

Walk down a quiet street in Old North or a newer cul-de-sac in Westmount and you can spot the driveways that were built with care. The edges line up cleanly with the curb, water runs where it should, the broom finish has that faint linen texture, and there are no spidery surface cracks telegraphing an early failure. In a city that sees snow, thaw cycles, and the odd scorching summer week, concrete is a smart, long lived choice for curb appeal. Done right, a residential driveway in London Ontario handles pickups, snowblowers, and visiting hockey carpools year after year without drama.

I have replaced enough failed slabs to know that success is found long before the truck arrives. Soil prep, drainage, and a realistic maintenance plan matter more than any decorative touch. If you are comparing concrete driveways London Ontario options or mapping out a replacement, this guide lays out the details that actually move the needle.

## **Climate and concrete, the London reality**

Southwestern Ontario sits in a freeze-thaw band. We get sustained periods below zero, then a midwinter thaw, then a refreeze. Moisture finds its way into concrete surfaces, and if the air content, finishing, or curing is wrong, that moisture expands into damage. Add de-icing salts from the road and you get scaling, pitting, and spalling that show up in the first two or three winters.

For exterior slabs in our climate, I specify a 32 to 35 MPa mix with 5 to 8 percent air entrainment. That microscopic air gives freezing water a place to expand without popping off the surface paste. Too little air, the surface shells off. Too much, the paste weakens and you lose strength. A good local ready-mix supplier knows the winter exposure and tailors the admixtures accordingly. I like to see a water-cement ratio at or below 0.45 and slump controlled so the crew is not tempted to splash in extra water, which raises the w/c and kills durability.

Temperature at placement also matters. Pouring when the slab is above 27 C can lead to plastic shrinkage cracks if there is wind, while placing below 5 C without protection compromises curing. For London, the prime window for flatwork runs roughly April through October. Shoulder-season pours need blankets and a curing plan, not just good intentions.

## **Layout, setbacks, and permits in the city**

Before anyone starts digging, measure the layout and check municipal rules. The City of London has guidelines around driveway width, approaches at the curb, and how much of a front yard can be hard surface. If you plan to widen a driveway or cut a new curb, expect to apply for a permit and coordinate with the city or a licensed contractor approved for curb work. The exact requirements shift over time, so do not rely on a neighbour's three-year-old story. Pull the current standards, or ask your contractor to do so in writing.

Utilities are a second early step. Ontario One Call coordinates locates at no cost, and you want those paint marks on the ground before an excavator tooth finds a shallow cable. I have seen gas lines so close to the surface you could nick them with a shovel in older parts of the city. A little scheduling patience prevents a big scare.

When we stake out a residential driveway London Ontario homeowners often want to gain a foot or two of width near a garage for easier door swings. It can be done thoughtfully by using a gentle flare instead of a blunt rectangle that looks like a parking pad. Consider snow storage too. If you push every boundary line with paving, you remove the pockets where snow can safely melt away from the foundation.

## **What makes a stable base**

Every great slab starts underneath. I look at three things: native soil, base material, and compaction.

London's subsoils vary block to block. Some lots have well-drained sandy loam that behaves nicely. Others sit over clay that pumps when wet and moves seasonally. On clay, the worst shortcut is scraping off the sod, dropping gravel, and pouring. You trap soft pockets under a hard surface. A heavy truck or a spring thaw will find them and leave you a sunken tire path.

For most driveways I remove organics plus any obvious soft spots, then place 6 to 12 inches of well-graded granular base, compacted in lifts. The depth depends on soil quality and traffic. A family of cars on stable native soil does fine with 6 to 8 inches. If a delivery truck regularly visits, or the soil shows pumping under a plate tamper, move toward 10 to 12 inches.

Compaction is not a single pass. Each 3 to 4 inch lift gets compacted to refusal with a plate compactor or roller, and I check density by feel and by the way the machine rides. If the base shivers or waves, keep working. Warm, dry days

help, and if the base is too wet to compact, wait. Rushing this step is a guaranteed callback later.

I like to see a separation geotextile over poor soils to keep fines from pumping up into the base. It is cheaper than redoing a sunken panel.

## **Thickness, reinforcement, and joints**

For concrete driveways London, 5 inches is my minimum slab thickness, and 6 inches earns its keep on edges where vehicles turn, especially for homes with RV pads or trailers. Four inches belongs on light garden pathways, not a driveway that sees SUVs. Thickness buys capacity and margin for small imperfections.

Reinforcement in flatwork is not about bending the way it is in beams. It fights shrinkage cracking and keeps microcracks tight. Welded wire mesh can work if it ends up in the top third of the slab, but too often it sags or crews walk it down into the base where it does nothing. I prefer 10M rebar on a 18 to 24 inch grid, supported on chairs so it stays put. On higher load areas or long runs, that grid tightens to 16 inches. Fiber reinforcement in the mix is a supplemental tool. It controls early plastic shrinkage, but it does not replace steel for crack control.

Control joints are your steering wheel. Concrete will crack as it shrinks and moves with temperature. You decide where. I saw or tool joints at intervals of 10 to 12 feet for a typical driveway, depth at least one quarter of the slab thickness. On curves, plan for joints that mirror the geometry so the eye sees intention, not randomness. Make sure joints come off corners to prevent stress concentrations that create diagonal cracks.

Isolation joints are different. They separate the driveway from fixed points like a garage slab, foundation wall, or catch basin. A 12 mm foam strip keeps the drive from binding up against something that does not move.

## **Slope and drainage protect your house**

Concrete is water resistant, your home's foundation is not. I pitch a driveway at 2 percent away from structures and toward a safe discharge point. In London, that usually means the street, but some lots need a trench drain at the garage door or a centre valley line to handle the volume. Scaling back slope below about 1 percent may look sleek on paper, but in the field it puddles, then freezes and polishes into a skating rink. Two percent looks natural, sheds water, and stays walkable.

Downspouts need a plan. Pouring a great slab only to dump roof water on the same spot is self-defeating. I often add buried extensions with pop-ups or route water to garden beds. The City is increasingly attentive to stormwater practices, so choose solutions that do not push water onto neighbours or the sidewalk.

## **Finishes that match function and style**

Plain broom finish is still the most practical surface for our winters. It gives tire grip under frost and holds up to shovels without scarring. For homeowners who want more visual texture, exposed aggregate and stamped concrete both hold a place when detailed with care.

Exposed aggregate uses a pea or decorative stone mix and is surface retarded then washed so the stones show. It resists slip well and hides small blemishes, but the open surface needs regular sealing to fight de-icing salt intrusion. I ask clients if they are willing to reseal every couple of years. If not, go with a broom finish and add design interest through borders or sawcut patterns.



Stamped concrete can mimic slate or pavers when done by an experienced crew. The main risks are over-texturing, which makes snow shoveling a chore, and colour release that stains if curing and sealing go wrong. I prefer stamps in border bands and at aprons, not across the whole drive, or a two-tone broom slab with a smooth edged band. That gives custom concrete work appeal and keeps maintenance reasonable.

For a premium look without future headaches, consider a monochrome plain or lightly tinted slab with crisp sawcut squares, a 12 inch smooth border, and a textured apron at the sidewalk. Clean, timeless, and it plows easily.

## **The pour day, and why timing is everything**

A textbook day starts the afternoon before, with a final base check, form alignment, and reinforcement tied in. On pour day, the crew confirms the mix ticket, slump, and air content at arrival, then places from the low point upward, working the concrete with a screed and bull float. Finishing is a sequence, not a race. Bull float once to close the surface, wait for bleed water to leave, then edge, joint, and broom. If you work bleed water back into the surface, you seal in excess water that later evaporates and leaves a weak, flaky skin.

Wind, temperature, and sun drive evaporation. In hot, dry weather, an evaporation retarder spray and fogging can prevent plastic shrinkage cracking. In a cool fall pour, blankets go on as soon as the brooming finishes. I like to cure with a membrane forming compound on most drives, then keep foot traffic off for 24 hours and vehicles off for 7 days. The concrete reaches most of its design strength by day 7, but it continues to gain for weeks.

## **Cost ranges and what drives them**

Homeowners often ask for a price per square foot. It is a useful shorthand, but it hides variables that matter. In London, a straightforward plain broom driveway with proper base prep typically falls in the range of 12 to 18 CAD per square foot. Tight access, poor soils that need excavation and more granular base, extra thickness, and complex layouts push toward the top end.

Add decorative touches and the number shifts. Exposed aggregate often runs 16 to 24 CAD per square foot depending on stone and complexity. Stamped, with colour and release, tends to land 18 to 30 CAD per square foot, assuming a reputable finisher. Borders and sawcut patterns add a smaller premium and deliver a lot of visual value per dollar.

If someone offers 8 to 10 CAD per square foot for a full replacement, ask what they are skipping. Usually it is base depth, compaction, mix specs, or curing, and you will pay later.

## Maintenance that actually matters

Concrete is low maintenance, not no maintenance. A few small habits protect the surface and the base for years.

- Skip de-icing salts the first winter, and keep it light thereafter. Use sand or grit for traction. If calcium or sodium chloride from the street gets tracked onto your drive, rinse it off when weather allows.
- Seal exposed aggregate every 2 years and plain broom every 3 to 5 years if you want easier cleaning and a touch of stain resistance. Choose a breathable, penetrating sealer for broom. Avoid thick, glossy film formers that can peel.
- Keep joints and cracks clean. If a hairline opens, leave it. If it widens beyond a few millimetres or admits water that washes fines from the base, fill it with a flexible polyurethane joint sealant during warm weather.
- Redirect downspouts and keep the driveway shoulders supported. Erosion at the edges undermines support and invites breaks along the border.
- Treat oil and rust stains early. A poultice with oil stain remover or a mild acid wash for rust, followed by thorough rinsing, keeps the surface uniform.

A driveway that gets this level of care stays solid and attractive far beyond a decade.

## Common mistakes I see, and how to avoid them

Over the years, patterns repeat. The most common early failure is scaling, a flaking of the surface paste. It usually traces back to one of three culprits. The mix lacked proper air entrainment for freeze-thaw, the finisher worked bleed water into the surface, or de-icing chemicals hit the slab in the first winter while it was still green. Specify the mix, watch the finishing, and baby it the first winter and you sidestep that outcome.

Another preventable issue is settlement along trenches where utilities were run. If a gas or electrical line crosses the drive, that trench must be compacted in lifts and sometimes re-excavated wider so the compactor can actually work. Filling a narrow cut with loose gravel and hoping the slab bridges it is not a plan. Six months later, a depression shows right along the line.

Thin edges crack. If a drive tapers to match a sidewalk or flare near the curb, keep the slab at design thickness and ramp the grade in the base, not in the concrete. Feathering concrete to an inch at a transition invites a break.

Finally, poor drainage ruins good concrete. A dip that holds water becomes a freeze lens in January. It looks harmless until a wheel hits it on a frigid morning. Good layout and that 2 percent slope beat any patch fix later.

## Choosing the right partner for the work

Plenty of companies offer concrete installation services, and picking the right fit makes the difference between a routine project and a mess. Price matters, but process and clarity matter more. Ask to see recent work in neighbourhoods like Byron or Masonville. A contractor who is proud of results will happily point you to driveways that have gone through a few winters.

When you interview, focus on how they handle the boring parts. How deep is the base, and how will they verify compaction. What is the mix design in MPa, and what air content do they request for exterior flatwork. Where will joints go, and how deep will they be cut. What is the slope plan and how will they manage downspouts. If your home needs custom concrete work, like a curved border or integrated steps, ask how they will form and reinforce those transitions.

- Request a written scope that includes base depth, slab thickness, reinforcement type and placement, joint layout, curing method, and cleanup.
- Confirm who manages permits or curb cuts if you are widening or altering the approach, and get timelines in writing.
- Ask for proof of liability insurance and WSIB coverage. It protects you if something goes wrong.
- Clarify the warranty. One year on workmanship is common. Good contractors stand behind scaling or abnormal cracking within reason.
- Discuss scheduling windows, weather contingencies, and how they communicate if a pour must be delayed.

If the answers are vague or rushed, keep looking. The best crews are methodical and do not mind explaining why they do what they do.

## A few London stories that shaped my approach

A family in Lambeth hired us after their five-year-old stamped driveway started popping at the surface. The mix ticket from the original job, which they kept, showed 3 percent air on a January pour. That number might slide in a mild climate. Here it was a ticking clock. We replaced the worst panels, specified 6 percent air, and shifted the decorative stamp to two border bands instead of the whole field. Five winters later, it still looks new and shovels cleanly.

On a ranch in Oakridge, clay subsoil near the street stayed saturated each spring. The homeowner wanted to add parking space. Instead of [driveway contractors for homes](#) pouring edge to edge, we installed 12 inches of base over a geotextile, kept the slab at 5.5 inches, and left a 3 foot planting strip with river rock to absorb runoff. The driveway drains, the edges stay supported, and the plant bed softens the look. Sometimes the best concrete is where you do not pour.

A bungalow in Huron Heights needed a new apron and a way to stop water from curling back toward the garage. We cut in a shallow trench drain at the door, routed the downspout under the drive to a pop-up emitter by the lawn, and increased the pitch to 2.2 percent. It was a small scope change that spared their foundation and saved them the cost of an interior drain later.

## Sustainability and smarter material choices

Concrete has a carbon footprint, but you can make better choices without sacrificing performance. Supplementary cementitious materials like fly ash or slag can replace a portion of the portland cement in the mix, often 15 to 30 percent. In our climate, I keep the percentage modest for driveways so early strength and cold weather performance stay predictable. Ask your supplier about a blended mix that meets 32 MPa and proper air content.

Permeable pavers are another path, but if you are set on concrete, consider pairing the slab with permeable zones, such as gravel shoulders or planting strips, to reduce runoff and let water soak into the ground. Good drainage planning is as green as it is practical.

## How a typical project unfolds

From first call to final seal, a driveway replacement tends to follow a steady cadence. An initial site visit covers measurements, soil checks, and drainage discussion. Within a week you should see a written proposal with specs. After locates and any permits, demolition and base prep take a day or two for an average 600 to 800 square foot drive. The pour is one day if the weather lines up. Curing blankets or a compound go on, and the slab rests. By day three, foot traffic is fine. By day seven, park on it. If you are adding sealer, many contractors wait 28 days so the concrete has time to shed moisture and hydrate fully before sealing.

Seasonality plays a role. In May and June, schedules book quickly. Late September and October can be great for concrete, with cooler temps that favour finishing, but watch the forecast and allow for a rain day buffer.

## Where concrete shines compared to other options

Asphalt has a lower upfront cost and heats quickly in the sun, which helps ice melt. It also softens in summer heat and shows tire depressions in turning areas. Pavers deliver a high end look and easy spot repairs, but they demand a thicker, extremely well compacted base and periodic joint sand maintenance. In the long run, a properly built concrete driveway in London finds a middle ground: manageable cost, daily durability, and strong resale appeal. Homebuyers clock the condition of the drive as soon as they pull up. A crisp concrete apron sets a tone.

## Bringing it all together

A driveway is part structure, part landscape feature, and part daily tool. If you align layout with how your household moves, respect London's climate with the right mix and detailing, and hire a crew that obsesses over base and joints, the slab becomes invisible in the best way. It just works. Years later, you may not remember the exact air percentage or the joint spacing, but you will notice how water never pools at the garage edge, the snow shovel glides without catching, and visitors pull up to a home that looks cared for.

For homeowners comparing concrete driveways London Ontario options, treat the planning steps as the real work. A contractor who explains their process, provides clear specs, and offers custom concrete work where it adds value is worth their bid. If you want a second set of eyes on a proposed scope, ask for it. A few careful decisions before the ready-mix truck turns the corner on your street are what deliver durable curb appeal for the next twenty winters.

## NAP

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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.

## **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:519652-0483) 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](#).

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