its policy directives. It requires the conservation of cultural heritage landscapes, recognizing their importance as matters of provincial interest. In considering the PPS definition of cultural heritage landscapes, there are five essential components. First, a defined geographic area must exist that has been modified by human activities. Second, the defined area is required to possess heritage significance. Third, a community associated with the defined area needs to demonstrate that it values the landscape. Fourth, the area must contain a grouping of diverse heritage
features. Finally, a unique heritage form must be apparent that is differentiated from adjacent physical features (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005). These five components of the definition are interconnected and all must be satisfied for a landscape to be considered a cultural heritage landscape according to the PPS.

When this definition is applied to the Hickson Trail, several of the components are satisfied. The physical layout of the Trail has clear boundaries that include two major roads (Oxford Road 8 and Oxford Road 17), the former rail right-of-way, and the commercial/industrial node in the Village of Hickson. As discussed in the previous section, these boundaries provide a clearly defined geographic area that is distinct from surrounding agricultural and residential land uses. Further, the railscape contains two different features – a former rail corridor and a cluster of associated buildings within a settlement. However, the loss of access to the portion of the rail corridor between Braemar Side Road and the S.T. Loveys property has severed the connection of the landscape between the two distinct features. As a result, an individual cannot currently experience the railscape in its entirety; rather, it is perceived that two separate landscapes exist.

An assessment of significance is important to the PPS definition to determine whether the landscape is sufficiently ‘special’ to require conservation measures. According to the policy document, cultural heritage significance is defined as “resources that are valued for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005). Although the PPS does not provide criteria for determining significance according to this definition, the Ontario Heritage Toolkit states that the criteria are based on Ontario Regulation 9/06 issued under sub-section 29(1)(a) of the Ontario Heritage Act (Ministry of Culture, 2006d).

Section 7 of this study utilized the Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria to evaluate the significance of the Hickson Trail. Of the three criteria satisfied through the evaluation, both 2(ii) and 3(i) present the strongest arguments for the heritage significance of the Hickson Trail railscape. The former railway was instrumental in shaping the character of the area surrounding the Village of Hickson. As it has been noted in this study, the construction of the railway had significant economic, social and cultural influences on the daily life of Hickson area residents from almost 90 years. Further, the railway defined the physical layout of the Village of Hickson and was responsible for the historical development of two settlements. The Hickson Trail
railscape is thus a vital physical reminder of the cultural heritage of the Hickson area and its evolution as a community. The author of this study believes that there is strong evidence to support arguments of the heritage significance of the Hickson Trail as a cultural heritage landscape.

As previously stated in Section 5, an assessment of whether the Hickson Trail is valued by a community is beyond the scope of this study. While the PPS does not articulate how to determine a community’s value of a potential cultural heritage landscape, this author believes that the Provincial intent is for an expression of recognition through an action of a municipal council (e.g., a resolution of council, listing of the heritage resource, inclusion in a planning policy document, etc.) serving as the representative body of a community. Ideally, the community value should also emerge from a planning exercise that gathers opinions of community members directly associated with the potential cultural heritage landscape. Examples of means to determine community value include public workshops (Heritage Resources Centre, 2010) and opinion surveys (Shipley & Feick, 2009a) that can provide guidance to the municipal council. Given the lack of public consultation in establishing the research findings, this study cannot provide an assessment of the community value of the Hickson Trail, however.

Overall, the Hickson Trail satisfies most components of the PPS definition of a cultural heritage landscape. This study has provided support for the existence of a defined geographic area, heritage significance, a variety of features, and differentiation of the landscape from its adjacent features. However, there are two caveats preventing a conclusive statement that the Hickson Trail is a cultural heritage landscape. First, an indication of the community’s value of the Trail is outstanding and requires further research to determine. Second, the loss of the right-of-way segment between Braemar Side Road and the S.T. Loveys property has profoundly impacted the integrity of the landscape. While the PPS definition of a cultural heritage landscape does not include an assessment of landscape integrity, the impact of this loss on the holistic perception of the railscape cannot be ignored. Although the railscape could be identified as a cultural heritage landscape on a map, it cannot be experienced in its historical layout whereby the rail corridor was linked to the village node at Hickson. The two features are symbiotic: their physical connection is vital to the existence of a railscape and to arguments regarding its heritage
significance. Thus, the existence of two separate landscapes presents a challenge to a definitive conclusion that the Hickson Trail is a cultural heritage landscape.

8.2 Does the Hickson Trail (the former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway) merit protection under the *Ontario Heritage Act*?

As noted in Section 4 of this study, the *Ontario Heritage Act* (1990) provides two approaches of note that the municipal council of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock and/or the County of Oxford could take to protect the Hickson Trail railscape. First, the individual properties comprising the Hickson Trail cultural heritage landscape could be designated by municipal by-law under Section 29 of the Act. However, the properties in isolation do not possess sufficient heritage significance on their own; rather, the heritage value of the properties identified in Section 7 of this study is associated with the railscape as a whole. The second conservation approach, Part V of the Act, outlines the process of creating a heritage conservation district. Given the interconnectivity of the railscape properties, the development of a heritage conservation district plan would provide a means to recognize the linkages of the railscape properties and articulate their collective cultural value.

Of the three classifications of heritage districts outlined in Section 4 of this study, the Hickson Trail railscape best represents a static evolved district. Such a classification recognizes that the railscape reached point where its evolution as a railway ended, it developed over an extended period of time, and that it is significant to commemorating the historical development of the Hickson area (Ministry of Culture, 2006c). Additionally, the loss of buildings associated with the railscape such as the Hickson station, the grist mill, and the cheese plant support consideration of the Hickson Trail as a relic landscape. The removal of these buildings has had a substantial impact on the ability of the railscape to demonstrate a visual link with past conditions. Finally, the problems of railscape integrity as discussed above preclude the consideration of the Hickson Trail as a designed district.

Although the Hickson Trail railscape has been demonstrated to have heritage significance according to the Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria, the existing conditions of the landscape are not sufficiently reflective of a railscape to proceed with a heritage conservation district study. The commercial/industrial node in the Village of Hickson lacks many of its former associated buildings, most importantly the Hickson station. Were it still in place, the station would serve as
a critical indicator building of the former existence of a railway in the Village of Hickson. With its removal in 1964, the Hickson Trail landscape shifted from being a railway cluster to being a generic commercial cluster. Additionally, its loss took away a means to indicate the location of the right-of-way that ran through the village. The loss of a visual clue of the corridor that would have been provided by the continued existence of the station in situ is especially important given the general habit of track structure removal by railway companies upon abandonment (Andreea, 1997). Thus, the remaining buildings contained within the railscape village node lack a clear sense of connectivity and association with a former railway.

Finally, the lack of an accessible linkage of the former rail corridor and the village node has disrupted the ability of a potential heritage conservation district to convey a cohesive railway landscape. The node-corridor relationship is essential to the experience of individuals in perceiving a sense of the railscape as a unique land pattern with historical importance to the development of the Hickson area. The right-of-way segment between Braemar Side Road and the S.T. Loveys property is the most important aspect of the former rail corridor to a potential heritage conservation district centred in the Village of Hickson. Its loss due to the removal of the Mud Creek bridge is an unfortunate result of the 1965 abandonment, and is one of the main reasons for the conclusion of this study that the physical remains of the Hickson Trail railscape are not sufficient to warrant designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.
8.3 Description of Property, Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest, and Description of Heritage Attributes

Although this study does not recommend the designation of the Hickson Trail railscape as a heritage conservation district, a description and statement regarding the cultural heritage value of the landscape to the area around the Village of Hickson are important to recognizing the railscape’s heritage and ensuring its future conservation. The description and statement has several beneficial purposes such as providing supporting information for inclusion of the landscape on the municipal register of heritage properties, as a framework to guide alterations proposed for the railscape, and as a summary for inclusion with a designation by-law under the Ontario Heritage Act if deemed appropriate in the future (Ministry of Culture, 2006a). As a result, Table 8.1 presents the description of the heritage properties, a statement of cultural heritage value or interest, and a description of heritage attributes.

Figure 8.2: Advertisement for Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Passenger Service
**Figure 8.3: Hickson Trail Description and Heritage Statement**

**Description of Property – The Hickson Trail, Township of East Zorra-Tavistock**

The Hickson Trail is a railway landscape that consists of two constituent heritage features: the Hickson Trail running north-south and bounded by Oxford Road 8, the 13th Line, Oxford Road 17 and Oxford Road 59; and, associated properties within the Village of Hickson consisting of the Hickson Library (85 Loveys St. E), S.T. Loveys, Ltd. (89 Loveys St E.), the postal outlet (83 Loveys St. E.), a red brick private home (81 Loveys St. E.), and a white siding apartment building (88 Loveys St. E.).

**Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

The Hickson Trail is of cultural heritage value due to its historic and contextual role in shaping the development of the area surrounding Hickson, Ontario. In 1876, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway completed a rail line north of Woodstock, Ontario that provided the final link to the railway’s terminus in Stratford, Ontario. The railway resulted in the creation of the Village of Hickson surrounding the rail stop at the intersection of the railway and the current Oxford Road 8. The railway stop was also instrumental in the decline of the nearby settlement of Strathallan as residents and entrepreneurs located to Hickson to be close to the railway. For 89 years, the railway provided economic, social and cultural benefits to the residents of Hickson, and farmers in the surrounding area.

Additionally, the railway created a distinct settlement pattern in the Village of Hickson. Unlike many rural villages, the central core of Hickson is not located at the intersection of two major roads. Rather, the railway and its associated yards produced a commercial and industrial core surrounding the rail right-of-way that continues to exist to this day. The former Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway line between Woodstock and Hickson was abandoned by Canadian National Railways in 1965.

**Description of Heritage Attributes**

Key attributes of the Hickson Trail landscape that reflect its value as an important link to the area surrounding the Village of Hickson include:

- the former railway right-of-way now known as the Hickson Trail;
- raised earth works at the centre of the right-of-way that served as subgrade for rail track structure;
- the red brick S.T. Loveys commercial building located on the S.T. Loveys property;
- the white outbuilding on the S.T. Loveys property that served as the former feed shed;
- the grey outbuilding on the S.T. Loveys property that served as the former coal shed;
- the yellow brick outbuilding on the S.T. Loveys property that served as a former storage shed;
- the brown outbuildings on the S.T. Loveys property that served as former lumber sheds;
- the white aluminum siding apartment building that was a former commercial building;
- the Hickson Library as the former township hall;
- the yellow brick post office building that was a former blacksmith shop; and,
- the red brick house that was once a grain storage shed.
8.4 Recommendations for the Hickson Trail Railscape

This study has served as a technical examination of the Hickson Trail railscape to discern its cultural heritage value in the context of legislation and policy frameworks. The information discussed in the previous pages has provided a thorough assessment of the Hickson Trail as a cultural heritage landscape based on an accepted methodology. As a result, the research questions posed at the beginning of this study have now been answered. The preceding assessment, however, has generated recommendations pertaining to the Hickson Trail beyond the research questions posed. It is the opinion of this study’s author that the following actions are warranted:

- **The Hickson Trail railscape should be listed in the County of Oxford Heritage Resources Inventory.** Appendix 4 of the Oxford County Official Plan is an inventory of heritage resources throughout the County (County of Oxford, 2008). It serves as the register of cultural heritage properties that municipalities are required to maintain in accordance with sub-section 27(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The appendix serves as a registry of designated heritage properties, as well as an inventory of non-designated properties that have heritage value or interest. The inclusion of non-designated properties is known as listing, which is recognized in the heritage planning community as the first step in providing conservation measures to newly-identified heritage resources. Listing provides a form of recognition of a property’s heritage value; however, it does not provide protection under the *Ontario Heritage Act* (Ministry of Culture, 2006c). The results of this study provide a strong rationale for the listing of all properties associated with the Hickson Trail railscape. The above description of properties, statement of cultural heritage value or interest, and heritage attributes outlines the parcels to be listed and the reasoning for their inclusion in the Oxford County Heritage Resources Inventory. This action would serve as an important conservation measure for the Hickson Trail railscape as planning staff consult the municipal register when considering development-related applications (Ministry of Culture, 2006c). As a result, proposals that would negatively impact the Hickson Trail railscape (e.g., subdivisions, sale of trail, demolition of buildings) can be guided and/or prevented based on the identified heritage value of the landscape components.
• **A public workshop should be held regarding the Hickson Trail.** This study has not been able to ascertain a measure of the value held by the Hickson community of the railscape. As a result, a conclusive statement about whether the Hickson Trail railscape is a cultural heritage landscape has proven elusive. An opportunity exists for staff from the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock, the County of Oxford and the Ministry of Natural Resources to engage the community of Hickson regarding the cultural heritage value of the railscape. Through a public workshop, the community would be able to gain knowledge of the heritage significance of the Hickson Trail and to express a position as to whether conservation efforts under the *Ontario Heritage Act* should be pursued, or whether other commemorative displays are warranted. The public workshop could be timed to coincide with the village’s annual Lions Dayz celebrations, which serve as the unofficial community holiday. It would provide for a special event as part of the celebration.

• **Interpretive displays should be created for the Hickson Trail railscape.** In four years, the 50th anniversary of the abandonment of the Hickson subdivision by Canadian National Railways will occur. Currently, no physical forms of commemoration exist to recognize the significance of the Hickson Trail railscape on the development of the area surrounding Hickson. There exists a sufficient timeframe to prepare interpretive displays that could be located within the Village of Hickson and along the trail route. These displays would provide public education concerning the area’s history, enhance the community’s sense of place and serve as a potential tourist attraction. Potential locations for interpretive displays in the Village of Hickson include the Hickson Lions’ Park, the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock office and in front of the S.T. Loveys property at the centre of the village. Consideration of the displays would be a useful discussion topic for the public meeting discussed above.

• **Several of the buildings comprising the railscape should be restored and repaired.**

  Given the number of years that have passed since the abandonment of the railway, several buildings associated with the railscape have been altered or are in declining condition. First, the former brown lumber sheds on the S.T. Loveys property are made of wood and are beginning to collapse. As the buildings are currently not in use, they are at risk from future

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23 All restorations and repairs noted in this recommendation should follow the protocols outlined in Parks Canada’s “Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada” (Parks Canada, 2010).
demolition as they continue to deteriorate. The removal of the sheds would be an additional loss to the many railscape buildings that no longer exist from the historic periods. With relatively minor repair, the buildings could serve as valuable storage structures in a similar use to their historic purpose. Second, the Hickson Library appears to be suffering from substantial deferred maintenance. The building’s shingled roof requires replacement and the exterior brickwork is decaying. The library would benefit from these repairs that should be conducted in a heritage-sympathetic fashion. Finally, the white apartment building across from the S.T. Loveys building has lost much of the semblance of its former use due to the alterations that occurred in the 1970s to convert the building into residential apartments. Behind the aluminum siding exterior is a red brick facade that echoes the cladding of the S.T. Loveys building. During future renovations to the building, the removal of the siding would return the sense of mirrored commercial buildings, recognizing the former node that existed in the village. This action would enhance the aesthetic value of the core area and improve the visual historical link with the railscape.

- **The County of Oxford should recognize the value of the Hickson Trail as a natural heritage corridor.** Although this study has presented an evaluation of the Hickson Trail as a cultural heritage landscape, there is equal merit to its consideration as a natural corridor. Since the abandonment period, the former rail right-of-way has developed substantial vegetative growth at the edges of the right-of-way boundary. As a result, the Trail has evolved into serving as a valuable natural corridor linking many private woodlots that are natural landscape patches. The dynamics between the patches and the corridor provides strong benefits to species habitats and improves biodiversity in the area. While the Oxford County Natural Heritage Study did not address natural corridors (County of Oxford, 2006), the recognition of the Hickson Trail in the Oxford County Official Plan is likely warranted especially given the rarity of corridor linkages of the scale provided by the Trail. As a result of the Official Plan recognition, the environmental resource policies contained in Chapter 3 of the Plan could be applied to the Hickson Trail, providing the benefits noted above.

- **A history of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway should be written.** To date, a comprehensive and dedicated history of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway has not been written. Historical information pertaining to the railway must be gleaned from various local historical sources and other railway documents. A historical work on the Port Dover
and Lake Huron Railway and its successors would provide a valuable understanding of the people, events, places and activities that were associated with the railway and how the railway shaped the communities it connected. Given the historic layout of the right-of-way, the railway is an important heritage feature for the Counties of Perth, Oxford, Brant and Norfolk, as well as the numerous settlements that were located along the rail line. Unfortunately, the author of this study was not able to explore potential primary sources of information pertaining to the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway that are located at the Ontario Archives (the repository of archive material for many of the associated townships) and Library and Archives Canada (the location of the Canadian National Railways archives that likely contain additional information on the former rail subsidiary). The codification of the history of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway would make an excellent project for a combined effort of local heritage associations, a history doctoral dissertation, or the North American Railway Hall of Fame in St. Thomas, Ontario that is emerging as a centre of railway commemoration within the province.

### 8.5 Commentary on the Evaluation of Railscapes in Ontario

The Hickson Trail cultural heritage landscape study has provided an assessment and evaluation of a single railscape located in the County of Oxford. From this project, a methodology has emerged that provides part of a means to address PPS requirements for the conservation of cultural heritage landscapes and to determine appropriate conservation measures under the *Ontario Heritage Act* for railscapes of heritage value. When combined with public engagement activities, the methodology of this study can be replicated to identify and evaluate railscapes in other Ontario communities that require conservation. As a result, the methods and process articulated in Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 are adaptable for use in considering railscapes as part of environmental assessments and for municipal staff, committees or heritage organizations that desire to conserve important rail heritage as a key asset linked to their respective community’s history.

There is, however, a larger project beyond this study that should be pursued. Although historic rail stations are protected by federal legislation (*Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act*, 1985) and many abandoned rail rights-of-way are owned by the Ontario government, there is a pressing need to inventory and evaluate important Ontario railscapes to determine candidates
for protection under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. In particular, the vital railscape nodes of heritage significance that exist in many communities formerly served by railways lack conservation measures without formal consideration under planning policy or the *Ontario Heritage Act*. With many railscapes at or approaching the 50th anniversary of abandonment, there is a pressing need to identify significant railscapes in the province to conserve and recognize the importance of Ontario’s rail heritage to the historical development of many Ontario communities and to the province as a whole.

The author of this study is not aware of an existing assessment of Ontario railscapes. Although the seminal work of Christopher Andreae (1997) provided a comprehensive listing of the provincial rail network and dates of abandonment, the atlas does not speak to railscape conditions of the lines following abandonment. As a result, an abandoned rail rights-of-way project should be undertaken to utilize Andreae’s data for the purposes of identifying abandoned rail lines, followed by a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the lines with their associated communities. Such a project would recognize railways of heritage significance and enable the conservation of identified railscapes as valuable local and provincial heritage resources. The culmination of the abandoned rail rights-of-way project would provide railscapes that could be experienced by future generations of Ontarians – tangibly recognizing the important role performed by railways in the history of our province.
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**Picture Sources**

Figure 2.1: Artist’s Rendering of the Former Hickson Station – Oxford County Archives
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Figure 6.2: Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Excursion Trip – MacDonald
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APPENDIX 1: FIELD SURVEY OBSERVATIONS FORM

Field Survey Notes

Date of survey: ______________________________
Subject of survey: ______________________________
Location of survey: ______________________________
Survey location portion: ______________________________

Map of Survey Location Portion

Assessment of Landscape Elements

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Buildings (Station, warehouse, mill, shed) **Contributing/Non-contributing

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Hickson Trail Cultural Heritage Landscape Study 127
Structures (Water tower, coal tower, bridges) **Contributing/Non-contributing

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Minor Elements (switches, crossings, signs) **Contributing/Non-contributing

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Notes regarding elements

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APPENDIX 2: CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR DATES OF THE HICKSON TRAIL

1853 – Strathallan founded as Alma, Ontario from a surveyed town site on the property of Andrew Kennedy

1865 – Alma changes its name to Strathallan

1872 – Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway Company incorporated to provide rail service between Port Dover to Stratford, assuming the assets of the incomplete Woodstock and Lake Erie Railway (incorporated in 1848); Gilbert Moore appointed railway president

1873 – Petition to County Council of Oxford from Township of East Zorra ratepayers to provide funding for the Port Dover and Lake Huron; County of Oxford provides a grant of $35,000 for the construction of the railroad

1874 – First sod turned at Stratford for the Woodstock to Stratford portion of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway; Joseph Hickson named General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway

1875 – Rail line from Port Dover to Woodstock opened

1876 – Rail line from Woodstock to Stratford opened; flag stop assigned to Harwood Corners (the precursor to the Village of Hickson) due to the unwillingness of Andrew Kennedy to permit a right-of-way across his property to link the railway with Strathallan

1878 – Gilbert Moore retires as president of the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway, but remains on the Board of Directors

1879 – Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway amalgamated with Stratford and Huron Railroad, sold to Grand Trunk Railway; Strathallan Cheese Factory constructed in Hickson with lumber from former factory in Strathallan
1881 – Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway, Stratford and Huron Railroad and the Georgian Bay and Wellington Railway amalgamated to form the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay and Lake Erie Railway Company (a subsidiary of Grand Trunk Railway)

1883 – Village of Hickson officially founded with the establishment of a post office, named after Joseph Hickson; the Vance family construct the general store building

1885 – Hickson’s white brick school house constructed

1890 – Thomas J. Loveys purchases the Vance general store and begins the commercial empire that would become S.T. Loveys Limited; Joseph Hickson retires as General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway

1894 – Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay and Lake Erie Railway amalgamated into the Grand Trunk Railway

1897 – Joseph Hickson dies

1899 – Strathallan post office closed

1901 – Hickson Methodist Church constructed from remnants of the Strathallan Methodist Church

1903 – Major train wreck between Woodstock and Hickson; T.J. Loveys constructs a cement block blacksmith shop near the railroad (later converted in 1938 to a service station)

1902 – Feed mill constructed by Jack Barney adjacent to the rail line

1904 – Hickson Station constructed; Gilbert Moore dies

1905 – Township of East Zorra township hall constructed adjacent to the railway from land purchased from T.J. Loveys

1909 – Township of East Zorra spends $225 to construct a sidewalk from the Hickson Station to Highway #59
1910 – S.T. Loveys building constructed

1923 – Grand Trunk Railway absorbed into the Canadian National Railway

1932 – No train service or maintenance conducted for the rail line between Hickson and Tavistock

1935 – The Board of Railway Commissioners grants CN permission to abandon the 6.5 mile portion of the Otterville Subdivision between Hickson and Tavistock

1962 – Hickson Station closed for passenger traffic; final station agent William Lambourne leaves the community

1963 – Hickson Station moved to Braemar Sideroad as a private residence

1965 – The Board of Transport Commissioners of Canada grants the Canadian National Railway Company permission to abandon the 6.85 mile portion of the Hickson Subdivision between Woodstock and Hickson; Mud Creek bridge adjacent to Braemar Side Road removed

1978 – Village of Hickson celebrates its centennial, unsure of the exact date of the establishment of the settlement