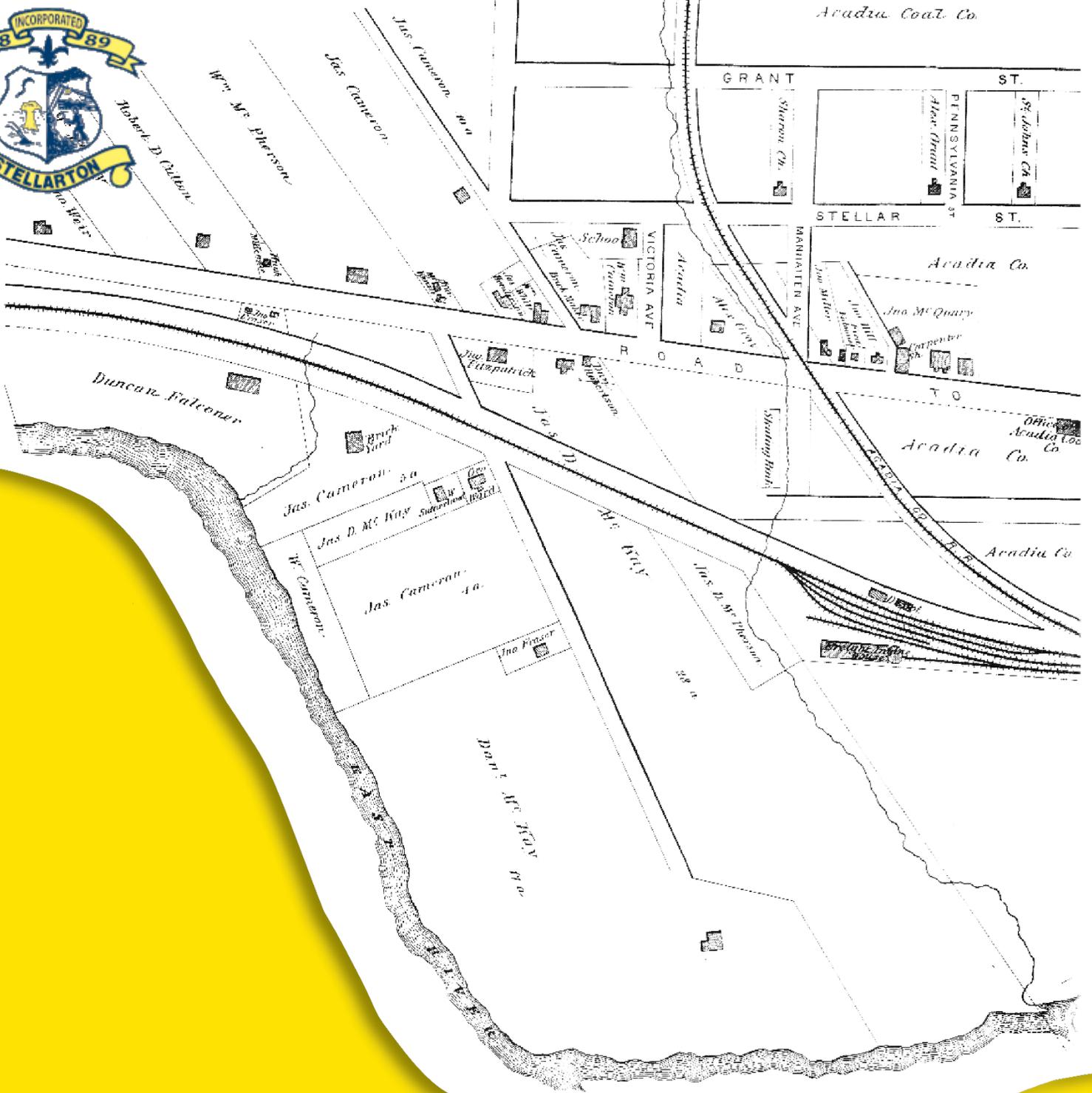




Robert D. Gibson



Telling Stellarton's Story

Heritage Plan for the Town of Stellarton

March 16, 2021

Telling Stellarton's Story

Town Heritage Plan

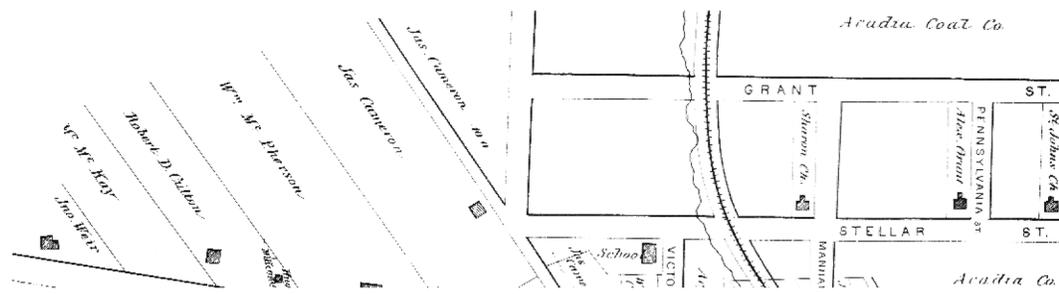


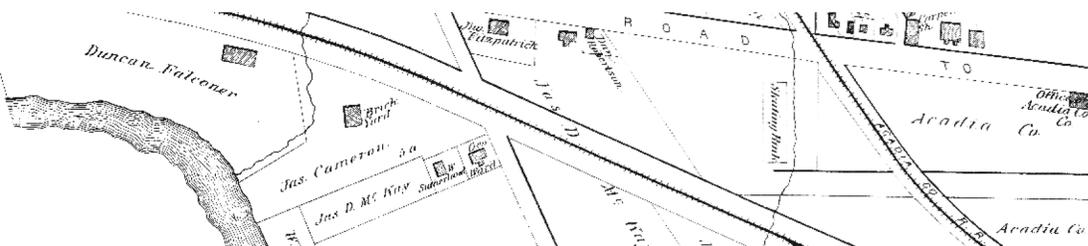
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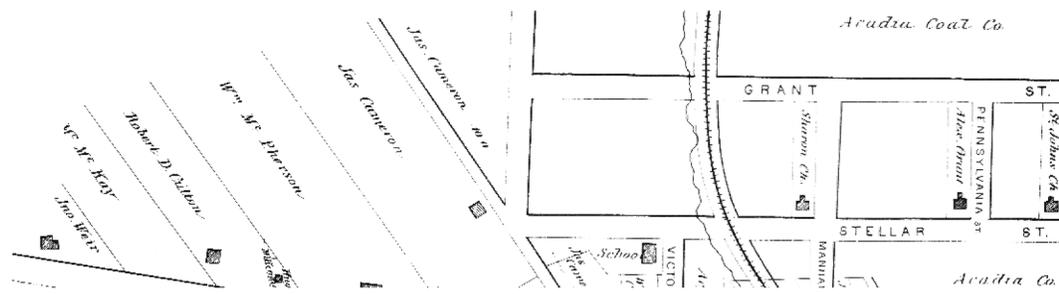
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Appendix A: Heritage Properties & Character Areas Map Images

Appendix B: Online Heritage Survey Results

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1.0 Introduction

The Town of Stellarton has a rich history complete with built, cultural, and natural heritage elements, dating from early Mi'kmaq use of the land for hunting, fishing, and transportation to the early British settlers in the 1770s. The most pivotal moment in the Town's history is, unquestioningly, the discovery of coal in 1790 which would shape the growth, development, culture, and industry in Stellarton for next 200 years and to this day. The scope of this project makes recommendations on recognizing and celebrating The Town of Stellarton's history specifically following incorporation of the Town; however, it is recognized that the history of the area started long before then.

Stellarton's heritage remains a strong part of local identity and many heritage assets and resources have survived and, in some cases, have been rehabilitated for modern functionality. A notable example is the adaptive reuse of the old Scotsburn factory on Foord Street by Nova Scotia Spirit Co. Many buildings and houses that characterize unique development throughout periods of Stellarton's history remain standing and more still feature prominently on Foord Street. There are many features of Stellarton which are characteristic of the Town and its residents, such as the commercial storefront main street (Foord Street), the distinct neighbourhoods and neighbourhood names, the family lineage that in many cases can be traced back several generations, and the prominence of heritage as a guiding force for the community and local writers. Figure 1 below features an image indicating the location and category of heritage assets within the Town, while Figure 2 shows the location and name of Stellarton's many distinct neighbourhoods.

The Town of Stellarton has many local historians who have taken the time to collect, catalogue, interpret and write about the history of the Town and the Region. The Town, in partnership with the Heritage Committee, is undertaking the preparation of a Heritage Plan not to reiterate the copious documentation which already exists but instead to devise a strategy to highlight the known history and proud heritage for people to learn and enjoy. This Plan provides an overall Vision for heritage conservation and promotion in the Town of Stellarton and is complemented by a series of Recommendations which can be pursued by the Town and its community partners to work toward achieving the Vision.

The Town retained WSP Canada Inc. and Architecture49 to work with staff to develop a Heritage Plan that harnesses opportunities in the Town and makes a clear and implementable Plan for years to come. To support this project, the Town created a Heritage Committee comprised of local individuals with an interest and/or expertise in the history and heritage of Stellarton. This Committee has assisted with the development of this Plan by providing guidance and feedback. The Committee will play an important role in the implementation of this Plan. The Town of Stellarton has already begun taking initiatives toward improving built heritage in the Town through the Façade Improvement Program and a Heritage Registration Bylaw. Recommendations from this Plan are intended to build upon existing initiatives in the Town to help fulfil the overall Vision for the Plan (see Section 3.0).

As part of the scope of creating this Plan, the *Stellarton Heritage Inventory* was created. This inventory includes cultural, built, and natural heritage assets in the Town of Stellarton and is intended to be built-upon and added to over time with the continued help of the community. The *Inventory* focuses most heavily on built heritage assets, due to the ease of quantification of these assets and their tangibility in the Town. However, the *Inventory* could be

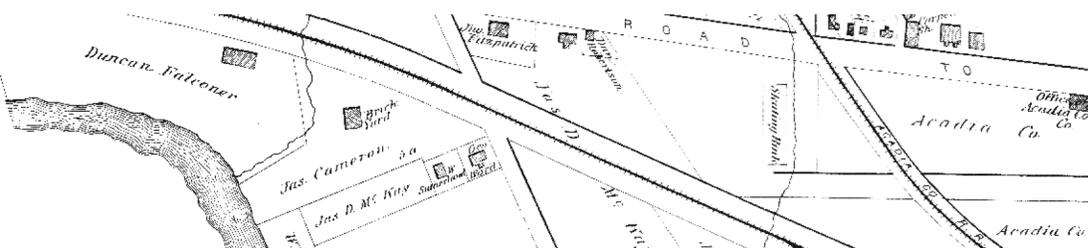
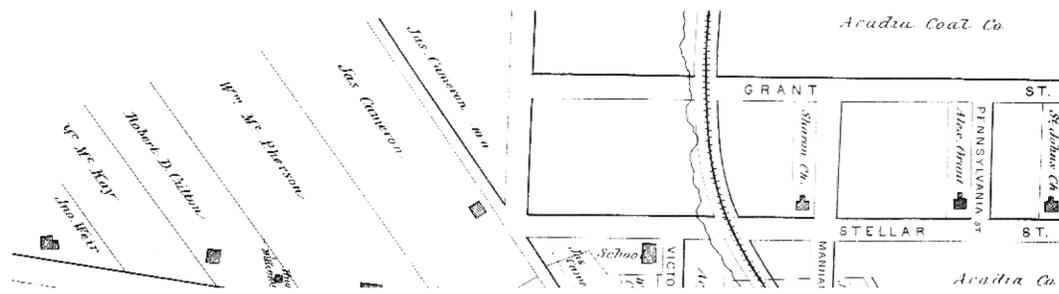




Figure 2: Heritage Neighbourhoods Map

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Town Heritage Plan



2.2 Benefits of Celebrating Community Heritage

Celebration of community heritage has many benefits for the community, including:

COMMUNITY PRIDE

The conservation and promotion of heritage assets helps to preserve and communicate the collective memory of a community. This inspires a sense of pride for residents in presenting the unique and special parts of their community to the world. This in turn fosters important community building elements, such as participation in community events, volunteering, shopping locally, and fostering a supportive community for others.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The recognition and celebration of heritage help to enhance the quality of life and sense of place that individuals find in their community or in a community they are visiting. It inspires curiosity in the past and an interest in staying within a community to learn more and gather experiences, making memories in that place. A heritage plan can help to provide individuals with better grounding as to their family's or community's origins and can help them to better relate to others in the community, to welcome newcomers with pride, and to contribute to a more cohesive community that retains its residents and welcomes tourists.

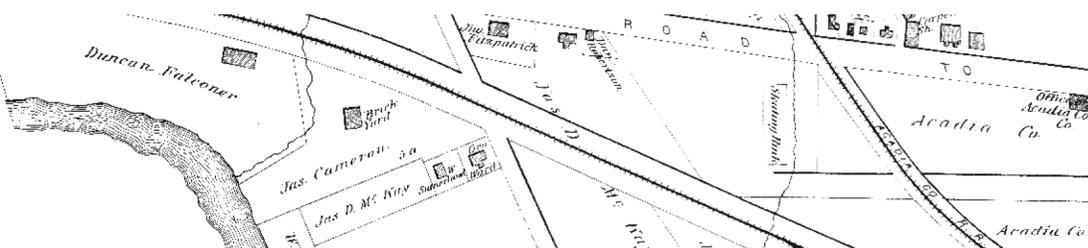
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Investment from a municipality in heritage assets inspires investment from the private sector, which in turn contributes to overall economic development in the Town. The appearance and condition of unique and historical buildings, streetscapes, and features influences businesses' and individuals' interest in making continued investment, as well as helps to spark interest in the cultural heritage of the Town. This type of investment can lead to synergies between businesses, shops, and services, encourage locals and visitors alike to spend their time and money in the community, and foster more widespread tourism interest.

2.3 Approach for the Heritage Plan

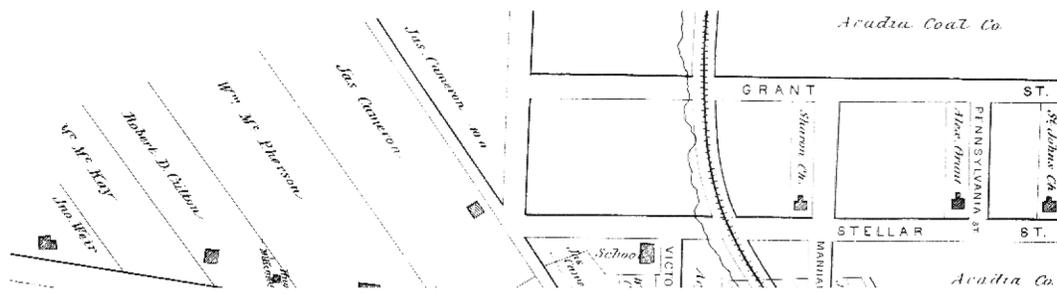
Stellarton's Heritage Plan was developed by WSP Canada Inc. and Architecture49 with the help of Town Staff and the Heritage Committee. The first task of the Plan was to meet with the Heritage Committee to workshop the vision and initiatives for the Heritage Plan, and then to engage the community through an online survey. The results of this survey are presented in **Appendix B**.

The second task was to develop the *Stellarton Heritage Inventory*, which includes heritage assets identified through input from the Heritage Committee and community survey, as important contributing factors to Built, Cultural, or Natural Heritage. The inventory also includes heritage resources identified by the consulting team. The intention for the *Inventory* is that it be used as a resource for Staff and the Heritage Committee when undertaking



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Town Heritage Plan



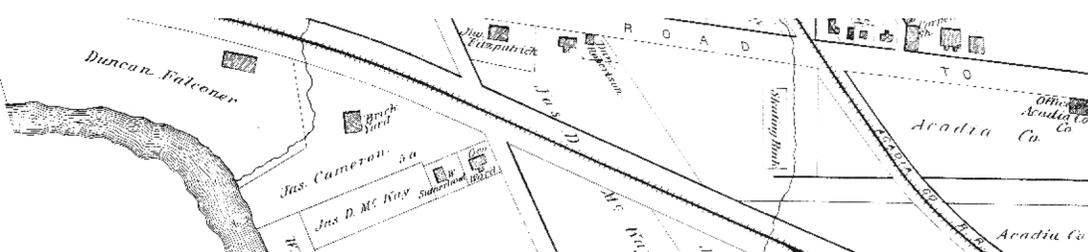
the recommendations of this Plan. This Inventory has been formatted to be expanded upon with further input from the community and local historians to create a complete and robust history of the Town.

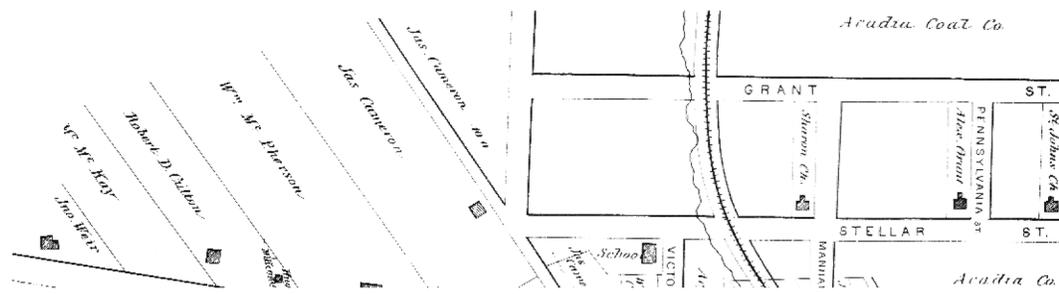
The third task was to develop a Heritage Plan that would provide clear guidance on the Vision of the Town for its heritage, and be implementable through a series of Initiatives and Recommendations.

2.4 Input from the Community

The intention for the Stellarton Heritage Plan is that it is rooted strongly in the community and its people. To engage the public in this process, a community survey was available online and in paper copies, and advertised to residents of Stellarton, between November 9 and December 7th, 2020. A total of **137 responses** were received during this period, with 75% of those responses coming from individuals who live in the Town of Stellarton.

A summary of the survey results which helps to highlight the impressions from survey participants can be found in **Appendix B**. The findings from the community survey were used to help develop the initiatives and recommendations of this Plan.





4.0 Heritage Initiatives & Recommendations

Initiative 1: Develop a framework for a heritage tour which highlights built and cultural heritage

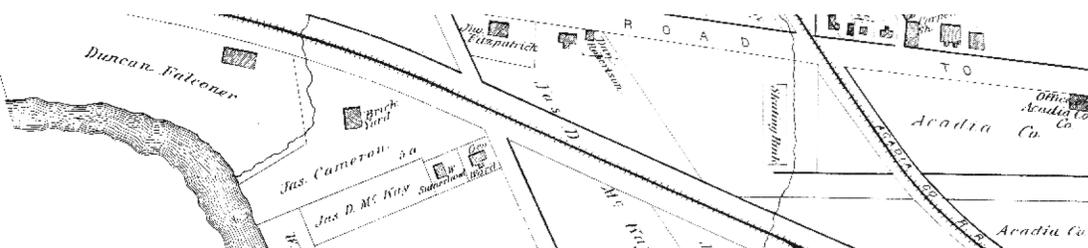
One of the major opportunities in Stellarton is that while there is a rich history and many remnants of this history are still visible in the town today, it isn't readily apparent for visitors, or even locals, unless they seek out information specifically. To leverage this opportunity, the Town can use different angles and methods to design community tours. The purpose of the tour(s) is to create interest and intrigue in the history of the Town and to bring an understanding of the Town's heritage into the present context. Therefore in-person tours provide bigger benefits than online/virtual tours. It is important to recognize that different individuals wish to learn and experience the history of the Town in different ways, and therefore the Town can use different types of tour experiences to attract different participants. The following recommendations provide guidance to Town staff on the types of tours that may be possible and the implementable steps that can be pursued to make the tours a reality. It is important to note that the themes of tours below are not exhaustive and should be reviewed and expanded upon by the Town and the Heritage Committee regularly.

Recommendation 1.1: Maintain the Heritage Committee as a volunteer organization which provides interested individuals with an opportunity to participate in the implementation of this Plan. Responsibilities of the Heritage Committee can broadly include:

- Organizing and operating Town tours;
- Organizing and operating the heritage archives room at the Stellarton Public Library;
- Contributing to research and education around heritage in Stellarton;
- Building partnerships with industry, community organizations, and others as explored in Initiative 5 of this Plan; and
- Assisting staff to broadly implement the Recommendations of this Plan.

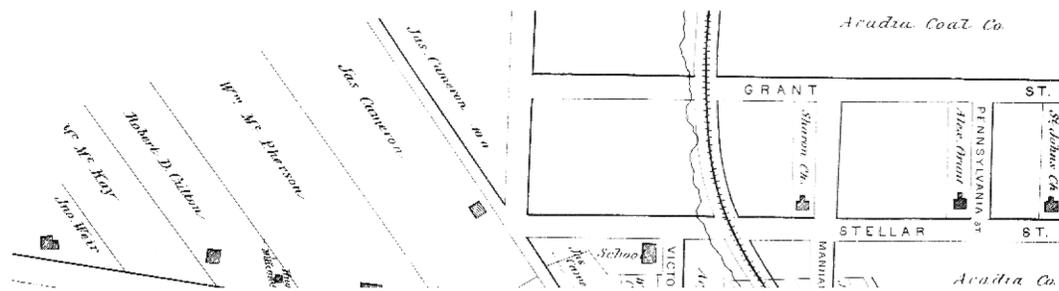
Recommendation 1.2: Building from the *Stellarton Heritage Inventory* completed as part of this project, collaborate with the Heritage Committee to design and implement two Town tours which would run once monthly (and more frequently during the summer months, if desired) to attract tourists and locals alike to have an authentic experience of the Town. Town staff should work with the Committee to assist in organization, mapping, and promotion, while the responsibility for designing tour notes, locations, themes, and hosting the tour should fall to the Heritage Committee. Such tours may include:

- History of Industry tour (including the museum and a field trip and other elements from the *Stellarton Heritage Inventory*).
- Built History tour (featuring existing buildings and neighbourhoods, as outlined in the *Stellarton Heritage Inventory* (**Appendix C** of this Plan) and using images if available to reference buildings how they once appeared or buildings that were demolished). A built heritage tour also allows for



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- Sense of community and support for local businesses: Foord Street can still be recognized as the bustling epicentre of the Town and the place where locals meet. People in Stellarton take pride in the local businesses and in the strong history that comes from Main Street.

Interpretation and wayfinding are important elements of fostering a welcoming and interesting streetscape for individuals to experience. The Town of Stellarton already has many interpretive signs at important locations throughout the Town. However, wayfinding can be used as a complementary initiative to help individuals navigate the Town while also learning about its history and landmarks.

The following recommendations aim to enhance Foord Street as the economic epicentre of Stellarton and a destination main street for those from other nearby municipalities and visitors alike.

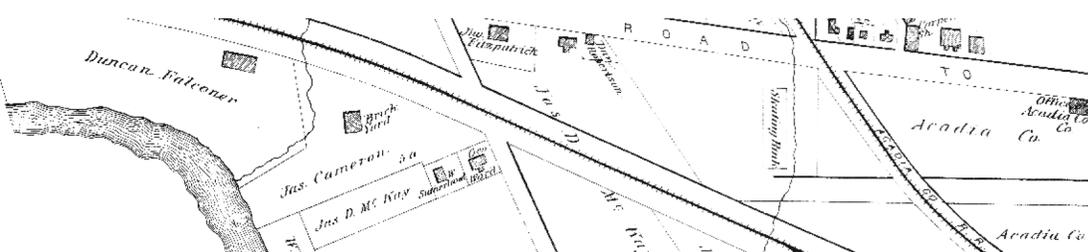
Recommendation 2.1: Make amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy, Land Use By-law and the Stellarton Secondary Planning Strategy, as appropriate, to:

- Promote 'infill' development to create a more continuous streetwall in the Downtown to be consistent with heritage form;
- Develop urban design guidelines for new development or renovation on Foord Street to maintain and, where possible, re-establish the historic streetscape;
- Remove barriers that may exist for the conversion of historical commercial buildings for modern purposes; and
- Preserve the existing heritage character of the street (see Initiative 3).

Recommendation 2.2: Support local entrepreneurs and businesses to locate within historic buildings along Foord Street where possible and provide resources to these businesses in creating a traditional 'storefront' feeling. This could include offering historical images of the building (if available), referring to urban design guidelines (see Recommendation 2.1), and arranging consultations with local historians to promote heritage in new business ventures. This could also include promotion of the Façade Improvement program and/or other funding initiatives as identified by Council.

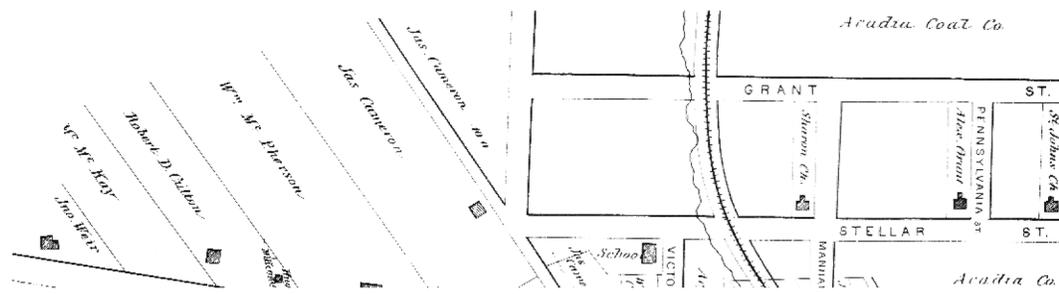
Recommendation 2.3: Through the Town's Strategic Plan, work with local businesses on Foord Street and the Business Advisory Committee to investigate the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID). Business improvement districts are typically funded and run by local businesses, and therefore buy-in from businesses will be crucial. If business interest is not strong for a BID, then Council could work to identify another avenue to pursue possible actions of a BID. Specific actions for this BID could include:

- Building synergy between businesses on Foord Street to encourage more people to spend time on the Street;
- Encouraging businesses to standardize and harmonize their business hours;
- Working with building owners and business owners to improve their commercial storefront; and
- Hosting events and/or promotions.



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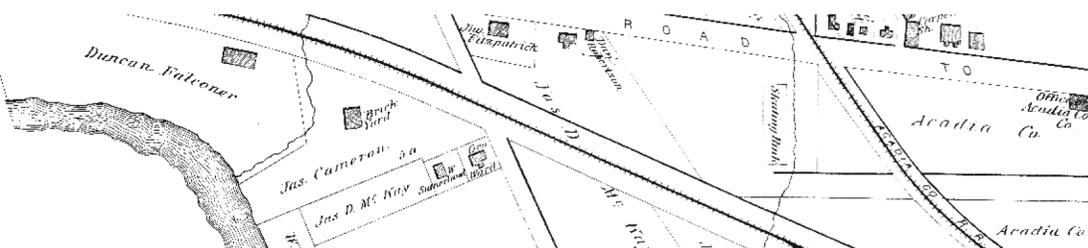
Recommendation 2.4: Complete a Heritage Wayfinding Plan for the Foord Street Streetscape with the help of wayfinding and design professionals. This Plan should aim to provide guidance on historical buildings and cultural places on Foord Street and on nearby streets, while also providing orientation and directional assistance.

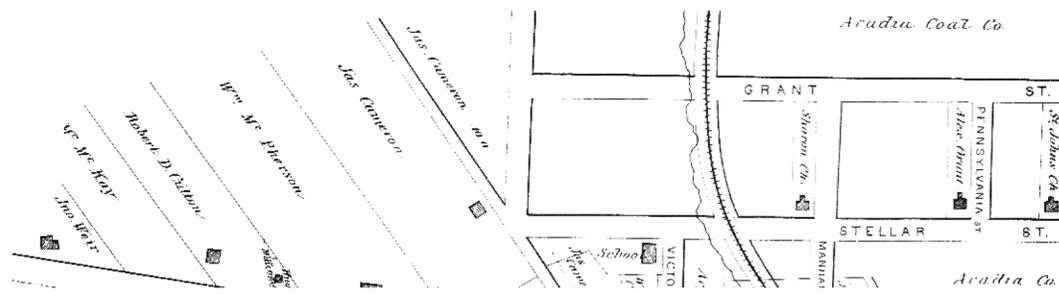
Recommended items that the signs could include are:

- Nearby landmarks and historical buildings;
- Gathering places and local businesses;
- Distance (walking) to key locations and buildings in the Town; and
- Illustrations of buildings to spark interest in the architectural heritage.

Recommendation 2.5: Consider organizing different events that focus on or incorporate celebration of the Town and the Town's heritage, including:

- A winter-themed or "off-season homecoming" event such as a winter festival, annually on Foord Street to encourage people to embrace colder weather and support the businesses along the street year-round;
- A downtown event or festival during the shoulder season; and
- An annual "Stellarton Day" to celebrate Stellarton's rich history, which could take place on October 22, Stellarton's Incorporation date.



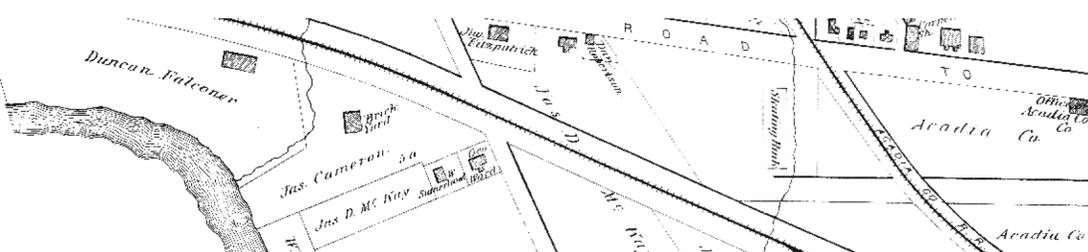


5.0 Implementation Strategy

The following section lists each of the Recommendations from the previous section and assigns a timeline, role/responsibility, and suggested monitoring of implementation for each Recommendation. The timelines assigned are predicated on a five-year implementation of the Strategy based on fiscal years (e.g. April 2021-March 2022; April 2022-March 2023; April 2023-March 2024; April 2024-March 2025; April 2025-March 2026).

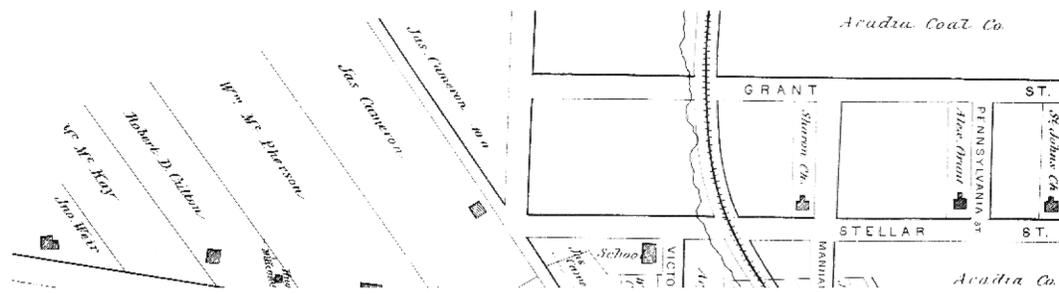
Note: in the interest of keeping the implementable strategy table of manageable length, the Recommendations listed below are a summary of the full recommendation text. When implementing the Plan, the full recommendation (found in Section 4, under Initiatives 1-5) should be used.

| # | Recommendation Summary | Timeline | Role/ Responsibility | Monitoring of Implementation |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Initiative 1: Develop a Framework for a heritage tour which highlights built and cultural heritage. | | | | |
| 1.1 | Maintain the Heritage Committee as a volunteer organization which provides interested individuals with an opportunity to participate in the implementation of this Plan. | 2021 – ongoing | Heritage Committee; Town staff | Review membership and accomplishments of heritage committee each year in March. |
| 1.2 | Building from the <i>Stellarton Heritage Inventory</i> completed as part of this project, collaborate with the Heritage Committee to design and implement two Town tours which would run once monthly (and more frequently during the summer months, if desired) to attract tourists and locals alike to have an authentic experience of the Town. | Begin work on planning tours in April 2021. Aim to have first tour offered in Fall 2021. | Heritage Committee; Town staff; could be part of Canada Summer Student Grant tasks (Rec 5.5) | Review tour successes and opportunities for enhancement each year in March. Following the first year of in-person tours, review to understand whether there is an opportunity to incorporate online features, like QR codes, to allow for self-guided tours. |

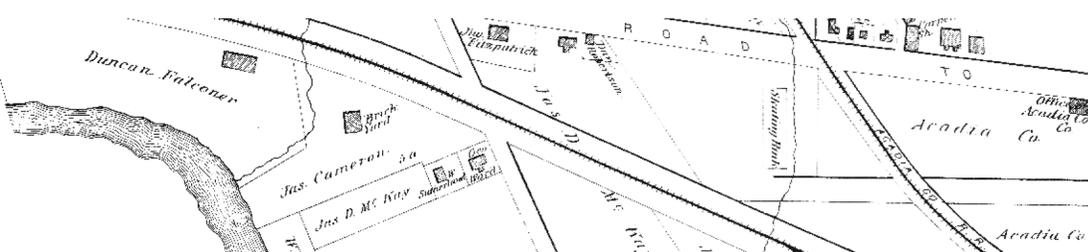


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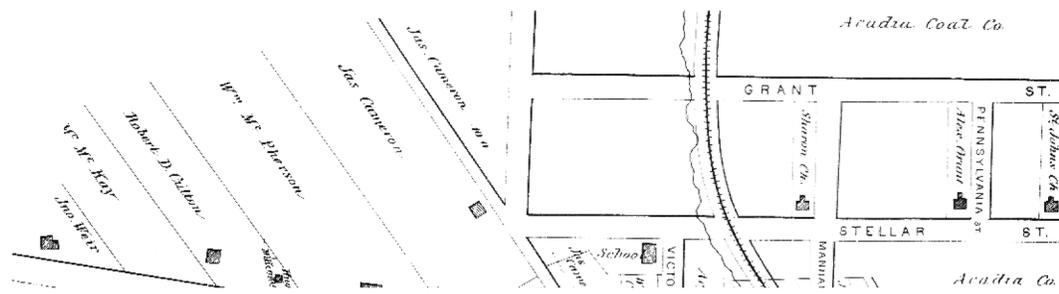


| # | Recommendation Summary | Timeline | Role/ Responsibility | Monitoring of Implementation |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| 1.3 | Commission Town map(s) from a graphic designer that feature different information from the various tours, and additional historical and 'locally known' information. Order printed copies of these maps and distribute to local businesses and at other public locations, including in other nearby municipalities and Halifax as the provincial capital. | These could help committee to plan the tours. Committee should refer to historic maps owned by the Town in order to guide development of new maps. Begin work in 2021. | Town staff; Heritage Committee; consultant/could be part of Canada Summer Student Grant tasks (Rec 5.5) | 1-2 maps complete and in circulation by March 2022. |
| Initiative 2: Enhance Foord Street as a Heritage Streetscape and the economic centre of the Town. | | | | |
| 2.1 | Make amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy, Land Use By-law and the Stellarton Secondary Planning Strategy, as appropriate. | Review to understand opportunities for improvement in 2021-2022 | Town planner; Town staff | Review completed and changes made (if needed) by March 2023 |
| 2.2 | Support local entrepreneurs and businesses to locate within historic buildings along Foord Street where possible and provide resources to these businesses in creating a traditional 'storefront' feeling. | Beginning in 2021 – ongoing. | Town staff; Business Advisory Committee | Promotions for this resource on website by March 2022. |
| 2.3 | Through the Town's Strategic Plan, work with local businesses on Foord Street and the Business Advisory Committee to investigate the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID). | 2021 – ongoing | Business Advisory Committee | BID is established in the Town of Stellarton. |
| 2.4 | Complete a Heritage Wayfinding Plan for the Foord Street Streetscape with the help of wayfinding and design professionals. This Plan should aim to provide guidance on historical buildings and cultural places on Foord Street and on nearby streets, while also providing orientation and directional assistance. | 2022 – ongoing Heritage tours should have begun and maps should be made by 2022. These will help the Heritage Committee to provide more assistance to wayfinding experts. | Heritage Committee; Town staff; Consultant | Wayfinding Plan for Foord Street completed by March 2024. |

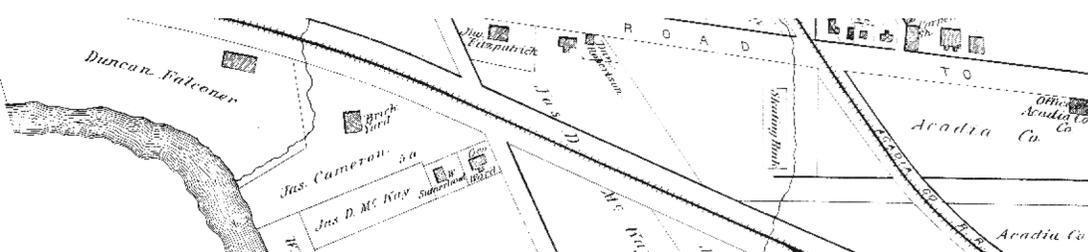


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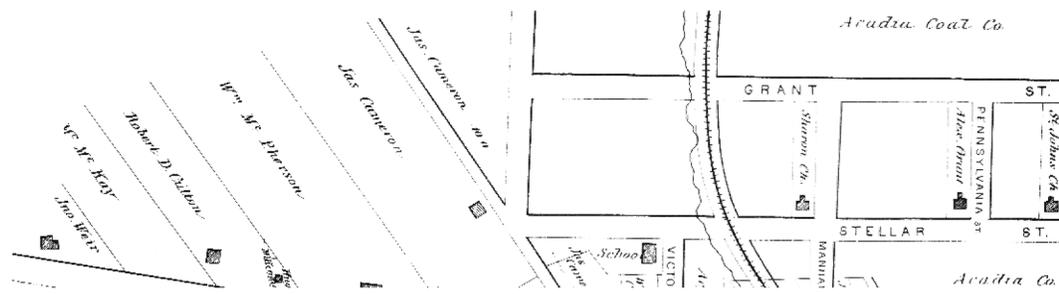


| # | Recommendation Summary | Timeline | Role/Responsibility | Monitoring of Implementation |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| 2.5 | <p>Consider organizing different events that focus on or incorporate celebration of the Town and the Town's heritage, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — A winter-themed or "off-season homecoming" event such as a winter festival, annually on Foord Street to encourage people to embrace colder weather and support the businesses along the street year-round. — A downtown event or festival during the shoulder season. — An annual "Stellarton Day" to celebrate Stellarton's rich history. | <p>Committee to begin consideration in 2022</p> <p>Committee will have lots to do in 2021. Could be moved sooner if capacity exists.</p> | <p>Heritage Committee; Business Advisory Committee; Homecoming Committee</p> | <p>One event being planned and/or taking place by March 2023</p> |
| Initiative 3: Protect and enhance existing built heritage resources | | | | |
| 3.1 | <p>Continue to operate and promote the Façade Improvement Program, reviewing for effectiveness every 1-2 years.</p> | Ongoing | <p>Planning Advisory Committee; Town staff</p> | <p>Monitoring and updates to program made every 1-2 years</p> |
| 3.2 | <p>Under Sections 12-13 of the <i>Heritage Property Act</i>, broaden the mandate of the existing Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) to act as the as the body which provides advice on heritage matters to Council, staff, and the Town.</p> | 2021 | <p>Town staff; Planning Advisory Committee; Council</p> | <p>PAC mandate updated by March 2022</p> |
| 3.3 | <p>Under Sections 14-19 of the <i>Heritage Property Act</i>, review the existing Heritage By-law, No. 43, to update the Municipal Heritage Registration Program to allow both the Town and individual property owners to apply for the registration of historical buildings.</p> | 2021 | <p>Town staff; Town planner; Council</p> | <p>Updates made to Heritage By-law by March 2023</p> |

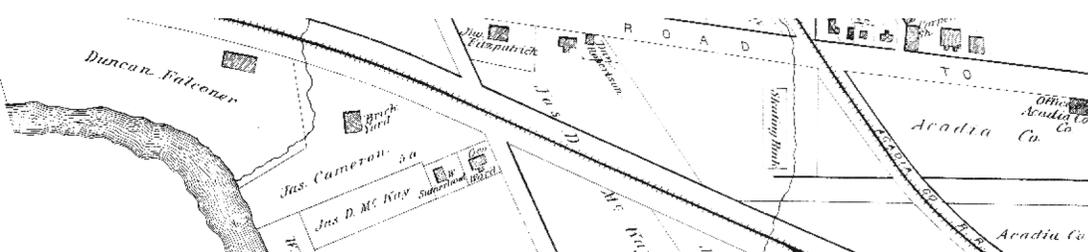


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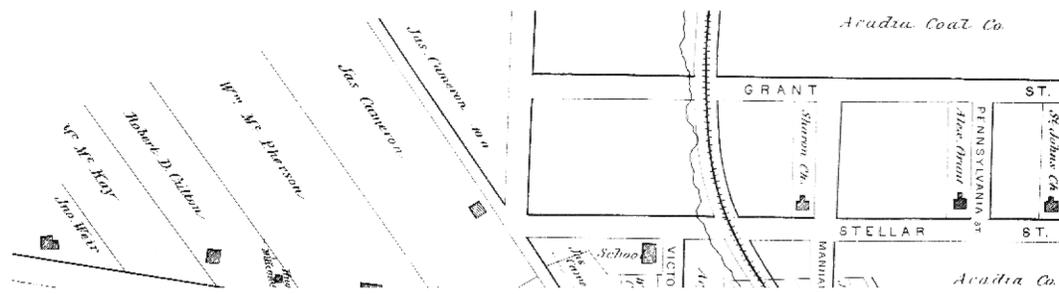


| # | Recommendation Summary | Timeline | Role/Responsibility | Monitoring of Implementation |
|-----|---|---|--|--|
| 3.4 | Develop a heritage assessment tool and decision-making framework for evaluating and categorizing historical buildings which are being weighed as possible municipally registered heritage properties, for use by the PAC in their evaluation process. | 2021 Can happen simultaneously with Rec. 3.2. | Town staff; Town planner; Heritage Committee | Heritage assessment tool available to PAC by March 2022 |
| 3.5 | Create information brochures and a webpage on the Town website featuring information for property owners on heritage properties, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Information about heritage registration (the process, the benefits, etc.); — Information about the Façade Improvement Program and any other funding or grants programs available to owners of heritage properties; — Building code information for the renovation of heritage properties — Samples of heritage restoration projects; and — Resources for those looking to restore historical buildings, such as local builders or contractors with relevant experience. | 2022-2023 Will be more useful once heritage registration begins to take place; therefore, it makes sense to have a later start-date. | Heritage Committee; Town staff | Information available on a single webpage on the Town's website by March 2023. |
| 3.6 | Following the completion of Rec. 3.1-3.4, amend the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to provide expanded development rights on registered heritage properties, including possibilities for higher densities, increased height limits, increased lot coverage, etc. | 2022-2023 | Town planner | Amendments made to MPS, LUB, or SPS by March 2023. |
| 3.7 | Consider a property tax rebate program for those who own and maintain registered heritage buildings under the Town of Stellarton's Municipal Registration Program (see Rec 3.2). | 2023-2025 Will need to take place after registration begins happening. A longer timeline recognizes that this may take longer to accomplish. | Town staff; Council | Rebate considered and/or implemented by March 2025. |

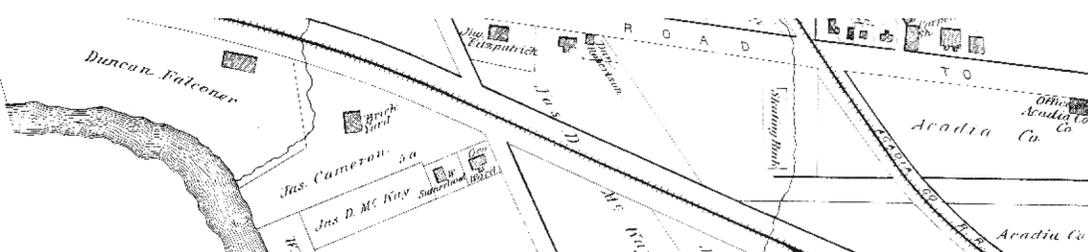


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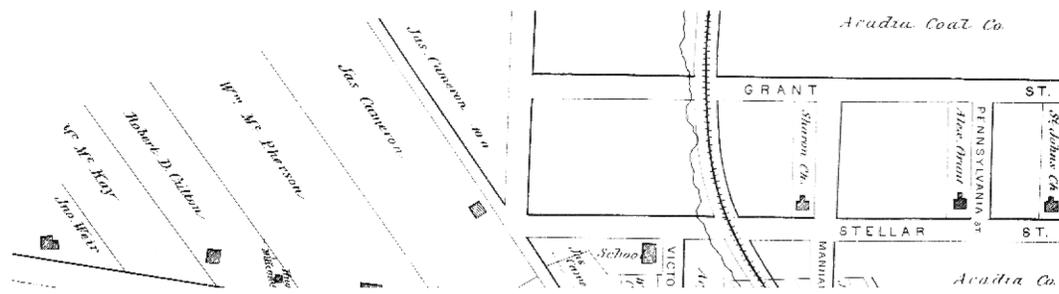


| # | Recommendation Summary | Timeline | Role/Responsibility | Monitoring of Implementation |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 3.8 | Investigate the creation of Heritage Conservation Districts under Sections 19A, 19B, and 19C of the <i>Heritage Property Act</i> for neighbourhoods/character areas. | 2023-2025 Important, but not urgent. Can take place after Town understands uptake on registration of buildings under the reviewed Heritage By-law (Rec 3.3) | Town Staff; Town Planner; Council | Investigation of the establishment of HCD's by end of 2025. Establishing these could take 2-5 years, depending on resources allocated. As an alternative, should HCDs be determined not preferable, the Town could investigate the creation of heritage character guidelines for different neighbourhoods and the introduction of grants programs to help property owners follow the guidelines. |
| Initiative 4: Incorporate celebration of Heritage into Town promotions, events, and places | | | | |
| 4.1 | Host workshop sessions for the <i>Stellarton Heritage Inventory</i> and invite individuals from the community to review maps and share history of the built, cultural, and natural heritage assets inventoried and the opportunity to provide additional content and histories of these assets. Update the <i>Inventory</i> to reflect the information collected at these workshops. | 2022-2024 Initiative should start once public gatherings are permitted again (or in 2022, if possible). Can be ongoing if desired by Committee. | Heritage Committee | Updates made to the <i>Stellarton Heritage Inventory</i> by March 2024. |

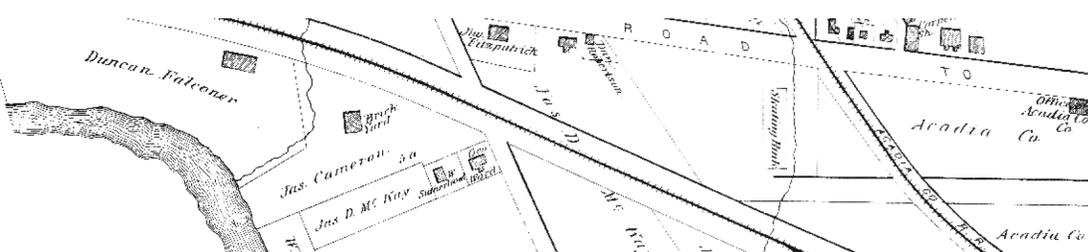


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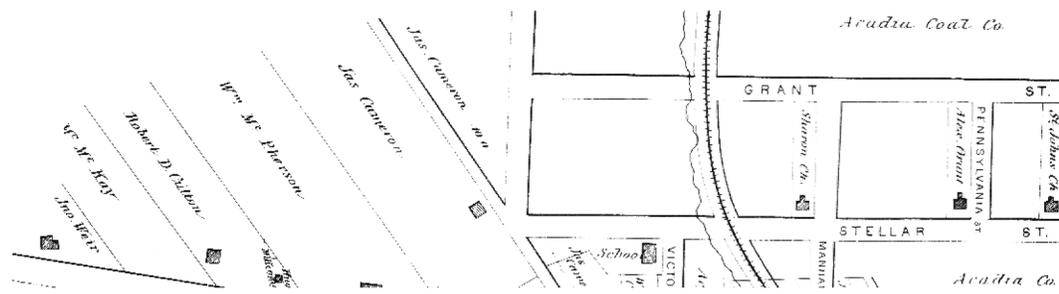


| # | Recommendation Summary | Timeline | Role/ Responsibility | Monitoring of Implementation |
|-----|---|--|---|---|
| 4.2 | Feature and promote unique neighbourhood names in Stellarton's distinct neighbourhoods through wayfinding and public art, such as unique sign-post colours, street murals, or similar initiatives. | 2021 – ongoing. Should be considered during Wayfinding Plan (Rec 2.2) but could be started earlier by Committee if desired. Should consider hiring a local, professional artist for public artwork | Planning Advisory Committee; Heritage Committee; Town staff; consultation needed with the Traffic Authority | Incorporated in Wayfinding Plan. Some initiatives completed by March 2025. |
| 4.3 | Introduce the position of 'Historian Laureate' including an honorarium, with the mandate to help raise public awareness of Stellarton's Heritage Plan initiatives and to contribute to heritage information shared with the community. | 2021-2022 | Heritage Committee; Town staff; Council | Position created and filled by March 2022. |
| 4.4 | With the help of the Historian Laureate (see Rec 4.3) and the Heritage Committee (see Rec 1.1), create a heritage promotions campaign to share information about historical buildings, events, and facts. | 2022 – ongoing Will be aided by continued research completed by Heritage Committee in creation of tours and adding to <i>Inventory</i> . | Town staff (communications staff); Historian Laureate; Heritage Committee | Heritage promotions campaign launched by March 2023. |
| 4.5 | Support the Heritage Committee (see Rec 1.1) in the creation of a cultural heritage collection project. The objective of this project is to collect oral or written histories from Town elders and individuals who are willing to share stories that contribute to the Town's collective memory and cultural history. | 2021 – ongoing Town should consider transcription of information. Could be assisted by summer student (Rec 5.5) | Heritage Committee | Ongoing project; project launched by March 2022. |
| 4.6 | Work with the Museum of Industry to partner on their yearly archaeological program, with events such as 'Amateur Dig for a Day', by helping to cross-promote and in other ways as determined with the MOI. | 2023 – ongoing Could start earlier. Moved down the timeline in recognition of many Heritage Committee initiatives. | Heritage Committee; Museum of Industry partnership (Rec 5.2) | Ongoing project; project launched by March 2023. |



Telling Stellarton's Story

Town Heritage Plan



| # | Recommendation Summary | Timeline | Role/ Responsibility | Monitoring of Implementation |
|--|--|----------|---|---|
| 4.7 | <p>Continue the development of the Heritage Room at the Stellarton Library, considering such initiatives as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with a curating consultant; Setting parameters and guidelines for the acceptance of historical information and artefacts into the Heritage Room; Consider having the Historian Laureate (see Rec 4.3) leading the curation of the Heritage Room; and Other initiatives as developed with the help of the Heritage Committee (see Rec 1.1). | Ongoing | <p>Heritage Committee; Town staff; possible Historian Laureate</p> <p>Library staff could contribute where possible</p> | Heritage Room successfully operating by March 2022. |
| Initiative 5: Build partnerships to help the Town educate about, promote, and conserve heritage in the Town | | | | |
| 5.1 | Enhance partnership between Sobey's, and other longstanding/historical businesses and the Town. | 2021 | Town staff; Heritage Committee | Collaborative opportunity with Sobey's or other historic business identified by March 2022. |
| 5.2 | Enhance the partnership between the Town and the Museum of Industry. | 2021 | Town Staff | Collaboration with Town staff ongoing. |
| 5.3 | Enhance the partnership between the NSCC and the Town. | 2021 | Town Staff | Collaborative opportunity with NSCC identified by March 2022. |
| 5.4 | Build or enhance a partnership with the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia (HTNS). | 2021 | Heritage Committee | Meeting completed to understand HTNS interests/mandate by March 2022. |

