

Authorization to Study Lawrence Park West as a Potential Heritage Conservation District

Date:	August 19, 2016
To:	Toronto Preservation Board North York Community Council
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	25 – Don Valley West
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster B\PLN\NYCC\NY16104

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council authorize the study of the Lawrence Park West area as a potential Heritage Conservation District (HCD), under Section 40.(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The Lawrence Park West HCD Study Nominated Area, as indicated by the boundary in Attachment 1 of this report, is one of the 97 potential HCD study areas in Official Plan Amendment No. 38.

Authorization to study Lawrence Park West HCD would allow the area to be included in a staff review and analysis of prioritization for HCD studies in 2017 and 2018.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council authorize that a study be undertaken of the Lawrence Park West Area as a potential Heritage Conservation District under Section 40.(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act, as indicated by the boundary in Attachment 1 of the report (August 19, 2016) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting on March 5, 6 and 7, 2012, adopted the document titled, "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference" (January 2012), and directed staff to develop a prioritization system to determine which potential heritage conservation district studies should be undertaken first. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG11.5>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Lawrence Park West was nominated for study as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) by the Lawrence Park Heritage Committee in a submission to the City's Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) on February 16, 2015.

A HCD, as described in "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference" requires that an area is likely to display at least one of the following: design value or physical value, historical value or associative value, contextual value, social value or community value and/or natural value or scientific value.

Nominated Study Area

The nominated area comprises the western portion of the historic Lawrence Park neighbourhood, one of Toronto's first planned garden suburbs. Lawrence Park was planned in the early part of the 20th century, however, it wasn't fully developed until after World War II. The western portion of Lawrence Park was developed first, comprising some of the oldest homes in the area. The housing stock includes fine examples of English Cottage, Tudor Revival, Georgian, Arts & Crafts and Colonial style designs.

The nominated area is bounded by Yonge Street to the west, Lawrence Avenue East to the north, Mount Pleasant Road to the east and the Lawrence Park & Ravine and Glengowan Road to the south. The nominated area represents the oldest portion of the larger Lawrence Park neighbourhood, which includes the Lawrence Park and Ravine, and the Alexander Muir Memorial Gardens as integral components in the design of Lawrence Park as a garden suburb. The total number of properties in the nominated area is 211.

In reviewing the HCD Nomination from the Lawrence Park Heritage Committee, Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) staff analyzed the submitted documents and conducted a site visit of the neighbourhood in April 2015 to gain a greater understanding of the heritage value and to provide guidance on the nomination process. HPS staff must consider the area appropriate for study as a potential HCD before undertaking a community meeting.

In accordance with the HCD procedures adopted by City Council, HPS staff conducted a community meeting with the Ward Councillor on October 28, 2015 to inform the neighbourhood of the HCD nomination and to explain why Lawrence Park West is a good candidate for study. The purpose of this meeting was to receive feedback from residents and property owners in the area and to answer general questions about HCDs, their implications and benefits.

Lawrence Park West General History and Heritage Character

In the 1790s the nominated area and its surroundings were surveyed and divided into farm lots under the supervision of Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe. The nominated area is located in the western parts of Lot 5 and Lot 4, 1st Concession east of Yonge Street, which spans east from Yonge Street to today's Bayview Avenue and north from today's St. Leonard's Avenue to Lawrence Avenue East. The larger area that would come to be known as Lawrence Park, comprised of Lot 5 and Lot 4, 1st Concession east of Yonge Street, which spans east from Yonge Street to today's Bayview Avenue and south from today's St. Leonard's Avenue to just north of Blythwood Road.

In 1907 Wilfrid Servington Dinnick, president of the loan and mortgage company Standard Loan Co., purchased Lot 5, the Lawrence farm, and the Harris farm, which comprised the northern portion of Lot 4. In 1908, Dinnick hired surveyor and engineer Walter S. Brooke to implement his vision for a "garden suburb", an urban planning concept that came out of the Garden City Movement in England. Garden suburbs were envisioned as residential communities with gardens, open spaces and limited industry.

The Lawrence Park plan reflects garden suburb principles with winding roads that follow the natural contours of the landscape with houses and gardens that fit harmoniously into their surroundings. Dinnick ensured a high architectural standard for the neighbourhood by engaging Chadwick & Beckett to design the first homes and to review submissions for all plans within the neighbourhood. Other prominent Toronto architects that designed homes in Lawrence Park include Eden Smith and Forsey Page. Dinnick also maintained a nursery on the property to provide trees and shrubs to buildings and homeowners.

Dinnick registered the first plan for Lawrence Park in 1910, however, it was not fully developed until after World War II. The nominated area represents the earliest portion of the area that was developed.

The character of the area reflects its design as a garden suburb. Nestled within its landscape and surrounded by park and ravine, the roads meander, following the natural contours of the landscape, diverging from the character of the city's prevailing street grid.

The nominated area includes fine, well-maintained examples of residences in Arts and Crafts, English Cottage, Tudor Revival, Georgian, and Colonial style designs. Lots have generous setbacks with soft-landscaping and well-maintained gardens.

Existing Planning Framework and Heritage Protections

The nominated study area is currently regulated by the City's Official Plan and City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013, and some individual heritage designations.

Most of the nominated study area is designated "Neighbourhoods" in the Official Plan, with the exception of the designated "Parks or Open Space Areas" forming the western edge of the proposed study area boundary.

The residential portion of the nominated area is zoned RD 9f15.0; d0.35) (x1432) with a portion of Lawrence Park Avenue zoned as R (f7.5; d0.6) (x933). The southeast corner of Yonge Street and Lawrence Avenue East is zoned R (f7.5; d0.6) (x934). The remaining park within the nominated area is zoned ON.

Within the nominated area five properties are on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register, including 77 St. Edmund's Drive which is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

COMMENTS

The Lawrence Park West HCD nomination process was conducted in accordance with "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto - Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference."

Lawrence Park is one of Toronto's first garden suburbs and contains a collection of fine examples of residential architecture. HPS staff considers the Lawrence Park West area appropriate for study as it is likely to display one or more of the following: design value or physical value, historical value or associative value, contextual value, social value or community value and/or natural value or scientific value, as required by the "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference."

The character of Lawrence Park is expressed in the original garden suburb design and the relationship of buildings to the landscape, to the street, and to each other. Embedded in the ravine system and oriented on generously sized lots, Lawrence Park West has fine examples of English Cottage, Tudor Revival, Georgian, Arts & Crafts and Colonial residential architecture. There are twenty-nine century-old homes associated with Lawrence Park in the Study Area as illustrated on Attachment 2. The houses are placed within the landscape, surrounded by trees, shrubs and gardens, which creates a cohesive sense of place.

These characteristics, and the physical integrity of the area, make Lawrence Park West an excellent candidate for Part V designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Recent practices of demolition and replacement with new houses that are not in keeping with the design principles of the original design intent of the garden suburb have put the heritage character of the area at risk.

The subject study area is recommended for authorization as per the "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference" policy document. Any future HCD study completed for this area will be required to be in keeping with this document.

HCD Process and Community Consultation

The study of potential HCDs is a city-led process, conducted by HPS staff. Study areas for potential HCDs can be nominated by community groups, elected officials and city staff. No matter how an area comes forward for nomination, community engagement and transparency is a critical part of the HCD study process.

Like all planning studies undertaken by the City, HCD studies are conducted by planning professionals and they involve a combination of research, analysis and community engagement. The City believes that consultation with the community prior to Council considering the designation of an HCD is in the best interest of the City, community, and property owners. The HCD procedures and mechanisms are in place to provide for public input, deputation and decisions as set by the Ontario Heritage Act and City Council.

On October 28, 2015, HPS conducted a community meeting to inform Lawrence Park West owners and residents about the HCD nomination and to explain the reasons why it is an excellent candidate for study as a potential HCD. The purpose of this meeting was also to receive preliminary feedback and to answer general questions about HCDs, their implications and benefits. The Lawrence Park Heritage Committee made a presentation that outlined the contents of their nomination and described the committee's ongoing volunteer efforts to raise awareness about the historic nature of Lawrence Park.

HPS arranged for representatives from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to also participate at the community meeting as it is the authority responsible for assessing and classifying properties in Ontario in compliance with the Assessment Act and regulations set by the Government of Ontario. MPAC provided an overview of property assessment and explained that municipal heritage designation is not a factor in assessing property.

HPS posted the community meeting presentation material online on the City's HCD Blog. The Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association (LPRA) distributed a *Frequently Asked Questions* on heritage designation via e-mail to LPRA members in the Lawrence Park West study area and is available online.

Subsequent to the community meeting, City staff and the Ward Councillor answered questions from property owners on how a HCD works. The City received both positive and negative feedback on the proposed HCD Study.

HPS staff have conducted a review of the nomination against adopted criteria. The recommendation to authorize a Heritage Conservation District study does not consider the extent of community support for a district since the process adopted by City Council does not permit staff to conduct polls. Should the area be prioritized for study, HPS will undertake community consultation in accordance with the City Council adopted "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference."

CONCLUSIONS

Staff have concluded that the Lawrence Park West HCD nominated study area merits consideration for study as a potential Heritage Conservation District as one of Toronto's earliest planned garden suburbs, with a collection of fine examples of residential architecture from the early 20th century nestled within a landscape setting.

CONTACT

Tamara Anson-Cartwright,
Program Manager
Heritage Preservation Services
Tel. No. 416-338-1083
Fax No. 416-392-1973
Email: tansonc@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jennifer Keesmaat, MES, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Potential Study Area Boundary
Attachment 2: Century Homes in the Study Area



 **TORONTO**
Study Area

Lawrence Park West
Nominated Heritage Conservation District



Not to Scale
2/29/2016



**Century Homes in
 Lawrence Park West HCD Nominated Area**

-  Lawrence Park West HCD Nominated Area
-  Heritage Register Properties
-  Century Homes

↑
 Not to Scale
 7/29/2016