

Suggested questions re heritage for Guelph's Municipal Election, October 26, 2026.

Composed by Susan Ratcliffe, Board member, Yorklands Green hub

The Ontario Heritage Act enables municipal councils to protect not only individual properties but also districts of cultural heritage value of interest as Heritage Conservation Districts. HCDs can protect and enhance an aggregate of buildings, streets and open spaces that as a group represent a collective asset to a community.

1. Would you support more HCDs in Guelph? Where?
2. The former Ontario Reformatory lands are now an HCD. Would you support their continued preservation and development into a national Urban Park that would include the Yorklands proposals?

Natural heritage

1. The GRCA has posted the Niska lands, formerly the Kortright Waterfowl Park, for sale for housing development. Are you in favour of this sale, given the heritage of this landscape?
2. The Clair/Malby area consists of significant natural features like large ponds, rolling landscape of drumlins (part of the Paris-Galt Moraine) and good agricultural land. Are you in favour of full development of these lands for housing?
3. There have been discussions about using the Yorklands and the OR lands for a new hospital, despite its proximity to an abattoir and a garbage facility. Would you be in favour of such a proposal if the province approves Guelph for a new hospital

A personal question

1. Why is the preservation of heritage buildings important to you? Give specific Guelph examples.
2. The Yorklands and the OR property (about 300 acres) have been suggested as a possible place for a large housing development. Do you agree with this idea?

Heritage

1. Do you think there is adequate protection for built and natural heritage in Guelph?
2. How will you balance development pressures against the need to preserve archaeological, cultural and natural heritage structures and landscapes in areas like the Yorklands and the rest of the OR property?

Property rights

3. Should Council proceed with heritage designation of a heritage property even when the owner disagrees?

Role of Municipality

4. Given the large amount of support for heritage preservation, will you support funding, laws, policy and appointments that encourage it? List any specific initiatives that you would propose; e.g., tax incentives, special grants.

5. Would you be in favour of saving a heritage property or landscape with adaptive reuse of that property? (e.g., a factory or former school converted to housing).
6. “The greenest building is the one that’s already built.” Carl Elephante.

Construction materials used in heritage buildings (e.g. limestone, bricks, wooden elements like windows and doors, are locally produced and much longer lasting and repairable. Are you in favour of by-laws that would preserve and reuse this material if demolition were to be approved?