

A driveway in London, Ontario works harder than most people think. It carries the weight of vehicles, sheds stormwater toward the street, faces tire chains in March slush, and then bakes in July sun. Choosing between concrete and asphalt is not a textbook decision. It is a local one, shaped by frost, clay soils, deicing salts, budget, and how you want the front of your home to look in five, ten, or thirty years.

I have stood on job sites in Old North and Fox Field in late November as we raced the first deep freeze, and I have come back a few springs later to check joints, curling, and settlement. Done right, both concrete and asphalt can serve a residential driveway in London Ontario well. Done casually, both can fail early. The difference lives in the details.

## **What our climate does to a driveway**

London sits in a snowbelt corridor that often sees lake effect bands sweep in from Huron. In an average winter you can expect anywhere from 150 to 250 centimetres of snow, mixed with rain and thaws. That mix creates frequent freeze and thaw cycles. Water infiltrates the top surface and base, freezes, expands, and then recedes. Materials that are not stable with moisture changes will pump and shift. Surfaces that are not air entrained or sealed can scale, spall, or ravel.

Two other forces matter. First, deicing salts. Municipal plows lay down chlorides that get tracked onto your driveway. Chlorides are rough on bare concrete paste, especially in the first winter before concrete is fully cured and densified. They are less damaging to asphalt, though salts can accelerate binder aging. Second, soil. Much of London has clay and clay loam that holds water and swells when saturated. If your excavation and granular base are thin or poorly compacted, frost can jack the paving up and down every season, leaving depressions at tire tracks and along edges.

In short, whatever surface you choose should be designed for freeze thaw, assumed to see chlorides, and supported by a base that can drain.

## **What a solid concrete driveway looks like in practice**

When I say concrete, I do not mean any 4 inch slab placed on dirt. A well built concrete driveway in this city usually follows a few non negotiables.

The mix design should be air entrained, typically 5 to 7 percent, so micro air pockets give freezing water somewhere to expand without bursting the paste. Compressive strength at 28 days should be at least 32 MPa for residential use, often 35 MPa when I know the driveway will take work vans. Slump is kept moderate to reduce bleed water and shrinkage. For winter pours, accelerators swap in for calcium chloride to protect steel.

Thickness is driven by loading. For a typical residential driveway London Ontario wide, I will not pour less than 4 inches, and I prefer 5 inches at the apron where delivery trucks and garbage collection can ride over the edge. If you plan to park a trailer or a heavy pickup regularly, 6 inches in those strips pays you back. Reinforcement helps control cracking. In many cases, 6 by 6 wire mesh is enough. Where subgrade is variable, #10 or #15 rebar at 18 to 24 inches on centre, top third of the slab, holds cracks tight.

Joints prevent random cracking from curling and shrinkage. Too many driveways crack diagonally across a wide panel because no one cut joints on time. I want control joints spaced at two to three times slab thickness in feet, which means panels no bigger than 10 to 12 feet in either direction for a 4 to 5 inch slab. Cuts should reach about a quarter of the slab depth and be made as soon as the surface bears weight without raveling. Perimeter isolation joints at the garage slab and steps keep the house and driveway from fighting each other.

Base and drainage decide whether the slab lives straight or settles. Remove topsoil. Replace with Granular A or B, compacted in lifts to at least 95 percent of standard Proctor. Depth varies, but 4 to 8 inches is common. On clay, I lean to the higher end and sometimes place a geotextile fabric if the subgrade feels spongy after rain. Finished slope should fall 1 to 2 percent away from the garage and toward the street or swale. That is about 1 to 2 centimetres per metre.



Finishes matter in winter. A broom finish gives traction without trapping water. Stamped concrete looks fantastic, and exposed aggregate holds up well, but both require a more deliberate sealer schedule and careful winter care. I tend to steer clients toward a light broom in areas where they shovel or plow often, and save decorative textures for borders and aprons.

When a homeowner calls us for concrete installation services after living on aging asphalt, the first thing they usually notice is the crisp edge and brightness. The second, once snow arrives, is how the surface stays flatter at the tire paths after a few seasons. Concrete resists rutting far better than asphalt because it carries load as a rigid slab rather than a flexible mat.

**What a good asphalt driveway needs to last**

Asphalt, or hot mix asphalt if we are being formal, behaves as a flexible pavement. It spreads load through a thicker, well compacted granular base. In London you will often see a 6 to 8 inch base of Granular A or B, compacted thoroughly, with 2.5 to 3 inches of HL3 or HL3A surface mix on top. If a contractor bids a single 2 inch lift on a 3 inch base, expect ruts and alligator cracking sooner than later.

Timing is critical. The mix should arrive hot and go down in a single continuous operation to avoid cold joints across the width. Steel drum rollers and plate compactors should both show up on site. Edges should be supported with extra base and compacted, otherwise the first spring thaw and the first [Click here for info](#) time a tire runs near the border, the edge will crumble.

Asphalt handles deicing salts without chemical attack, but sunlight and air oxidize its binder slowly. That is why fresh asphalt looks jet black and three years later reads dark grey. Sealcoating is a maintenance item that can slow oxidation and keep fine aggregate locked in the surface, but it does not add structure. In our climate, plan to seal every 2 to 4 years once the asphalt has fully cured after the first season.

Asphalt tolerates a little movement in the base, which is useful in clay soils. Where I have seen trouble is at the garage threshold. The flexible mat can settle a centimetre or two, and that creates a lip you feel as you drive in. Shimming with another thin lift helps for a while, but eventually you need a more thorough resurfacing. For homeowners stepping up from gravel, asphalt offers the fastest, most cost efficient path to a clean driveway, especially across long rural lanes in the city's south and east edges.

## How the two surfaces age on London streets

Longevity depends on design, materials, and maintenance, which is why you hear a range in years. For concrete driveways London homeowners can expect 25 to 40 years out of a properly built slab, longer if the subgrade is stable and the owner follows a sensible sealing routine. For asphalt, 12 to 20 years is common, with resurfacing or overlay sometime in the middle if the base stays true.

Concrete's most common early failure in our area is surface scaling within the first two winters. It usually traces back to finishing too early and closing the surface while bleed water is still rising, or to using non air entrained mix. Add in salt and you have a recipe for flakes that show up in March. If you are placing concrete in late fall, I insist on air entrainment, proper cure with compound or wet cover, no steel trowel finish, and no salt until after the first winter. Use sand or a chloride alternative on icy days.

Asphalt shows its age differently. The first signs are hairline cracks along the edges and faint depressions where tires sit. Water enters those cracks, freezes, and makes them worse. Left unsealed, those hairlines turn into alligator cracking over the drive lanes and potholes at the apron. Regular crack sealing and sealcoating buys time. So does keeping heavy vehicles off the same tracks week after week in summer when the mat is a little softer.

## Dollars and cents for a residential driveway in London

Budget speaks loudly in this decision, especially for large frontages or long approaches. Installed costs vary by site conditions, access, and finish, so use ranges.

For asphalt in London, many homeowners see quotes in the 4 to 8 dollars per square foot range for a full build with 6 to 8 inches of compacted base and 2.5 to 3 inches of surface mix. If you already have a good base and need a resurface only, numbers land lower, but if the contractor strips and replaces the base, expect the higher end of the range.

For concrete, a plain broom finish driveway typically lands in the 12 to 20 dollars per square foot range. Decorative work increases cost. Exposed aggregate, two tone borders, or stamped textures add labour, deeper sealer schedules, and more complex forming. I have seen custom concrete work with intricate bands run 25 dollars per square foot and up, especially on curved drives where formwork and cuts take time.

Price is not only material. Access for a ready mix truck, room to stage base, handwork around services, and disposal of old asphalt or concrete all affect your final invoice. I always tell clients to compare the full scope line by line, not just the headline number.

## Curb appeal, customization, and resale

Asphalt has a clean, unified look that lets the house and landscaping do the talking. It recedes. In heritage pockets like Woodfield, a simple black mat pairs nicely with older brick and mature trees. If the driveway is long, the visual

continuity of asphalt can shrink the perceived sprawl.

Concrete draws the eye and can elevate the front of a home. A crisp broom finish brightens the façade, and simple details like a 12 inch exposed aggregate border can make the walkway and driveway read as a single, well designed element. Stamped concrete has improved a lot in the past decade. When installers keep patterns restrained and joints aligned with the geometry of the house, the effect feels intentional rather than busy.

For resale, buyers tend to assign durability and low upkeep to concrete driveways London listings, especially when panels are straight and joints are neat. Asphalt rarely adds value beyond being in good condition, but a fresh, smooth mat avoids subtracting value. As a rule, if your front yard design leans modern or if your home's architecture is clean lined, concrete aligns better. If you prefer a softer, traditional look with generous planting beds, asphalt sits back and lets that softness carry.

## **Maintenance you should plan for**

Even a low maintenance driveway needs a few scheduled tasks. Think of them as insurance against our weather.

- Concrete maintenance checklist: seal every 2 to 4 years with a breathable, penetrating sealer designed for exterior flatwork. Avoid deicing salts in the first winter. Use sand or calcium magnesium acetate when needed. Keep control joints clear of dirt so they work. Watch for suspicious pooling that suggests a low spot developing along the edge after a storm. Reseal exposed aggregate more often because the stones can polish and lose friction if left unsealed.
- Asphalt maintenance checklist: stay off new asphalt with heavy vehicles for the first week in summer heat. Sealcoat after the first year once volatiles have left the mix, then repeat every 2 to 4 years. Fill cracks annually before freeze season so water does not widen them. Avoid parking motorcycles or kickstands on hot days without a pad under the stand. Sweep sand and grit in spring so it does not act like sandpaper under tires.

That is the first of our two allowed lists. We will keep only one more short list later and keep the rest in prose.

## **Environmental considerations that actually matter on real lots**

We talk a lot about permeable surfaces, and they deserve the airtime. In most London subdivisions you cannot send stormwater onto your neighbour's lot or the sidewalk. A standard concrete or asphalt surface is essentially impermeable. The base may hold some water, but most runoff flows to the street or a swale. If you live near a floodplain or conservation area, the City or the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority may require certain grades or limit hard surface expansion.

If reducing runoff is important to you, consider permeable concrete or permeable pavers for part of the drive, like the parking shoulder. Permeable asphalt is also an option, though it clogs in our dusty spring unless you vacuum it. Permeable systems need a much deeper open graded stone base and careful snow management so plows do not push fines into the voids. If you like the idea but not the maintenance, adding a trench drain along the garage with a connection to your storm system can intercept a lot of water without changing the main surface.

Material sourcing and heat are the other environmental angles. Asphalt is petroleum based, but it is also one of the most recycled materials on the continent. Reclaimed asphalt pavement finds its way back into mixes. Concrete has a high embodied carbon because of cement, yet it can last longer and reflect more light, which brightens a north facing façade and reduces nighttime lighting needs. Neither path is automatically greener. Longevity and careful construction are where you win.

## **How installation timing and logistics influence the outcome**

In London we pour and pave from April through November, with shoulder season work tied to overnight lows and daytime highs. For concrete, I do not like to place if the forecast shows a hard freeze within 24 hours without a plan for blankets and heat. Cold joints, poor cure, and surface scaling risk climb fast once you are fighting weather. For asphalt, cool weather shortens the compaction window. The mat needs enough heat to knit properly under the roller. You can install late fall, but you must move quickly and keep lift thickness up so you retain heat.

The calendar also touches your life. A concrete driveway needs three to seven days before regular traffic, depending on cure conditions. Asphalt takes traffic almost immediately but is happiest when it can cool and set for a couple of days

before you swing sharp turns. If you are coordinating other trades, such as a new garage door or landscaping, plan the sequence carefully so no one drives machinery over young surfaces.

Access matters. Many urban lots leave little room for a full size ready mix truck. On tight sites we pump concrete or use buggies, which adds cost. Asphalt crews need roller access and staging for the paver. Overhead lines, mature trees, and narrow side yards can slow the job and push it into a second day. Padding your schedule and being clear about site constraints with your contractor avoids stress mid pour.

## Real world examples from local streets

A homeowner in Byron called a few years back about replacing a patchwork asphalt and concrete mix. The subgrade along one side had settled over time because roof downspouts discharged right at the edge. Every spring new patches appeared, and the driveway looked tired. We regraded the front yard, piped the downspouts to a proper outlet, and placed a 5 inch air entrained concrete slab with wider panels aligned to the façade. Joints ran away from the garage door edges to catch shrinkage. That driveway took the first winter well, with no edge scaling and no ponding after a July thunderstorm. The owner likes a clean look, and the lighter surface brightened a north facing entry.

Across town in Stoney Creek, a couple with a long double drive wanted a cost conscious refresh before listing their home. The base was solid. We milled off the top inch of rough asphalt, sealed cracks, and put down a 2 inch overlay. Edges were rebuilt where vehicles cut corners. They kept a budget under control, the surface looked fresh for photos, and they did not sink money where the next owner might tear out for a new walkway plan.

On a custom build in Sunningdale, where the architecture skewed modern, we combined materials. The main drive from the street to the garage was broom finish concrete with a sawcut grid that mirrored window muntins. Along the outer parking bay, we used an exposed aggregate band for texture and a subtle visual line. The cost rose compared to a plain pour, but the front elevation moved up a notch and the materials suited the crisp lines of the house. That kind of custom concrete work only shines when the installer respects layout and proportion. Random patterns or sawcuts that ignore façades read sloppy fast.

## The small specifications that decide big outcomes

A few site decisions matter more than homeowners expect, and they tip the scale between the two surfaces.

- Choose your edge treatment intentionally: concrete can carry a clean, square edge if the base is compact and wide. It photographs well and resists side crumble. Asphalt needs a supported edge. If your lawn sits lower than the drive, consider a flush concrete border or a soldier course of brick to hold the mat. Edges are where I see the first failures in both materials.

This is our second and final list. The rest continues in prose.

Match slope to your winter habits. If you prefer to push snow across the drive to a side yard, a simple, single plane slope makes work easiest. If your lot needs a crown in the center to shed to both sides, I try not to exceed 2 percent in either direction so walking stays comfortable. With stamped or exposed aggregate concrete, I avoid excessive slope that would turn textured peaks into skate blades under a dusting of ice.

Think about where you park heavy vehicles and how often. For concrete, driving and parking in the same tire tracks for years is not a problem, though sealing joints keeps water out. For asphalt, repeated summer parking in the same spot can create subtle depressions. If you own a heavy pickup with a plow mounted from November to March, consider thicker lifts or reinforce the initial design accordingly.

Plan your first winter strategy before the job starts. For brand new concrete, I recommend no salt use in the first cold season, even if the bag says safe for concrete. Use sand for traction and keep a square nosed shovel that will not gouge. For asphalt, be gentle the first few weeks in summer and skip sharp turns when the sun is high.

## How to decide for your property

The answer rarely fits a slogan. If you ask me on a street with high water [residential driveway london ontario](#) table, clay subgrade, lots of freeze thaw, and a long flat approach, my north star is simple: invest in the base, then choose the surface that aligns with how long you plan to stay and how you want the front of your home to look.

If you want the longest service life with the least seasonal rutting and you are comfortable with a higher upfront cost, a well designed concrete driveway is hard to beat here. It rewards care in the first winter, then settles into a steady rhythm of sealing every few years. If you prefer a lower initial cost, accept more frequent maintenance, and may overlay at the 8 to 12 year mark, asphalt is a smart choice, especially for long runs or when you want the surface to recede visually.

One more factor to weigh is your appetite for customization. Concrete offers nearly endless custom concrete work options, from sawcut grids and borders to integral colour and exposed aggregate. Those details can tie a driveway to a home's architecture and make everyday arrivals feel a little special. Asphalt keeps its role practical. It can be edged with stone or pavers to bring in some detail, but the mat itself stays uniform.

## Working with the right crew

Materials are only as good as the hands that place them. Ask prospective contractors in London for addresses of similar projects that are at least two winters old. Stand on them. Look at joints, edges, and pooling after a rain if you can. Confirm the specifications in writing. For concrete, see the mix strength, air content, reinforcement, thickness, joint pattern, and curing method spelled out. For asphalt, see base depth, compaction method, mix type, lift thickness, and edge support.

Good crews do not rush subgrade prep. They adjust on site when clay pockets show up or when a utility trench compromises bearing. They talk you through joint layout that lines up with your garage and walkway, and they explain how they will protect fresh work if a cold front arrives a day early.

If your project sits in the municipal right of way, like a widened driveway approach, check permit requirements. In London the city controls curb cuts and public sidewalks. You may need a permit and must follow city standards for thickness and finish in the boulevard. A reputable contractor handles that paperwork or walks you through it.

## Final thought from the driveway

If you stood beside me on a mid March morning as the freeze thaw battle plays out on a quiet west end street, you would see both materials doing their jobs. One driveway would look slightly rutted along the tire lines, a testament to a soft week and heavy vehicles. Another would show hairline cracks that had opened a fraction since November, sitting right where the sawcut joints guided them. Both homeowners would get to work on time.

The better question than which material wins is which material and specification match your lot, your habits, and your timeframe. In London, where our seasons and soils do not forgive shortcuts, the winners are the driveways built on well compacted bases, designed with real drainage, and maintained with a light but steady hand. If you are ready to move from research to action, talk to local crews who specialize in concrete driveways London Ontario wide and to asphalt contractors who know our clay and frost. The right choice for your address is the one that respects what the ground and the weather will do next.

## NAP

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Saturday: 8:00 am - 6:00 pm

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**Google Maps (long URL):** <https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=Ferrari%20Concrete%2C%205606%20Westdel%20Bourne%2C%20London%2C%20ON%20N6P%201P3>

**Map Embed (iframe):**

**Logo URL:** <https://www.ferrariconcrete.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/423A0786-F561-4AC7-B20A-DF2D6D5A155A.png>

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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:5196520483) or email [info@ferrariconcrete.com](mailto: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](#).

Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and offers residential and commercial concrete work. If you're looking for concrete contractor help in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Victoria Park](#).

Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and provides decorative concrete options like stamped and coloured finishes. If you're looking for decorative concrete in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Covent Garden Market](#).

Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and offers concrete services for driveways, patios, and walkways. If you're looking for concrete installation in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Western University](#).

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Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and offers concrete work for curbs, sidewalks, and other flatwork needs. If you're looking for concrete flatwork in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Masonville Place](#).

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Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and offers concrete contracting for residential upgrades and new installs. If you're looking for residential concrete in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Storybook Gardens](#).

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