



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Summerhill Heritage Conservation District Study Area

Date:	February 7, 2007
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto East York Community Council
From:	Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
Wards:	Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Ward 27
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Council identify the Summerhill neighbourhood as a Heritage Conservation District Study Area for potential designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

To qualify for designation as a Heritage Conservation District an area must display, among other things, a significant concentration of heritage resources. Summerhill is an area with a heritage character that includes both architectural and historical resources. Staff have reviewed the proposed area on a preliminary basis and have determined that it would qualify for study as a heritage conservation district. Staff support the local initiative to undertake a Heritage Conservation District study of Summerhill.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. City Council identify the area shown in Attachment No. 1 of this report as the Summerhill Heritage Conservation District Study Area; and
2. the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

There is no immediate financial impact arising from this report. It must be noted that when the study is completed approximately 260 properties will be added to the Inventory. It is also noted that adding properties to the Inventory by means of Heritage Conservation District designations dramatically increases the workload of Heritage Preservation Services, requiring staff to review all building permits, Committee of Adjustment, rezoning and Official Plan amendment applications within legislated timeframes. The continued increase in Heritage Conservation Districts will not be sustainable without additional staff resources.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Summerhill area lies directly north of North and South Rosedale, two of the largest Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto, both of which were initiatives of the local residents association. The Summerhill Residents Association (SRA) became interested in how a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) designation could help to maintain and enhance the heritage character of their neighbourhood, as it has done in Rosedale.

Staff from Heritage Preservation Services made presentations regarding HCDs to the SRA Board of Directors, to the Annual General Meeting and to a meeting called specifically for all residents in the proposed study area. At each of these meetings, the concept was received positively and the groups indicated their desire to investigate the concept further.

COMMENTS

The Summerhill neighbourhood is part of the lower portion of the Deer Park neighbourhood. Deer Park's eastern and western boundaries are marked by the ravines that intersect St. Clair Avenue near Yonge Street and Spadina Avenue. The southern boundary consists of the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks; while the northern boundary is the old Belt Line Railway Bridge.

The history of Summerhill begins with the opening of Yonge Street. John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, determined the need for a military and colonization route that would begin at Lake Ontario and continue past Lake Simcoe. This direct north-south road was opened to Holland Landing in 1796. Shortly after, plots of land were parceled out on either side of Yonge Street. By the 1850s, the Deer Park estate, belonging to the Heath family, was located at Yonge Street and the Third Concession Road (St. Clair Avenue).

The area that lies adjacent to Yonge Street on the ridge of the escarpment south of St. Clair Avenue became known as Summerhill. By the mid 1800s, Toronto's wealthiest and most prominent families established country estates on the Hill; this elevated enclave was prized for both its views of the city and its healthier atmosphere. Further to the south, on

Yonge Street, was the Canadian Pacific Railway's North Toronto Station (now restored and adaptively reused as a LCBO store), which opened in 1916.

Prominent heritage buildings just outside the area includes the Canadian Pacific Railway Station, mentioned above. Three other properties in the study area are listed on the Inventory of Heritage Properties (Attachment 2).

The Study will be conducted by a group of neighbourhood residents with the assistance of a heritage professional. Planning staff will guide the process to ensure proper procedure, an adequate level of research and appropriate content. The resulting District Plan will include guidelines for managing change consistent with good heritage conservation principles, so as to encourage continued maintenance of the Summerhill heritage character.

At least two more public meetings will be held to present and discuss the study's findings as it proceeds. At the conclusion of the study, staff will report to Council and the Toronto Preservation Board on the suitability of the area for designation as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and make recommendations on appropriate guidelines and boundaries.

If City Council ultimately designates the area as a Heritage Conservation District, the study would form the District Plan required by the Act. The District Plan would provide guidance to the public, property owners, staff and City Council when considering alterations, demolitions and new construction in the area.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Map of Proposed Summerhill Heritage Conservation District Study Area

Attachment No. 2 – List of Heritage Properties in the Proposed Summerhill Heritage Conservation District