

A new driveway looks simple from the street, a smooth ribbon of concrete leading home. Behind the surface, there is a patchwork of rules, soil, steel, weather, and timing. In London, Ontario, getting that mix right means starting with permits and planning, then making a series of practical choices that hold up through freeze-thaw cycles and heavy tires. I have walked more than a few homeowners through this in London's distinct clay soils and changeable weather. The projects that go smoothly are the ones that treat permitting as part of the craft, not an afterthought.

Where the public right-of-way meets private property

A residential driveway in London typically crosses three zones. First, the city right-of-way at the street edge, which may include a curb, a boulevard strip, and sometimes a sidewalk. Next, the front yard on private property. Finally, the garage and side yards where drainage patterns and setbacks live. Each zone is regulated differently.

Most homeowners start by asking if a building permit is required. For a straightforward replacement inside your property lines, the answer is often no. But as soon as you change access to the street, widen near the sidewalk, or cut a curb, you are in city jurisdiction. In London this triggers a "work in the road allowance" permit and, in some cases, a curb cut authorization. If you are touching a sidewalk, the city will want it restored to their standard at your cost. If a boulevard tree is nearby, a tree protection plan or a set distance clearance may apply. These items come up routinely and can delay a pour if you do not account for them.

When a client plans to widen a single-car drive to a double, the limiting factor is not only the curb. The city's zoning by-law caps driveway width relative to lot frontage, particularly in low-density residential zones. On a typical 50-foot frontage, the maximum paved width near the property line can be smaller than you expect. I have seen at least a dozen designs trimmed back after a quick by-law check. The better approach is to measure lot frontage to the inch, sketch the proposed driveway at both the sidewalk and property line, then verify widths with the City of London's Planning or Transportation divisions before committing to formwork.

What the city cares about, practically speaking

Transportation planners focus on safety, drainage, and public assets. They are not judging your finish pattern. They want to keep slopes reasonable, avoid blocked sidewalks, protect trees, and make sure stormwater does not run into a neighbor's yard or the street in a way that overwhelms inlets. The typical London guideline is a gentle slope from garage to street at roughly 2 percent. That is a fall of about a quarter inch per foot. I have corrected more driveways for slope than for any other single defect, because a flat slab looks nice on paper but ponds water, freezes, and flakes.

If you are on a corner lot, sightline rules can constrain where you expand. If you live in a Heritage Conservation District, visible hardscape changes may require a heritage alteration approval. And if your lot grading was certified in recent years, adding hard surface area could trigger a minor grading review to confirm where runoff goes. These are not arbitrary hoops. London sits on heavy glacial till and clay that drains slowly. The city is cautious with new impervious surfaces because the water has to go somewhere.

There is a second, often overlooked boundary, the subsurface. Before any excavation, Ontario One Call must be notified to locate buried utilities. Expect five business days for standard locates. Gas lines sometimes run shallow near older homes, and site crews have found them only a few inches below sod. No one wants a repair emergency on pour day. If a locate drawing conflicts with your proposed edge or walkway, revise early.

A credible timeline for permits and prep

Calling the city a month in advance is not overkill, it is comfortable. The City of London can usually issue a right-of-way permit within one to two weeks for simple cases, though workloads vary with season. Add time if you need a curb cut or if a boulevard tree stands close by, since forestry staff may want a site check. Heritage districts add another week or two. Locates add a week. From first call to a ready site, two to four weeks is typical.

Meanwhile, an experienced contractor will measure, shoot grades, and stake the new alignment. On tight sites, we string the slope and confirm door thresholds, garage slab height, and sidewalk elevation. If you install a new drain or trench grate near the garage to intercept water, the plan needs to include connection details and the discharge path. Here in London, tying into a storm sewer on private property is not common for small retrofits, so we usually rely on surface grading and swales.

Choosing concrete that survives London winters

Concrete that endures salt, freeze-thaw cycles, and repeated loading is not a mystery blend. For exterior slabs in this climate, I specify air-entrained concrete at 30 to 35 MPa compressive strength. The entrained air, roughly 5 to 8 percent by volume, gives water room to expand when it freezes, which protects paste and aggregate from popping and scaling. Air content is the difference between a driveway that looks chalky and pitted after two winters and one that still cleans to a uniform tone after ten.

Thickness matters as much as strength. For typical passenger vehicles, 4 inches is a floor, not a target. I recommend 5 inches for most residential driveway slabs in London, and 6 inches where pickup trucks, work vans, or an RV will sit. The cost difference across a 500 square foot driveway from 4 to 5 inches is material but not huge relative to the life you gain, especially if soils are soft.

Beneath the slab, the granular base does the heavy lifting. Six to eight inches of well-compacted Granular A, compacted in two lifts with a plate or small roller, distributes loads and decreases frost heave. On new builds where the builder left poor backfill near the garage, we sometimes excavate deeper and rebuild the base to stop settlement at the apron. No finish technique can compensate for a spongy base.

Reinforcement is not for [concrete driveways](#) strength in the way people imagine. It is crack control. Concrete will crack as it shrinks and moves with temperature. A 6x6 welded wire mesh, properly chaired so it sits mid-depth, helps hold microcracks tight. On driveways with wider panels or heavier vehicles, I favor 10M rebar on a 16 to 24 inch grid. Reinforcement is not a guarantee against cracks, but it changes ugly wide cracks into thin, well-behaved hairlines.

Joints are the other half of crack control. Control joints should be cut or tooled to a depth of one quarter the slab thickness. For a 5 inch slab, a 1.25 inch cut is the rule. Spacing should be roughly 24 to 30 times the slab thickness. In practice, that is a joint every 8 to 12 feet. On a 20 by 40 foot drive, I might lay a grid of four panels across and two panels long, lined up with the garage doors so the joints look intentional. Aesthetics aside, consistent panels mean predictable cracking beneath the joints where it belongs.

Finishes matter to performance, not just looks. A broom finish provides texture for traction. Exposed aggregate offers grip as well, but it requires precise timing on the surface wash and demands a good sealer to prevent dirt from settling into the pores. Stamped concrete can be beautiful, though in our climate I recommend lighter textures and adequate slope, since deep impressions hold water and winter fines. Polished surfaces are fashionable but impractical on sloped exteriors here.

Drainage, downspouts, and the first winter

Driveways often collect water from the roof, especially when a downspout dumps at the corner of a garage. Redirecting that flow is one of the cheapest insurance policies you can buy. A short extender or an in-ground leader that discharges to lawn keeps meltwater off the slab where it would refreeze. If you install a trench drain across the garage doors, clean the channel a few times each year. They work wonderfully when kept free of grit and leaves, and they are nearly useless when clogged.

Every winter, someone salts a new driveway generously after a freeze-thaw and calls in the spring about scaling. Concrete is most vulnerable in its first season as it finishes hydrating and microstructure densifies. I advise clients to avoid de-icing salt the first winter. Use sand for traction. If ice must be treated, calcium magnesium acetate is gentler than rock salt. By the second winter, a high quality, breathable sealer helps resist water and chloride penetration, which in turn reduces scaling.

How the budget usually shakes out

Prices move with cement costs, fuel, and demand, but for concrete driveways in London Ontario, realistic ranges for 2025 projects look like this. For a simple broom-finished replacement over a sound base, expect roughly 12 to 18 dollars per square foot, including standard excavation, base prep, 5 inch air-entrained slab, control joints, and sawcuts. Exposed aggregate often falls in the 18 to 25 dollar range because of extra labor and sealer. Stamped or decorative borders with two colors and a medium pattern can land between 20 and 30 dollars per square foot.

Tear-out and disposal of an old asphalt or severely failed concrete slab often adds 2 to 4 dollars per square foot. A new curb cut and apron work within the right-of-way can add several thousand dollars, because of traffic control, city inspection, and restoration requirements. A two car driveway, about 20 by 20 feet or 400 square feet, tends to total 6,000 to 10,000 dollars for broom finish, 8,000 to 12,000 for exposed, more if the apron or sidewalk is part of the scope.

Where costs creep is in the unseen. Poor subgrade that requires undercutting, unsuitable fill from an older renovation, or the discovery that the garage slab is lower than the city sidewalk. These change the slope math and often lead to a trench drain or a small step at the threshold. Build a contingency of 10 percent into your budget. Most clients never use it, and the ones who do are grateful it is there.

Working with the city without losing your weekend

Permit paperwork improves when you bring a simple, complete package. The core items the City of London expects for a straightforward residential driveway application are consistent from season to season.



- A sketch or plan to scale showing property lines, existing and proposed driveway edges, the sidewalk and curb, the width at property line and sidewalk, and any nearby trees or utilities.
- Proof of insurance and contractor credentials if the work extends into the right-of-way, as required by the permit type.
- A short note on materials and thicknesses, plus the proposed slope direction and any drains, to show you have thought through grading.
- Ontario One Call locate ticket number and date, or confirmation that locates have been requested.
- If in a Heritage Conservation District, a brief description of the visible changes for heritage staff, or a note that a heritage alteration permit application is in process.

A city reviewer can scan that package in minutes and decide if the plan fits the by-law. If they need clarification, they tend to ask specifically, and a fast answer keeps your place in line. I have handled applications where a hand-drawn plan, done neatly on graph paper with dimensions and a north arrow, beat a slick but vague CAD sheet. Clarity trumps polish.

Eat the risk early with a pre-pour walkthrough

On the best jobs, we walk the site with the homeowner after forms go in and before concrete arrives. We check widths, clearances, the swing of car doors near fences, the slope near the garage, and that a wheelbarrow will not tip off the edge while still green. We talk about joint layout so no one is surprised by a diagonal cut. At this stage, moving a stake two inches is easy. Moving a hardened slab two inches is a story people tell for years.

London's soils invite a second look at base compaction. Clay subgrades hold water. If the base feels spongy under a boot or yields under a plate compactor, stop and add more Granular A in thin lifts. Good contractors bring a moisture meter and aim for compaction near 98 percent of standard proctor on important areas like the apron. You do not always need numbers, but you do need judgment. A vibrating plate that bounces rather than bites is a visual cue that the base has locked up.

Pour day, step by step

Concrete is unforgiving about sequence. A crisp pour follows a known rhythm.

- Confirm air content, slump, and temperature on the first truck. For exterior slabs here, a 4 to 5 inch slump is workable without water on site, and the air content should land in the 5 to 8 percent range. Adjust with superplasticizer rather than adding water if you need more flow.
- Place concrete starting at the lowest point and work uphill, vibrating edges and around drains lightly to avoid honeycombing while not overworking the paste.
- Strike off and bull float to embed aggregate, then let the bleed water evaporate before finishing. Work the surface too soon and you will lock water under a tight skin that scales later.
- Tool edges and joints, or saw cut as soon as the slab will take a saw without raveling. On warm, dry days that can be within 6 to 10 hours. Overnight when cooler.
- Begin curing immediately after final finish with wet curing blankets or a curing compound. Keep vehicular traffic off at least seven days in warm weather, longer when cold or damp.

Those steps are not glamorous, and that is the point. Mishaps happen when someone tries to save 20 minutes by cutting joints the next morning or finishes during bleed water because a shower is on the radar. Patience pays every time.

The case for custom concrete work where it counts

Most homeowners gravitate to design choices they can see, like color, border, or a gentle curve at the sidewalk. The best custom concrete work on a driveway starts with geometry and ends with details that manage water and shrinkage. On a sloped lot in North London, we combined a 2 percent driveway pitch with a subtle trench drain that doubled as a visual border. The homeowner liked the look. What they will appreciate in year five is that garage floor that stays dry during a January thaw.

Another client wanted a widened parking bay for a teenager's car, but the by-law limited driveway width at the sidewalk. We created a short flare within the property line and a ribbon of permeable pavers along the edge to meet both the width limit and the stormwater concerns. The city signed off, the teen parks safely off-street, and the neighbor's front garden no longer receives runoff. That is custom in the service of use.

If you are weighing long-term maintenance, a simple brush finish with clean joint lines and a quality sealer every two to three years often outlasts decorative surfaces at lower cost. Stamped and exposed aggregate finishes shine when the installation crew knows their timing and the homeowner understands sealing. Neither is wrong. Each rewards attention and punishes neglect.

Special cases: heated slabs, permeable options, and heavy loads

Heated driveways come up every winter after the first storm. They are practical on certain slopes and for homeowners with mobility concerns. In London, an electric snow-melt system or hydronic tubes embedded in the slab both require planning. Electric systems will involve the Electrical Safety Authority for permitting and inspection, and you will need capacity in your panel. Hydronic systems require a boiler or heat source and a careful layout to protect tubes during saw cuts. The slab needs insulation beneath, which changes the base detail and cost. The operating cost depends on weather and area, so get a realistic number before you commit.

Permeable concrete and pavers appeal for stormwater management. True pervious concrete is a specialty product that allows water to pass through. In freeze-thaw climates like ours, it demands rigorous base design and diligent vacuuming to keep pores open. When maintained, it works. When not, it clogs, holds water, and can spall. Permeable paver systems

with open-graded aggregate can be more forgiving and repairable in a residential setting. Some homeowners choose a hybrid, a conventional concrete center lane with permeable side ribbons for overflow, which softens runoff without complicating snow shoveling.

For driveways that will host delivery trucks or a work trailer regularly, bump thickness to 6 inches and tighten reinforcement. Avoid small panels near the curb where turning wheels stress edges. The apron sees the most abuse from plows and trucks. On city property, the design must meet city standards, so coordinate early.

How to choose the right crew

London has a healthy roster of contractors offering concrete installation services. The quality spread is wide. I look past the photo gallery to three things that predict success. First, ask what mix they specify for exterior slabs and why. If they cannot talk competently about air entrainment, psi, and joint spacing, keep looking. Second, ask who will be on site. Subcontracting is common, but accountability needs a name and a foreman who shows up at 7 a.m. On pour day, not 10. Third, ask to see a driveway they poured at least three winters ago. Fresh concrete always looks good. Old concrete tells you how they finish, cure, and cut joints.

References in your neighborhood help. I once replaced a driveway on a street where three neighbors had used the cheapest bid. All three had identical scaling by the third spring, smooth as terrazzo where salt and tire paths had worn away the paste. The bids had shaved time in finishing and used a leaner mix. The homeowners saved a few hundred dollars and paid thousands a few years later. It is not a scare story. It is what the physics of cement and water will do if you ask them to.

What to expect from day one to year ten

A residential driveway in London Ontario should be a 20-year asset with routine care. That care is modest. Reseal decorative finishes every two to three years, broom finishes every three to five. Keep edges supported so lawn crews do not undercut with trimmers. Rinse off leaked oil and avoid harsh solvents. Do not park heavy steel on kickstands or jacks on hot days without pads. Watch for soil settlement along edges the first year and backfill with topsoil so water does not sit against the slab.

Snow removal is another small decision that affects lifespan. Rubber or plastic blades on snow blowers are kinder to decorative finishes. Metal blades can catch joints and chip edges, especially on stamped patterns. If a plow service handles your drive, tell them about any trench drains or decorative borders so they do not hook them accidentally.

If you see a crack, do not panic. A hairline that follows a control joint is doing what it should. Wider random cracks deserve a look. Sometimes they trace to a soft spot in the base or a missing joint. A good contractor will explain whether a crack is cosmetic or structural and offer a repair like a low-viscosity epoxy injection if it is worth doing. Many are not serious and never move again.

Bringing it together without losing sight of the goal

Permits, specs, drainage, joints, finish, curing. Each piece matters, and none of it matters if the driveway does not serve how you live. The family with two small kids needs a wider apron where car seats click in safely. The woodworker who parks a half-ton pickup wants thicker slab and tighter joints under the turning radius. The retiree who walks a small dog needs a texture that grips in February and a path that does not pond by the steps. Good planning turns those needs into formwork and mix tickets.

If your project touches the street or sidewalk, treat the city as a partner. They are stewards of public space. Bring a clear drawing, confirm widths at the property line, call Ontario One Call, and respect tree protection. If your project stays on private land, hold yourself to the same standard anyway. Measure twice. Think about water. Choose an air-entrained mix. Place decent base. Cut joints on time. Cure properly. The rest is craft.

For homeowners comparing concrete driveways London options, a tidy broom finish with smart grading beats a flashy stamp over poor subgrade every day of the week. When you do want color, a border, or a curve that fits your garden, choose custom concrete work that serves function first. A driveway is not just a pad. It is part of the small infrastructure that keeps a house dry, safe, and welcoming. Done right, it is the last thing you think about when you pull in at night, which is the highest compliment concrete can earn.

NAP

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Sunday: [Not listed – please confirm]

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Ferrari Concrete is a family-owned concrete contractor serving London, Ontario with residential, commercial, and industrial concrete work.

Ferrari Concrete provides plain, coloured, stamped, and exposed aggregate concrete for driveways, patios, porches, pool decks, sidewalks, curbing, and garage floors.

Ferrari Concrete operates from 5606 Westdel Bourne, London, ON N6P 1P3, Canada (Plus Code: VM9J+GF) and can be reached at 519-652-0483 for project consultations.

Ferrari Concrete serves the London area and nearby communities such as Lambeth, St. Thomas, and Strathroy for concrete installations and upgrades.

Ferrari Concrete offers commercial concrete services for parking lots, curbs, sidewalks, driveways, and other site concrete needs for facilities and workplaces.

Ferrari Concrete includes decorative concrete options that can help homeowners match finishes and patterns to the look of their property.

Ferrari Concrete provides HydroVac services (Ferrari HydroVac) for projects where hydrovac excavation support may be a fit.

Ferrari Concrete can be found on Google Maps here: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=Ferrari%20Concrete%2C%205606%20Westdel%20Bourne%2C%20London%2C%20ON%20N6P%201P3>

Popular Questions About Ferrari Concrete

What services does Ferrari Concrete offer in London, Ontario?

Ferrari Concrete provides a range of concrete services, including residential and commercial concrete work such as driveways, patios, porches, pool decks, sidewalks, curbing, and garage floors, with finish options like plain, coloured, stamped, and exposed aggregate.

Does Ferrari Concrete install stamped or coloured concrete?

Yes—Ferrari Concrete offers decorative finishes such as stamped and coloured concrete. Availability can depend on scheduling, season, and the specific pattern/colour selection, so it's best to confirm details during an estimate.

Do you handle both residential and commercial concrete projects?

Ferrari Concrete works on residential projects (like driveways and patios) as well as commercial/industrial concrete needs (such as curbs, sidewalks, and parking-area concrete). Project scope and site requirements typically determine the best approach.

What areas does Ferrari Concrete serve around London?

Ferrari Concrete serves London, ON and surrounding communities. If your project is outside the city core, it's a good idea to confirm travel/service availability when requesting a quote.

How does pricing usually work for a concrete project?

Concrete project costs typically depend on size, site access, base preparation, thickness/reinforcement needs, drainage considerations, and finish choices (for example stamped vs. plain). An on-site assessment is usually the fastest way to get an accurate estimate.

What are Ferrari Concrete's business hours?

Hours listed are Monday through Saturday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Sunday hours are not listed, so it's best to call ahead if you need a weekend appointment outside those times.

How do I contact Ferrari Concrete for an estimate?

Call [\(519\) 652-0483](tel:519-652-0483) or email info@ferrariconcrete.com to request an estimate. You can also connect on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#). Website: <https://www.ferrariconcrete.com/>

Landmarks Near London, ON

Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and provides concrete contractor services. If you're looking for concrete contracting in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Budweiser Gardens](#).

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