1100 Briar Hill Avenue – Stage 1 – 4 Archaeological Assessment and Final Recommendations

Date: January 28, 2015
To: North York Community Council
From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards: Ward 15 Eglinton-Lawrence
Reference Number: P:\2015\Cluster B\PLN\NYCC\NY15024

SUMMARY

This information report provides details regarding the final recommendations and outcomes of the Stage 1-4 archaeological assessment work completed at 1100 Briar Hill Avenue. All archaeological assessment work was completed in support of a development application which proposes to amend both the former City of North York Zoning By-law No. 7625 and the former City of York Zoning By-law 1-83 to permit the development of 136 stacked back-to-back townhouse units and 4 commercial units with underground parking.

As a result of the completion of Stage 1-4 archaeological resource assessment, the Fairbanks School archaeological site (AkGu-89) was identified and registered with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS). The Stage 4 archaeological assessment fully documented the archaeological site and there are subsequently no outstanding archaeological concerns remaining for the property.

Financial Impact
There are no financial implications resulting from the receipt of this report.

DECISION HISTORY
At its meeting held October 17, 2013, North York Community Council considered the Preliminary Report - 1100 Briar Hill Avenue - Zoning By-law Amendment Application. The application proposes to amend both the former City of North York Zoning By-law No. 7625 and the former City of York Zoning By-law 1-83 to permit the development of 136 stacked back-to-back townhouse units and 4 commercial units with underground parking.
A Stage 1-2 archaeological resource assessment was submitted by the proponent in support of the development application. The preliminary planning report is available online at the following website:

http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.NY27.15

At the North York Community Council meeting held February 25, 2014, Councillor Josh Colle moved a motion requesting that a new Stage 2 archaeological assessment be completed at 1100 Briar Hill Avenue. The correspondence is available at the following link:


As additional archaeological assessment work was currently being undertaken by the applicant, at the City Council meeting of March 20, 2014, the motion was amended by Councillor Colle and adopted by City Council. The motion stated that City Council request the Chief Planner, City Planning to report to North York Community Council on the outcomes and final recommendations of the additional archaeological work to be conducted at 1100 Briar Hill Avenue. See the following link:


The applicant appealed the application to the OMB. On August 25, 2014 City Council considered a Request for Direction Report – Zoning By-law Amendment Application 1100 Briar Hill Avenue. Should the OMB approve the application, the City will request that an interpretation plan be a condition of approval. See the following link:

http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.NY34.95

**ISSUE BACKGROUND**

In support of a request to amend the zoning by-law for 1100 Briar Hill Avenue, the applicant submitted a Stage 1-2 Archaeological Assessment dated August 1, 2013. The report recommended that there were no further archaeological concerns associated with the property. Based upon the information contained in the report, Heritage Preservation Services, as the development approval authority for archaeological considerations under the Planning Act, concurred with the recommendations. However, on the basis of additional historical research provided to the City from the community, together with a further discussion with the consultant archaeologist and MTCS, it was agreed that additional archaeological investigation be completed to ensure that any outstanding archaeological concerns were addressed.

Additional work was undertaken by the proponent in April 2014 and completed under the direction of Rick Sutton of Archaeological Assessments Ltd, in consultation with David Robertson of Archaeological Services Inc. Mr. Robertson was brought into the project as a special advisor to Heritage Preservation Services as he has extensive experience in the excavation and full documentation of complex urban archaeological sites.
RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
As a result of this additional archaeological assessment work, a Stage 1-3 archaeological assessment was generated and submitted to MTCS and Heritage Preservation Services for review and comment. The results of the Stage 1-3 assessment confirmed that deeply buried foundation remain of the former Fairbanks School built in 1863 existed on site, as well as portions of the 1908 addition. The site was then registered with MTCS as the Fairbanks School archaeological site.

Based upon the revised findings, on June 19, 2014 MTCS provided correspondence to the applicant requiring that additional work be conducted on site to completely expose, document and excavate the foundation trench of the 1863-1927 one room schoolhouse component of the site. The proponent engaged the firm of Archaeological Services Inc. to perform the balance of the outstanding assessment work required and to completely excavate the site through a Stage 4 archaeological assessment.

In July 2014, MTCS and Heritage Preservation Services received the Stage 4 archaeological assessment report. The Ministry completed their review of the report for licensing requirements under the Ontario Heritage Act, and issued correspondence dated October 7, 2014 stating that the Fairbanks School archaeological site (AkGu-89) and the 1100 Briar Hill Avenue property is considered to be free of further archaeological concern and no further assessment is required. The Ministry stated that the cultural heritage value of the site had been addressed through Stage 4 archaeological excavation and documentation. Heritage Preservation Services concurs with this recommendation.

COMMENTS
As mitigation through site avoidance was not a viable option for the Fairbanks School archaeological site due to its location within the proposed development, the site was subject to complete archaeological excavation and documentation through Stage 1-4 archaeological assessment. The final Stage 4 archaeological recommendations state that the site has been fully mitigated and there are no further archaeological concerns. Both the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and Heritage Preservation Services agree that all cultural heritage resource concerns have been fully addressed for 1100 Briar Hill Avenue.
Should the development application be approved, the proponent will be required to install an interpretive plaque on the subject property illustrating the history of the Fairbanks community and the Fairbanks School archaeological site as a condition of approval.

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SIGNATURE

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