

Amendment to Previously Adopted St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District Study Area

Date:	September 11, 2009
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director of Policy and Research, City Planning Division
Wards:	Ward 28 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report examines the adopted St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study Area and provides recommendations regarding its amendment. The existing study area boundary is being re-evaluated as it does not capture enough of the “Old Town” area to properly convey the extent of its significance to the City of Toronto. The revised boundary is generally representative of the historic St. Lawrence Ward boundaries at the time of incorporation in 1834, plus the original ten blocks of the Town of York and the area leading south to the railway corridor. An amendment to the boundary would allow for a more informed, representative heritage conservation district study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division Recommends:

1. The amended study area (see attachment 3) is inclusive of the area located east of Yonge Street (including the buildings on the west side of the street), south of Adelaide Street (including buildings on the north side of the street), west of Parliament Street (including all buildings on the east side of the street) and north of the railway corridor;
2. City Council authorize the acceptance of donations to be used to conduct the Study. All donations received should be held in a separate account designated for that purpose;

3. City Council authorize the reimbursement of the Consultant, if any, selected to conduct the Study from donations received for that purpose, upon completion of the professional work to the satisfaction of the Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning;
4. The Treasurer be authorized to issue an Income Tax receipt to the donor for funds donated in the amount of \$10 or more.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of September 22, 1997, City Council approved the King Parliament Improvement Plan. The purpose of the Plan was to enhance the social and economic well-being of residents, improve the public realm, promote and stimulate private sector initiatives, maintain and upgrade infrastructure, and to encourage the conservation and appropriate reuse of historic properties.

At its meeting of July 19-21, 2005, City Council adopted Urban Design Guidelines for the 'St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Focused Area'.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc050719/te6rpt/cl009.pdf>.

The main aim of the Guidelines is "to improve the quality of the environment in the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Focused Area, and ensure that elements which contribute to the special character of the diverse parts of the district, are retained and enhanced". The Guidelines govern the section of the St. Lawrence/ Old Town area generally located south of King Street and west of Jarvis Street.

http://www.toronto.ca/planning/urbdesign/pdf/st_lawr_udg_full.pdf

Following the adoption of the Urban Design Guidelines for the 'St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Focused Area', City Council, at its meeting of September 28-30, 2005, adopted a heritage conservation district study area for part of the St. Lawrence area, under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The boundary of the adopted Area was referred to as 'Phase 1' to allow for the fact that other parts of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood may be studied at a later date (see attachment No. 2 for boundary of adopted Study Area).

http://www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/pdf/hcd_stlawrence_study_bylaw.pdf

In November 2008, City Council enacted by-law 1118-2008, to give effect to Official Plan Amendment (OPA) No. 38. This OPA authorised funding of heritage conservation district studies as an eligible benefit under Section 37 of the Planning Act. St. Lawrence East was identified, among ninety-six other areas, as having potential as a Heritage Conservation District.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-15304.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Much of the area east of the currently adopted Study Area also has potential for heritage conservation district designation. The St. Lawrence District East Neighbourhood, located immediately east of the existing Study Area, was one of 96 neighbourhoods recommended in an Official Plan Amendment authorising the use of Section 37 monies for the funding of heritage conservation district studies (August 2008). St. Lawrence District East is generally identified as the area located east of George Street, west of Parliament Street and north of the Gardiner Expressway with the original ten blocks to the Town of York forming the northern boundary.

The proposed amended study area has come under intense development pressure with a significant number of development projects progressing through the planning process. As the area is currently afforded no heritage status, under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, the intense redevelopment of this area threatens to erase much of its heritage character.

COMMENTS

The historic development of the St. Lawrence District has been intertwined with the historic development of the Town of York. So much so that the St. Lawrence neighbourhood and the area known as Old Town can largely be described as one in the same neighbourhood.

The amended study area (see attachment 3) is inclusive of the area located east of Yonge Street (including the buildings on the west side of the street), south of Adelaide Street (including all buildings on the north side of the street), west of Parliament Street (including all of the buildings on the east side of the street) and north of the railway corridor.

This area includes the original ten blocks of the Town of York and much of the lands upon which the Town further developed until the time of its incorporation as a city in 1834.

It is timely that a study area should be created for the Old Town/ St. Lawrence District on the 175th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Toronto. The boundary for the amended study area is largely reflective of the ‘downtown’ as it existed in the City’s birth year (1834). The amendment of the adopted Study Area also coincides with a Heritage Lighting and Heritage Interpretation Master Plan initiated as part of the King Parliament Community Improvement Plan. Staff have reviewed this amended area and are satisfied that it merits study as a heritage conservation district.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Analysis of historic development of the St. Lawrence/Old Town Area
Attachment 2 – St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District Study Area (2005)
Attachment 3 – Amended St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District Study Area

Analysis of historic development of the St. Lawrence/ Old Town area

The following analysis of the historic development of the St. Lawrence/ Old Town area has been provided so that a general understanding of the analysis behind the review and amendment of the original Study Area may be established:

Overview

The St. Lawrence/ Old Town area is representative of a much greater geographic area than exists in the original ten blocks associated with the founding of York in 1793. The amended study area is reflective of the growth of York from its founding in 1793, to incorporation as the City of Toronto in 1834. The original ten blocks represent the birthplace of the Town and are extremely important in the context of the settlement's early development. The birthplace of the City is an obvious choice for inclusion in a heritage conservation district study area. However, while the original ten blocks merit inclusion in such a study area, their close association with the neighbouring area to the west ensures that any study area be inclusive of a larger St. Lawrence/ Old Town area.

The rationale behind this assertion centres on the fact that the York settlement grew very quickly out of its early boundary and soon occupied much of the area now known as the St. Lawrence District. Hence, York's march westward began prior to the ten blocks developing any significant permanent built fabric (the early settlement of York was made up almost entirely of timber houses prior to 1800). It was only in the early decades of the 19th century that this remote British outpost began its transformation into a successful town complete with market, municipal, judicial, banking, religious and even parliament buildings.

The Original Ten Blocks

The Town of York was laid out after the Lieutenant Governor for British Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, arrived in 1793. The original layout consisted of ten rectangular blocks located east of George Street, west of Berkeley Street, south of Adelaide Street and north of Front Street. A military garrison was constructed a mile west of the Village and named Fort York. Construction of the Town was slow due to the scarcity of resources, population and tradesmen. By 1810 the isolated outpost consisted of only 107 timber houses, one brick house and the brick legislature building, located at the foot of Parliament Street.

Historic development of the St. Lawrence/ Old Town area

It was only when the settlement began to spread westwards to envelop much of the area now known as the St. Lawrence District that a fully functioning town began to emerge. The establishment of a farmers' market on New Street (Jarvis Street) instigated the development of the Town westwards over the swampy land towards Yonge Street. The completion of the first church in the Town in 1807 (the first St James Church) and the

construction of the first courthouse and civic square in 1824 also encouraged the expansion of the Town beyond the original ten block layout. The Town did not develop to the east of the ten blocks until after its incorporation as a City in 1834. This was due to the marshy landscape which existed east of Parliament Street and the fact that the first Parliament buildings for the Town were constructed at the eastern most point of the ten blocks, at the foot of Berkeley Street, thus restricting progress in this direction.

The most significant development in the early expansion of the Town came about due to the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1815) when Britain entered into a period of great economic depression. This depression led to a huge increase in immigration to British Upper Canada and saw a significant growth in the population of York. This large influx of poor immigrants into the Town resulted in the population exploding by 70% from 1816 (720 persons) to 1820 (1240 persons). By 1823 the Town had grown to 209 houses, 27 shops and 5 storehouses. It was not until 1828 that the population surpassed the two thousand figure. By the time of its incorporation as a City in 1834, the Town's population had risen to 9,254 and the town's built environment had significantly changed. The incorporated Town had become a small bustling 19th century city of fine Georgian brick homes (such as the Campbell House c.1822 originally located on the corner of Adelaide and Frederick Street, it contained a thriving commercial district on King Street, a prosperous market (St. Lawrence), its own municipal government (Second City Hall - located in the market building), an established banking system (Bank of Upper Canada – 252 Adelaide Street East) and judicial system (with court house and jail).

St. Lawrence Ward and Beyond

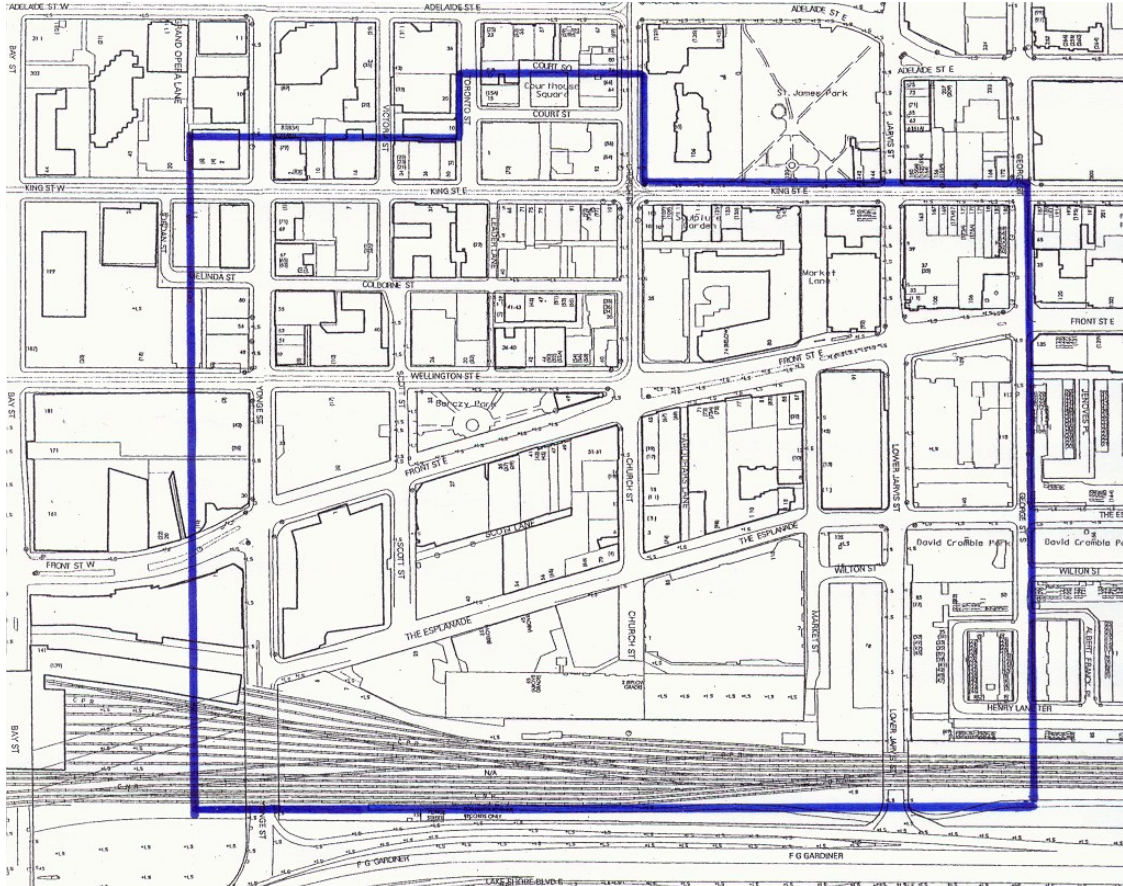
With incorporation in 1834, the City of Toronto established a ward system. Much of the area now known as the St Lawrence/ Old Town was included in the St Lawrence Ward. For the purposes of the study, the north boundary has been extended to Adelaide Street East, where the north and south side of the street include historic landmarks such as the Bank of Upper Canada and the grounds of the St. James Church and the south boundary has been extended to the north of the railway corridor.

References

- Arthur, Eric, *Toronto, No Mean City*, Third Edition, revised by Stephen Otto (1986)
- Careless, J.M.S., *Toronto to 1918, An Illustrated History* (1984)
- McHugh, Patricia, *Toronto Architecture – A City Guide* (1989)

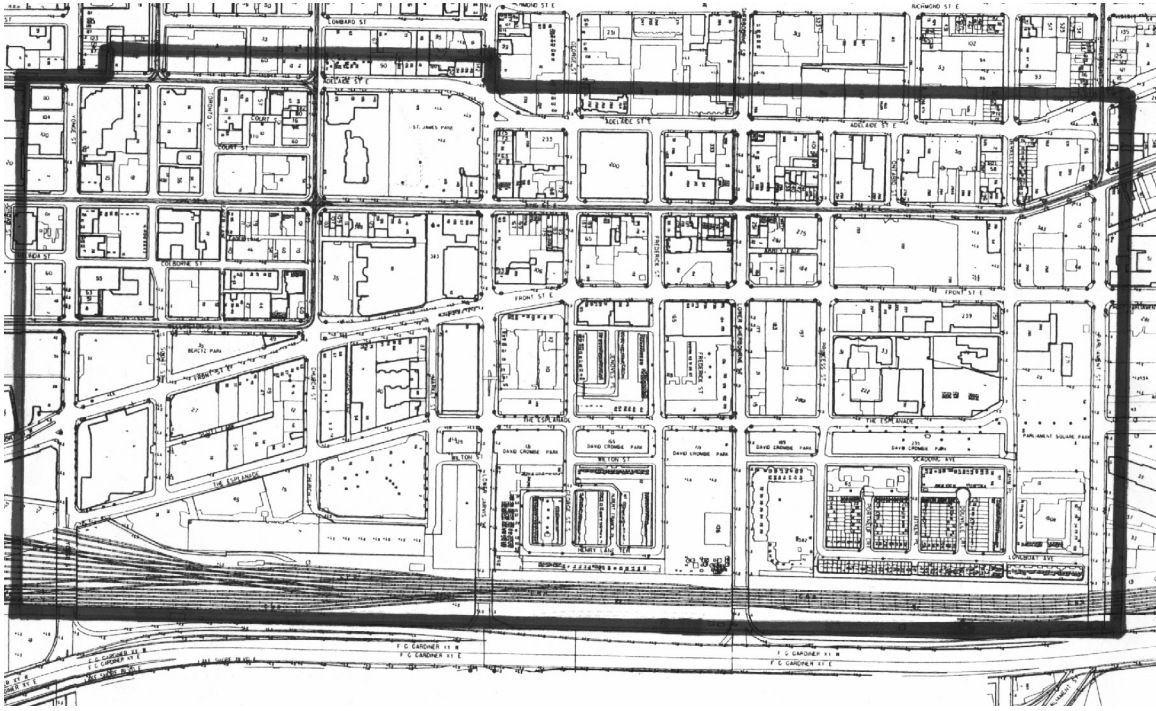
ATTACHMENT NO. 2

St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District Study Area (2005)



ATTACHMENT NO. 3

Amended St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District Study Area



Written Description - The amended study area is inclusive of the area located east of Yonge Street (including the buildings on the west side of the street), south of Adelaide Street (including all buildings on the north side of the street), west of Parliament Street (including all buildings on the east side of the street) and north of the railway corridor.