



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Designation of the Cabbagetown Northwest Area as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act

<b>Date:</b>	October 17, 2007
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 28 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### SUMMARY

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To recommend that City Council designate a part of the Cabbagetown area, generally bounded by Sherbourne Street, Carlton Street, Parliament Street and Wellesley Street East, as the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The City Planning Division recommends that:**

1. In accordance with Section 41 of the Ontario Heritage Act, Council designate by By-law the area shown on Attachment No. 1 as the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District;
2. Council adopt by By-law the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan, dated August, 2007, as the District Plan for the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District, to act as a guide for property owners, City staff, advisory committees and Council when making decisions regarding matters set out under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act;

3. If there are any objections to the By-law under Section 41 of the Ontario Heritage Act, the City Solicitor be directed to appear before the Ontario Municipal Board to defend the By-law; and
4. Until such time as the By-law designating the area as the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District comes into force or is repealed, all properties within the area, unless designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, be listed in the City's Inventory of Heritage Properties.

### **Implementation Points**

In accordance with Section 41 of the Ontario Heritage Act, an HCD designation comes into force at the end of the 30 day appeal period following Council's passage of the By-law, if there are no objections. Should there be an appeal the matter is referred to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) for a hearing. Should the OMB approve all or part of the by-law the by-law comes into force when the OMB issues its decision, provided the OMB approves the by-law.

### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report. The public Notices of Intention to Designate will be advertised on the City's web site in accordance with the City of Toronto Act provisions. This proposed Heritage Conservation District will add almost 200 properties 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.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

The Cabbagetown Preservation Association (CPA) - with local support and encouragement - initiated discussions with the City of Toronto to propose the establishment of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District to promote the preservation and enhancement of the special character of this area. On April 19, 2007, City staff held a community meeting during which the proposed district was discussed. Strong community support was expressed at this meeting.

The process has been supported locally by a group of dedicated volunteers who compiled a comprehensive inventory of properties of the study area to illustrate the significance of this Victorian and 1920s-era development. The Toronto Preservation Board, at its meeting held March 1, 2007 endorsed the study of the area. City Council, at its meeting held on April 23 and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007, approved the study of the area as a heritage conservation district and directed that a study advisory committee, consisting of CPA representatives and property owners, be established.

The previous staff report requesting Council authority to study the area, referenced the Cabbagetown West Heritage Conservation District Study Area (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-2166.pdf>). For clarity, the naming of the area has been revised to the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District. The district boundary has also been slightly revised with the support of the CPA to correctly show the full limits of individual properties and to consolidate the Sherbourne Street properties in this area.

The Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan was then compiled by Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) staff with the assistance of the CPA and is closely modeled after the other HCD district plans for Cabbagetown. The plan has been reviewed and is completely supported by CPA members.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

A heritage conservation district is comprised of a collection of buildings, streets and landscapes that together give an area a special character that distinguishes it from other areas in a municipality. Cabbagetown Northwest's character is derived from the overall quality of the architecture, the integrity of form, the history of development, its residents, the aesthetic value of the public streetscape and the private landscapes.

Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, RSO 1980, C.337 provides the mechanism for the designation of heritage conservation districts in the Province of Ontario. The legislation provides municipalities with the ability to define areas comprising heritage resources through study to be considered for designation. It also enables municipalities to develop guidelines to encourage the care and conservation of the heritage resources within the district and the maintenance of the district's character.

The Cabbagetown area, including the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD), has been under consideration by the area residents for many years. In 2002, City Council designated the Cabbagetown-Metcalf Area Heritage Conservation District by By-law No. 110-2002 following a study of the District. The designation of the District was subsequently confirmed by the Ontario Municipal Board. In 2004, City Council designated the Cabbagetown North Heritage Conservation District by By-law No. 259-2004, also following a study of the District. No appeals were filed. In 2005, City Council designated the Cabbagetown South Heritage Conservation District by By-law 887-2005, again following a study of the District. No appeals were filed. There was considerable community support for the three HCDs, with a team of residents undertaking the necessary research for the more than 1,000 properties in the Districts. The Cabbagetown-Metcalf, Cabbagetown North and Cabbagetown South HCDs are now up and running with assistance from a local advisory committee of residents.

All of the Districts share, among other things: (i) a time period and general nature of developmental evolution; (ii) a common and connecting grid system of streets; (iii) the coherence and integrity of unbroken streetscapes of narrow houses of similar size and scale, based on pattern-book designs rather than architectural drawings, built very close together, usually in pairs or rows of attached identical buildings erected in the 1870's and 1880's; and (iv) a shared relationship and history with other parts of the City built up during the period of rapid expansion of its areas of occupation during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Study Overview**

The Cabbagetown Northwest HCD study included a process of public consultation, historical research and analysis. Neighbourhood volunteers researched historical data for each property within the study boundary. Estimated or established dates of construction, builders, ownership since construction and other information, when available, were determined. An Inventory with photographs of each property was compiled.

Using this material and further research and analysis conducted by HPS, a District Plan (Attachment No. 2) was developed which fulfills all the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act including Guidelines for demolitions, alterations to existing buildings and for new construction. An implementation strategy, based on a consistent Toronto model for HCDs, is also recommended. The District Plan is available on the City's web site at: [www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage\\_districts.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage_districts.htm)

### Proposed Boundaries

The Cabbagetown North-West Heritage Conservation District is comprised of that part of Toronto shown in Attachment No. 1, which extends from the rear of the properties on the west side of Parliament Street, on the east; to properties on the east side of Sherbourne Street, on the west; and from the rear of the properties on the south side of Carlton Street, on the south, to the properties fronting on the south side of Wellesley Street East from Parliament Street, on the north; except for the area between Bleecker Street and Ontario Street shown in Attachment No. 1 as excluded from that area.

The omission of the area north of Wellesley Street East results from the demolition of virtually all of the previous Victorian homes in that area for the construction of St. James Town, and in the case of the area south of Wellesley Street East between Ontario Street and Bleecker Street, the demolition of most of the houses, in the 1960's and early 1970's, for South St. James Town.

Within the District, three (3) properties are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and fifty-three (53) properties are listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties.

#### Cultural Heritage Value and Heritage Attributes

The most visible and important characteristic of the District today consists of the virtually unbroken streetscapes of 2½ to 3-storey Victorian houses and other buildings existing on both sides of Carlton Street, Winchester Street, Prospect Street, Ontario Street south of the projection of Winchester, and Aberdeen Avenue, and on one side of each of Wellesley Street East, Bleecker Street and Ontario Street north of Winchester.

There have been some changes. Alterations have been made to a number of the Victorian structures, particularly the addition of projecting store-fronts on a number of buildings on the south side of Carlton. However, the overall character of the original Victorian neighbourhood, and the general combination of pleasing forms of Second Empire, Victorian Gothic, Romanesque and Georgian forms, together with representation from later architectural styles, as well as the massing, scale and relationship of buildings to each other and to the street, has maintained an integrity which renders the District worthy of designation, as making a significant contribution to the cultural heritage of the City of Toronto.

#### Objectives and Implementation

The Guidelines that form part of the study are intended to provide guidance and assistance to all those proposing and reviewing alterations, new construction and demolition in the Cabbagetown Northwest HCD. The Guidelines aim to ensure that development in the district maintains or enhances the unique character of this portion of Cabbagetown, as defined in the Heritage Character Statement.

The Guidelines state that buildings that contribute to the unique heritage character of the district should not be demolished. In accordance with Article IV of Chapter 103, Heritage, of the Municipal Code, proposals that comply with the Guidelines set out in the District Plan may be approved by staff, while proposals that do not comply or that involve demolition, will require City Council approval. Applicants are encouraged to consult with staff prior to making an application.

## Conclusions

Cabbagetown is a community with a significant heritage character. In accordance with the Official Plan, at the request of the local community and with the support of the Ward Councillor, City Council passed a by-law authorizing a study of parts of the Cabbagetown district to determine whether or not the neighbourhood could be designated as a Heritage Conservation District. The community conducted a study, and public meetings were held before and during the study period where residents indicated their support for the process. The study supports the designation of the area as a Heritage Conservation District. The District Plan resulting from the study defines the boundaries and heritage character of the area and provides Guidelines for demolitions, alterations and new development designed to reinforce and enhance the heritage nature of the District. Staff recommends designation of the District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, including enactment by By-law of the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan.

## CONTACT

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## SIGNATURE

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## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 - Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Boundary  
Attachment No. 2 – Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District Plan