

Authorization to Study Belmont-Hillsboro a Potential Heritage Conservation District

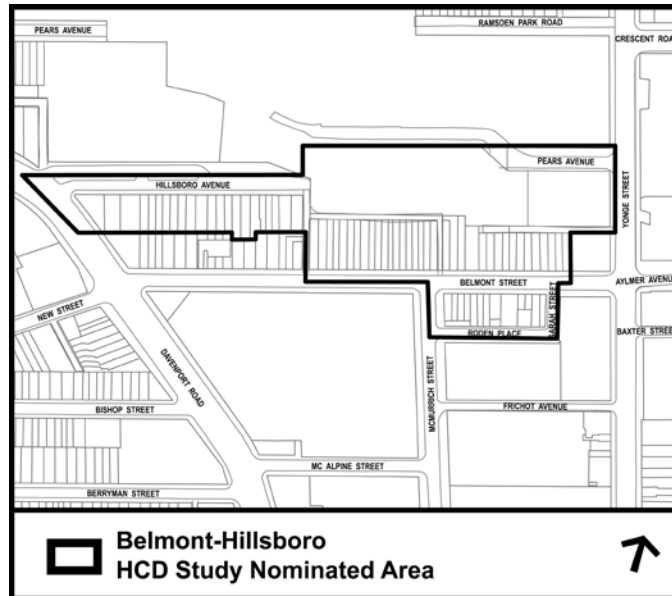
Date:	May 16, 2016
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto East York Community Council
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	27 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster B\PLN\TEYCC\TE16075

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council authorize to study the Belmont-Hillsboro area as a potential Heritage Conservation District (HCD), under Section 40.(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act at a later date, when it has been identified as a priority.

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

Authorization to study Belmont-Hillsboro HCD would allow the area to be included 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 Belmont-Hillsboro 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 (May 16, 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 districts should be undertaken first. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG11.5>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

A Heritage Conservation District, 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 enclave of Belmont Street and Hillsboro Avenue was nominated for study as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) by the Belmont Street Heritage Interest Group in a submission to Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) on March 27, 2015.

Belmont Street and Hillsboro Avenue are two of the oldest streets of Yorkville associated with brick industry in the area in 19th century. The majority of houses in the nominated area were built in the late 19th and early 20th century. The housing stock includes fine examples of Gothic Revival, Second Empire, Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian style designs.

The nominated area comprises the central portion of the Ramsden Park neighbourhood, part of the Yorkville area. The nominated area is bounded by Yonge Street and Sarah Street to the east, Davenport Road to the west, and properties along Hillsboro Avenue and Pears Avenue to the north, Belmont Street and Roden Place to the south. The area includes the Ramsden Public Works north of Belmont Street and south of Ramsden Park. The total number of properties in the nominated area is 74 properties.

Belmont-Hillsboro History and Heritage Character

Currently there are twenty-five (25) properties listed on the City's Heritage Register. Several additional houses in the area have been nominated for Part IV designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

As part of the March 27, 2015 nomination, the Belmont Street Heritage Interest Group has prepared a general history and description of the character of the area:

General History of the Area

The houses on Belmont Street have their origin in the century-long brickmaking industry of Toronto. Brickyards spread north to Yorkville in 1835, and gained prominence to the extent that a brick mould is featured in the Yorkville coat of arms. The clay in the area between Yonge Street and Avenue Road north of Davenport Road was a bluish white colour, leading to the popular nickname “The Blue Hill” for the stretch of Yonge between Belmont and St. Clair.

John Sheppard and William Townsley appear in 1850 as the earliest brickmakers listed in the City Directories, both with their addresses cited as “Yonge, Yorkville.” Having peaked in the 1870s and '80s, brick production ceased by the end of the nineteenth century, shortly after John Sheppard, Sr., oversaw the building of the north-side row of homes from 1889 to 1891 extending east of his own home at 14 Beverley (now 28 Belmont) towards Yonge (4 to 26 Belmont). An 1885 photograph of the Yorkville yards behind Belmont (originally called Beverley Street until Yorkville was annexed by the City in 1883) in what is now Ramsden Park, shows the huge drying rack and a number of small buildings which curiously have not been recorded in the maps of the day.

Heritage Character of the Area

Belmont Street includes a consistent row of modest homes built for labourers in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. The exceptionally narrow widths and two-storey rooflines, regularly interspersed with an additional gabled half storey, provide its mixture of Georgian, Gothic Revival, and Second Empire styles with an harmonious symmetry to the historic streetscape.

Most of the Victorian homes preserved in Toronto are of a larger scale, built for a wealthier social class. The Assessment Rolls for Belmont list the occupations of its residents during the Victorian period as brick labourers, coachmen, glass stainers, and horse groomers.

Hillsboro Avenue historically developed to provide access to the brickyards in Ramsden Park in early 19th century. The houses on Hillsboro Avenue are from the late 19th and early 20th century and exhibit similar size and architectural styles as those on Belmont Street.

Existing Planning Framework

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

Most of the nominated study area is designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan, with the exception of the designated *Open Space Areas* forming the north eastern edge of the proposed study area boundary.

The nominated area is part of the Ramsden Park, one of the neighbourhoods identified in the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Area. This area is governed by its own set of site and area-specific policies (Special Policy Area 211). These policies speak to the overall criteria for new developments in and near to the neighbourhood to respect and reinforce the stability and the established low-rise character of the area.

The portion of the nominated area that contains 7 to 33 Belmont Street (inclusive) and 10, 20, 30 Roden Place is governed by Special Policy Area 158. This policy allows commercial uses at a maximum density of 2.0 times the lot area provided that development preserves the existing built form.

The residential portion of the nominated area is zoned R (f5.0; d1.0) (x485) with a portion of Belmont Street zoned as R (d1.0) (x711). The remaining open space area within the nominated area is zoned OR.

COMMENTS

In reviewing the nomination, staff undertook a tour of the Belmont-Hillsboro HCD Study area to confirm the boundary of nominated area and to verify the integrity of the heritage character. The study area contains a collection of fine examples of residential architecture creating a cohesive enclave associated with Ramsden Park and Yorkville.

City staff conducted a community consultation meeting on May 6, 2015 to inform the neighbourhood of the HCD nomination and to answer general questions about HCDs, their implications and benefits. The public meeting provided an opportunity for the HCD nominator to present their historical research and for City staff to explain that the area is a good candidate for study. The Belmont-Hillsboro HCD Study nomination received positive feedback from the participants and general support from area residents and owners who submitted written communication.

City staff consider the nominated area appropriate for study as a potential HCD and followed the HCD nomination process in accordance with "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto - Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference."

If City Council determines that authorization to study should be granted, then the area will be included in prioritization analysis to determine the priority sequence for HCD studies to be initiated by HPS staff.

Several properties in the study area have been nominated for inclusion on the Heritage Register and/or Part IV designation. Authorization for study as a potential HCD does not preclude Council from designating individual properties in the study area under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Conclusions

Staff have concluded that the Belmont-Hillsboro HCD nominated study area merits consideration for study as a potential Heritage Conservation District due to its collection of fine examples of residential architecture from the late 19th and early 20th century and historical association with the origin in the brickmaking industry of Yorkville.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Potential Study Area Boundary