



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Designation of the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage
Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario
Heritage Act**

Date:	May 30, 2008
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
Wards:	Ward 30 – Toronto Danforth
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

To recommend that City Council designate part of the Riverdale area, generally bounded by First Avenue, the Canadian National Railway Line, Dundas Street East, and Degrossi Street as the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. In accordance with Section 41 of the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council designate by By-law the area shown on Attachment No. 1 as the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District;
2. City Council adopt by By-law the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District Plan, dated May 2008, as the District Plan for the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District, to act as a guide for property owners, City staff, advisory committees and City 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;

4. Until such time as the By-law designating the area as the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District comes into force or is repealed, all properties within the area, unless designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, be listed in the City's Inventory of Heritage Properties.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, a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) designation comes into force at the end of the 30 day appeal period following City 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. Overtime, this will create pressure to increase staff resources.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of September 1, 2005 the Toronto Preservation Board endorsed the study of part of the Riverdale Area as a heritage conservation district. City Council subsequently authorized the study area at its meeting of September 28, 29, and 30, 2005. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc050928/te7rpt/cl015.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In November 2004, the Riverdale Historical Society contacted City staff to learn more about Heritage Conservation Districts and how they can assist in the preservation and enhancement of heritage streetscapes. After an initial briefing, the Historical Society and interested residents organized a neighbourhood meeting (December 8, 2004) at which staff made a presentation about the benefits and implications a Heritage Conservation District would have for Riverdale. The Ward Councillor was present at this meeting.

The unanimous feeling at this meeting was that this section of Riverdale should be studied to determine its potential for Heritage Conservation District designation and that City Council's approval should be sought to allow the residents to initiate the study process under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Following Council's adoption of the study by-law for the area, neighbourhood volunteers through the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District Committee engaged the services of heritage architect Catherine Nasmith. The background research for the study was conducted by the committee in consultation with the heritage architect with advice from City staff. At the conclusion of the study City staff held a public meeting with area residents to discuss the results (December 6, 2007). The residents that attended the meeting were supportive of the District. The study is attached to this report as the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District Plan (Attachment No. 2).

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. The Character of the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District 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 to be considered through study 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.

COMMENTS

Study Overview

The Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District study included a process of public consultation, historical research, and analysis. Neighbourhood volunteers through the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District Committee researched historical data and compiled property datasheets for each property within the study boundary. The volunteers established dates of construction, builders, ownership since construction and other information, when available.

Using this material and further research and analysis conducted by the heritage architect, a District Plan 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

Proposed Boundaries

The Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District is bounded by First Avenue to the north, the Canadian National Railway line and Tiverton Avenue to the east, Dundas Street East to the south and West Avenue and portions of De Grassi Street to the west. (see Attachment No. 1).

The western section of First Avenue from Broadview Avenue to De Grassi Street was developed as part of a separate plan of subdivision, but as it shares the same heritage character it could be included in a future expansion of this District.

Cultural Heritage Value and Heritage Attributes

The significance of the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District lies in the large number of original buildings, with the majority of their heritage attributes present or capable of being restored. The streets were some of the earliest developed on the east side of the Don River, and reflect the period of development which stretched from the mid 1880s to the First World War. The houses are a mixture of the “Bay-n-Gable” style, Second Empire Row houses, and examples of Edwardian Four Square. The houses were built for working class residents and are generally modest in scale and detail. It is the relative completeness of the “sets,” and the relatively early period of development in a generally later community, that justifies the protection of this district under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. It is the continuity of heritage fabric that is most important to protect, preserve and restore.

The stability of a Heritage Conservation District will allow for the gradual reversal of surface alterations and restoration of missing heritage features.

Built Form and Current Conditions

The development of these three streets repeats a common pattern seen across Toronto in Victorian and Edwardian times: small-scale development, often by local builders or contractors, using similar materials, similar forms, and similar details, but offering slight variations on a theme. This pattern created the architectural diversity-within-harmony so characteristic of authentic Victorian and Edwardian neighbourhoods. It is a pattern found in other Toronto Heritage Conservation Districts, such as Cabbagetown and Harbord Village.

Remarkably, few houses on these three streets have been demolished or renovated beyond the possibility of restoration. Some of the houses are fine examples of their genre – such as the group of eight Second Empire row-houses along the north side of First Avenue (nos. 174-188), a number of classic Toronto “Bay-n-Gable” houses in various

locations, and E.J. Lennox's Edwardian workers' cottages on Tiverton (nos. 15-17, 19-21). The row of simple Edwardian workers' houses east of Logan built by Walter Nash sport little ornament, but with their projecting cedar shingle decorated bays create a nice rhythm worthy of restoration.

Objectives and Implementation

The Guidelines that form part of the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District study are intended to provide guidance and assistance to all those proposing and reviewing alterations, new construction and demolition in the district. The Guidelines aim to ensure that development in the district maintains or enhances the unique character of the district 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

Riverdale is a community with 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 part of the Riverdale district to determine whether or not the neighbourhood could be designated as a Heritage Conservation District. The community conducted a study with the assistance of a heritage professional and advice from City staff. Public meetings were held before and during the study period where residents indicated their support for the process.

The study of the Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District concludes that the district warrants designation as a Heritage Conservation District. The District Plan 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 Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District Plan.

CONTACT

Mary L. MacDonald
Acting Manager, Heritage Preservation Services
Tel: 416-338-1079
Fax: 416-392-1973
E-mail: mmacdon7@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Barbara Leonhardt
Director, Policy and Research
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District - Boundary
Attachment No. 2 – Riverdale Phase 1 Heritage Conservation District Plan