

Proceeding from Study to Plan Phase for the Proposed Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District

Date: September 14, 2017

To: Toronto Preservation Board

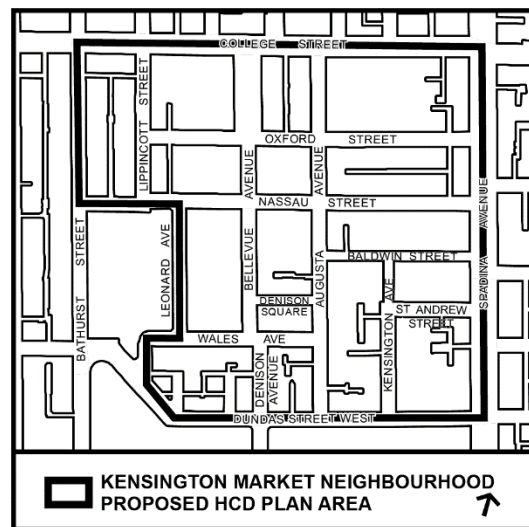
From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division

Wards: 20 - Trinity-Spadina

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the Toronto Preservation Board endorse City Planning's decision to proceed from the Study Phase to the Plan Phase of the proposed Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District (HCD).

The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings of the HCD Study and make recommendations for the creation of an HCD Plan for the Kensington Market Neighbourhood as shown on Attachment 1. In March 2015, City Council authorized and prioritized the Kensington Market HCD Study. In March 2016, City staff, with a consultant team led by Taylor Hazell Architects, began a study of the potential for this area to be designated as an HCD under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. This study followed the Council-adopted *Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference*.



Designating Kensington Market as a significant Cultural Heritage Landscape in Toronto with an HCD Plan will provide a policy framework that will ensure the conservation of the district's tangible and intangible cultural heritage values, while recognizing the dynamic and unique character of the neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. The Toronto Preservation Board receive for information the report dated September 14, 2017 from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning entitled Proceeding from Study to Plan Phase for the Proposed Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District.
2. The Toronto Preservation Board endorse the preparation of the Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District Plan.
3. The Toronto Preservation Board endorse the establishment of a Community Advisory Group prior to the commencement of the Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District Plan, with such committee to be comprised of a diverse and representative sample of property owners, residents and community organizations within and adjacent to the proposed Plan area.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

On March 5, 6, and 7, 2012, City Council adopted the document titled "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference" (January 2012) for the nomination, studying and planning of Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto.

At the same meeting, City Council 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>

On March 31, 2015, City Council adopted the amended Council-approved prioritization system and criteria as shown in Attachments 1A-6A to the report February 3, 2015 from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.

At the same meeting, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to initiate the study of West Queen West, Distillery District and Kensington Market districts in 2015, as a result of the application of the prioritization criteria. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG2.8>

On July 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2013, City Council adopted a motion directing staff to report to the Toronto and East York Community Council on the feasibility of amending the Zoning By-law with respect to implementing restrictions on Restaurant and Bar Uses in Kensington Market. A preliminary staff report which outlined the proposed study work

plan and community consultation process was submitted to the October 2013 Toronto East York Community Council.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-63129.pdf>

On August 14, 2015, Toronto and East York Community Council directed staff to support small business enterprises in Kensington Market and protect the scale, mix of uses and character of Kensington Market in co-ordination with the timing of the results of the Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Study.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-82900.pdf>

On May 10, 2016, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted a motion to expand the Kensington Market HCD Study Area boundaries.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.TE16.66>

COMMENTS

Legislative Framework

Provincial Policy Statement and Planning Act

The Planning Act and associated Provincial Policy Statement guides development in the Province. The Provincial Policy Statement states that the wise use and management of cultural heritage and archeological resources is a key provincial interest. Provincial Policy Statement 2.6.1 reads "Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved".

The Planning Act requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters "shall be consistent with" the Provincial Policy Statement. Under Part 1 Section 2 (d) of the Planning Act, those responsible for carrying out activities under the Act shall have regard to "the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest".

Ontario Heritage Act

The Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) is the key piece of legislation for the conservation of heritage resources in Ontario. It regulates, among other things, how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources, including archaeological resources, within municipal boundaries. This is largely achieved through designation of individual properties under Part IV, or designation of HCDs under Part V. It can also be achieved through the registration of a Heritage Easement Agreement on title.

Part IV of the OHA enables municipalities to designate individual properties of cultural heritage value or interest. Designation under Part IV can ensure the conservation of heritage properties and their identified heritage attributes, and requires the receipt of permission from the municipal council to alter, demolish or remove a building or structure on the property.

Part V of the OHA empowers municipalities to designate any defined area as an HCD. Central to Part V designation is the adoption of an HCD plan, which enables municipal

councils to conserve the district's heritage character through the application of policies and guidelines specific to the district.

Prior to designating an HCD, City Council must undertake an HCD study to determine if the area merits designation. Section 40 (2) of the OHA identifies the scope and required components of an HCD study. These include: an analysis of the character and appearance of the district; recommendations for the district's boundaries; recommendations for the objectives of the HCD plan; and recommended changes to the Official Plan and municipal by-laws, including zoning by-laws. This report summarizes the preliminary recommendations of the HCD study undertaken in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) provides a strategic framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region. Section 4.2.7 of the Growth Plan states that cultural heritage resources will be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas.

Like other provincial plans, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) builds upon the policy foundation provided by the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. The policies of the Growth Plan take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise. All decisions by Council affecting land use planning matters are required by the Planning Act, to conform, or not conflict, as the case may be, with the Growth Plan.

Official Plan

The City of Toronto's Official Plan contains policies that seek to protect and manage cultural heritage resources, including significant buildings, properties, districts, landscapes and archaeological sites. The Official Plan recognizes the contribution of these resources to sustainable development and place making, and provides policies to guide their conservation and wise use.

Section 3.1.5, "Heritage Conservation," provides, amongst other matters, direction on the identification, study and evaluation of cultural heritage resources, including HCDs in Toronto. Policy 3.1.5.3 states that HCDs will be protected by being designated under the OHA. The Official Plan also provides direction on how HCD studies and plans will be conducted, and notes the protocols and provisions that will be included (3.1.5.30-1).

Kensington Market HCD Study

The area was nominated in June 2013 by the Kensington Market Business Improvement Association. On May 10, 2016, Councillor Joe Cressy presented a motion to the Toronto and East York Community Council to expand the Study Area boundaries to reflect a broader understanding of Kensington Market. This allowed the City Planning Division to take into consideration the important relationship between the residential and commercial character of Kensington Market, and the major roads that create a boundary around it. The Study Area is bounded by four major roads: Dundas Street West to the south, Spadina Avenue to the east, College Street to the north and Bathurst

Street to the west. It is a mixed-use area with residential properties generally located in the western portion of the Study Area and mixed-use properties in the eastern portion. The Study Area encompasses approximately 35 hectares containing 870 properties.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation

The HCD Study process included two Community Consultation meetings, three Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings and interviews with individual stakeholders. City Planning created a Terms of Reference for the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) as part of the HCD Study process in order to benefit from local expertise, to offer knowledge, views and ideas for consideration and to provide the study team with an opportunity to vet information and ideas before bringing it to the broader community. The first meeting of the SAC took place on May 24, 2016. At this meeting, City staff presented an overview of the HCD Study process and the consultant outlined research and survey work completed to date. SAC members were asked to describe what they felt was important and what they wanted the HCD to achieve.

The second SAC meeting occurred on September 28, 2016. The study team presented draft findings from the research stage to confirm their findings and seek additional information on the social and community history of Kensington Market. The third SAC meeting was held on November 22, 2016. At this meeting, the SAC was provided with a draft evaluation, cultural heritage values and heritage attributes and asked if these reflected what was significant to them. Following the meeting, SAC members had an opportunity to review and comment on a draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value. Feedback from all three SAC meetings is summarized in Appendix B of the HCD Study.

Community Consultations were held on June 21, 2016 and February 9, 2017 to present the consultant team's findings and solicit input and feedback from the broader community on the Study Area's cultural heritage value and heritage attributes. At the first Community Consultation Meeting, City staff presented an overview of the HCD Study and Plan process and the consultant presented work completed to date, as well as a timeline for completion of the study. Participants were asked to describe what was significant to them on a map of the Study Area. At the second Community Consultation Meeting, the consultant presented key findings of the draft HCD Study in order to gain feedback prior to the submission of the final draft. Participants were highly in favour of moving forward with Part V designation and creating an HCD Plan.

In parallel, City staff responded to requests for meetings from individual stakeholders, such as Toronto Western Hospital. These meetings took place throughout the study process.

History and Evolution

As part of the HCD Study process, research into the history and evolution of the Study Area was completed. This review provided the foundational understanding of the history of development within the Study Area, and contributed to its subsequent analysis and evaluation.

The Study Area is comprised of part of Park Lots 16, 17 and 18 originally granted to military and government officials in the 1790s. Three prominent individuals, Dr. William Warren Baldwin, George Taylor Denison and George Crookshank acquired land within

the Study Area. The Baldwin, Denison and Crookshank properties were subdivided during the 1850s when they died and their lands transferred to relatives. The Study Area developed as a suburban residential neighbourhood inhabited primarily by immigrants from the British Isles and their descendants from the 1870s to the 1900s.

In the 1910s large numbers of Jewish immigrants moved to the Study Area, many from other parts of the city. By 1918, a weekly market emerged along Kensington Avenue and Baldwin Street. Businesses were located in existing residential buildings that were being converted and added to, to suit this new use.

By the 1950s the area was no longer synonymous with a Jewish Market but had taken on the broader term Kensington Market. In 1956, the Toronto Planning Board initiated an Urban Renewal Study for the City of Toronto. Although Kensington Market was identified as an urban renewal area within the Spadina Planning Area, it was not specifically targeted.

In subsequent decades immigration continued to influence the area, with changes to the built form and the introduction of new customs and traditions by successive waves of newcomers to the city. As Jewish families moved out the market, Hungarian and Portuguese immigrants began moving in. The 1960s national immigration policy shift had a pronounced impact on the diversity of the Study Area as immigrants from China, Korea, Vietnam, Latin America and Jamaica found a landing place. Kensington Market also started to attract younger business owners and artists who opened vintage clothing stores and cafes.

Archaeology

The Study Area contains several areas of general archaeological potential. Only one archaeological assessment has been carried out in the Study Area. This work consisted of Stage 1-4 archaeological assessments in advance of the recent redevelopment of 297 College Street. When redevelopment is proposed for any lands that incorporate areas of general archaeological potential or within an Archaeologically Sensitive Area, it triggers an assessment and evaluation process. Should the HCD Study proceed to Plan phase, policies will be developed to ensure the conservation of the Study Area's archaeological resources.

Existing Heritage Protections

The Study Area contains the Kensington Market National Historic Site of Canada which was designated in 2006. Its designation as a National Historical Site was based on the successive waves of ethno-cultural communities who have immigrated to Toronto since the beginning of the 20th-century and who made Kensington home. The Study Area includes eighteen properties that are listed in the City of Toronto's Heritage Register and two properties that are designated under Part IV of the OHA.

Built Form and Landscape Survey

A built form and landscape survey was undertaken to inventory each property within the Study Area, using the City of Toronto's standardized survey form and completed according to the *HCDs in Toronto*. Through the spring and summer of 2016 the consultant team undertook site visits, archival and online research to document the history, architecture, and current condition of individual properties. Several addresses

are associated with properties that were obscured or not visible from the public realm. In these cases, the consultant team documented what was discernible and otherwise the form states, “Not visible from public realm”. The total number of properties surveyed was 878.

Policy Context

The existing planning policy framework for the Kensington Market mixed-use area protects the low-scale character of the area and supports retail at grade, minimal setbacks from street frontages and open air display of goods. In the review of the existing planning policy framework, the consultant team noted that these policies have generally been effective in maintaining this scale and character at restricting any large-scale development within the market area. Outside of the market area and in the residential area the in-force planning policies continue to protect the neighbourhood areas as areas that are considered to be physically stable. However, recent development applications along Spadina Avenue, College Street, and Bathurst Street have led many Kensington residents to raise concerns about whether these planning policies are strong enough to continue to protect the market as a unique place within the downtown. Committee of Adjustment applications within the Study Area are also a concern for residents, who feel that new development is affecting the eclectic character of the district.

The consultant team identified that the configuration of small lots in the Study Area is considered an important feature of the district’s heritage character. The in-force zoning limits the size of retail stores in the market area to a maximum of 200 square metres of gross floor area for several retail-type stores. Section 3.5.3 of the Official Plan can be used as a rationale for any future changes to the planning framework designed to maintain the retail environment in the Study Area to “maintain the prevailing sizes of existing stores and commercial units in the area”. There are two Site and Area Specific Policies (SASP) in the Study Area including SASP No. 197 and SASP No. 202. There are also four planning initiatives in overlapping and adjacent areas including Kensington Market Study of Restaurant and Bar Uses, Bathurst Land Use and Built Form Study, Spadina Avenue Planning Study, and College Street Built Form Study and SASP 533.

The consultant recommends that the future HCD Plan will need to review the SASP 533 and the College Street Guidelines to assess the impact of the proposed height increase to 30.0m, massing, transition in scale and in particular the impact of development of deep lots that back onto the Study Area to ensure that low-scale height of buildings on Augusta Avenue are consistent with the scale of Kensington Market.

The consultant concludes that many of the proposed objectives for the HCD Plan are in keeping with the existing planning framework. The existing regulatory framework, however, does require consolidation, updating and to better relate to the intangibles of the Study Area. Moreover, while the existing regulatory framework provides certain protections to the district, it does not protect heritage attributes of the Study Area and does not designate significant, noteworthy buildings with heritage value or restrict demolition. An HCD Plan could provide a cohesive and contemporary policy framework for the Study Area that is in one place and that most importantly, protects the cultural heritage values and heritage attributes of the Study Area.

Character Analysis

Following the completion of the built form and landscape survey, the consultant team undertook a character analysis to identify themes and typologies within the Study Area that informed the identification of cultural heritage value, the determination of significance and the selection of heritage attributes. This analysis included block and street patterns, property frontages and patterns, architectural styles, typologies, built form scale, streetscapes, views and vistas, community life and artistic expression, and resiliency.

The Study Area contains a unique block and street pattern arising largely from the uncoordinated subdivisions of early Park Lots. Numerous subdivision plans were created over the ensuing years with little or no regard for the adjacent properties. This piecemeal and uncoordinated subdividing of property by property owners resulted in an area containing a variety of block dimensions, no two of which are the same. The combination of irregular block and street patterns creates a high number of corner properties and T-intersections. It also supports street activity and sociability. Moreover, the consecutive subdividing of properties has resulted in an area characterized by narrow property frontages. Roughly 75% (640 properties) in the Study Area have frontages of 6.7 metres (22 feet) or less.

The subdivisions that created narrow lot frontages in the Study Area also influenced the style and configurations of buildings. Much of the Study Area resisted straightforward categorization commonly used in HCDs however, either lacking clear adherence to an architectural style, or having been so altered that a single style does not predominate. As such, the consultant team employed several alternative definitions to categorize buildings which include Residential Vernacular, Commercial Vernacular and Modified. More details on these three categories of architectural styles can be found in the HCD Study. The Study Area exhibits few formal styles and a built form that is highly modified, layered and diverse. This heterogeneous nature is a defining characteristic of the Study Area.

The mixed-use portion of the Study Area to the east is defined by buildings whose uses have changed. The consultant team created building typologies that use the original form as a starting point, but reflect changes or alterations in use over time. The identified typologies include residential, commercial, converted residential, modified commercial, institutional, and open spaces. The Study Area's rich history of inhabitants modifying their environment manifests in the high number of alterations that define many of the commercial streetscapes. The many conversions that have been used to either permit or expand commercial uses are an integral part of its organic, and layered identity. The consultant also identified a high degree of resiliency in the Study Area which is observed in the district's built form.

The overwhelming majority of properties within the Study Area contain buildings of a low-scale. Of these, the largest group are buildings between 2 and 2.5 storeys in height (76% or 667 properties). Furthermore, the Study Area contains a diverse array of streetscapes, which vary considerably in form and usage, and the street life they foster. They can be categorized according to predominant present use, within the categories of Commercial Streets, Residential Streets and Adapted Streets.

Well-defined views in the Study Area are those of landmark buildings including the Kiever Synagogue, Toronto Fire Services Station 315 and Saint Stephen-in-the-Fields church. Vistas along Adapted Streets, such as, Augusta and Kensington Avenues are dynamic, as they tend to encompass the lively street life taking place on them, rather than focusing on a particular building or terminus.

The Study Area has a long history and tradition of community driven cultural events and festivals. This tradition remains strong today in the large number of community and neighbourhood organizations, and an activist culture that is quick to mobilize on behalf of local interests which is supported by the community and the culture of decision-making at the local level.

Cultural Heritage Value

Following the completion of the survey and character analysis, the consultant team evaluated the Study Area as a whole applying the criteria for the determination of cultural heritage value as described in *HCDs in Toronto*. This step is crucial in determining whether the Study Area or portions therein has sufficient cultural heritage value to warrant designation under Part V of the OHA, and if it contains sufficient integrity to communicate those values.

The HCD Study determined that the Kensington Market Neighborhood HCD study area has direct associations with the themes of immigration and commercial activity, particularly related to food. The presence of archaeological resources also contributes to the area's historic value.

The Study Area has design and physical value because it contains a unique collection of vernacular residential buildings representing a range of 19th and early 20th-century styles. It also contains a concentration of residential buildings that have been converted, in whole or part, to commercial use, as well as representative examples of purpose-built commercial buildings in the Renaissance Revival style along Spadina Avenue and College Street. The Study Area was also determined to have physical value due to its unique street and block layout which was the result of uncoordinated subdivision.

The Study Area also has contextual value related to its vibrant, eclectic and chaotic character. Its richly layered built form is tied to its history as a place reworked by successive generations of ethno-cultural groups and social outsiders. Furthermore, both the physical neighbourhood and the idea, or intangible value, of Kensington Market are considered landmarks.

The Study Area supports the resilient nature of its community, a trait seen in its novel combination of dynamism and stability. It is a constantly evolving canvas for public art and expression. The district supports a community that is both active and activist, numerous events and festivals as well as organizations and institutions, many of which are grassroots and not-for-profit.

The integrity of the Study Area is addressed through two criteria: visual, functional or historical coherence, and authenticity. The area derives coherence from its chaotic nature which is evident in both the residential and mixed-use areas. The Study Area is unified by changes and modifications made over a long period of time that reflect the

individual tastes and styles of residents. Furthermore, there is visual coherence in the overall low-scale nature of the neighborhood.

The HCD Study identified four periods of significance within the Study Area's history that have all contributed to its cultural heritage value. Given the ongoing and incremental change that has occurred over time, the consultant identified these four periods of significance that should be considered in the HCD Plan phase.

The periods of significance are:

- Toronto's Park Lot System (1790s to 1850s)
- Residential Development (1850s to 1900s)
- Jewish Market (1900s to 1950s)
- Kensington Market and Community (1950s to present)

Boundaries

City Staff propose that the Kensington Market Neighbourhood HCD be bounded on the north by the centre line of College Street, on the east by the centre line of Spadina Avenue, on the south by the centre line of Dundas Street West and on the west by the centre line of Bathurst Street from College Street to Nassau Street, Leonard Avenue, and Carlyle Street (Attachment 1), excluding the majority of the Toronto Western Hospital complex (with the exception of the low-scale parking garage at 55 Leonard) as well as the Bank of Nova Scotia which is located on the southwest of the Study Area.

Although the consultant team recommended that the proposed boundary encompass the entire area that was studied, including Toronto Western, City Staff are recommending the exclusion of the majority of Toronto Western Hospital as it is a large complex that differs considerably from the low-scale character of the Study Area. The hospital has existed on the site since 1899 but has been significantly altered over time. Of the earlier portions of the hospital only the central tower pavilion, built in 1936, has remained.

Draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value identifies and describes the Study Area's cultural heritage value and provides a preliminary list of heritage attributes (Attachment 2). The Statement expresses that the Study Area is of cultural heritage value for its historical associations with immigration and commercial activity, design value for its collection of vernacular buildings, many of which have been modified and for its unique street and block layout, and social value for its active and activist community who engage in a variety of events – commercial, artistic, social and political. It also identifies Kensington Market as a landmark, known to Torontonians and visitors alike. The Statement of Cultural Heritage Value and heritage attributes may be revised and refined through the course of the HCD Plan.

Draft Statement of Objectives

Draft objectives have been prepared and organized based upon identified cultural heritage values to ensure the long-term conservation and enhancement of the area (Attachment 3). This includes general objectives that address conservation of the Study Area's cultural heritage value and heritage attributes, and that ensure that new

development conserves and contributes to the Study Area's character. These objectives may be revised and refined through the course of the HCD Plan.

According to the staff report outlining the preliminary directions and next steps of the Kensington Market Study of Restaurants and Bar Uses, strict restrictions currently exist on restaurant size in Kensington Market. City Planning staff are investigating other ways to help to preserve the scale and character of the area. The HCD draft Statement of Objectives emphasizes that a Kensington Market Neighbourhood HCD should preserve the existing narrow property frontages, the existing low-scale heights of the district, and the integrity of the district as a low-scale neighbourhood protected within four larger streets.

Next Steps

The consultant has identified 30 properties that merit individual protection under Part IV of the OHA. The consultant's recommendations are based on screening the properties against the criteria in Ontario Regulation 9/06. Further evaluation will be undertaken of these properties and individual listings or designations will be recommended in a future staff report.

The consultant team recommends that contributing and non-contributing resources be identified before the HCD Plan commences. Given the complexity of the Study Area in regard to the identified tangible and intangible cultural heritage values and heritage attributes of the area, careful consideration will be given to the identification of contributing resources. City Planning will explore best practices for identification of the contributing resources within the proposed HCD and this analysis will inform the identification of potential Character Sub-Areas.

The consultant team recommends that in parallel to pursuing the creation of an HCD Plan, City Planning should identify other land-use planning policies and mechanisms that would complement the HCD and support its objectives.

CONCLUSION

The Kensington Market HCD Study meets the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act and other provincial legislation and municipal policies, including requirements for consultation, evaluation and content.

The HCD Study was undertaken collaboratively within the City Planning Division. Proceeding with the development of an HCD Plan will enable City Council to conserve the cultural heritage value and heritage attributes of the proposed Kensington Market Neighbourhood HCD and to manage and guide future change in accordance with the Official Plan and the Ontario Heritage Act.

City Planning staff have reviewed and support the findings and recommendations of the HCD Study, including the determination that the area qualify for designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. It is therefore recommended that City Planning proceed with the preparation of the Kensington Market Neighbourhood HCD Plan. Additional

stakeholder consultation, including community consultations and the establishment of a Community Advisory Group, will be undertaken throughout the Plan phase. This report seeks endorsement from the Toronto Preservation Board for these recommendations.

CONTACT

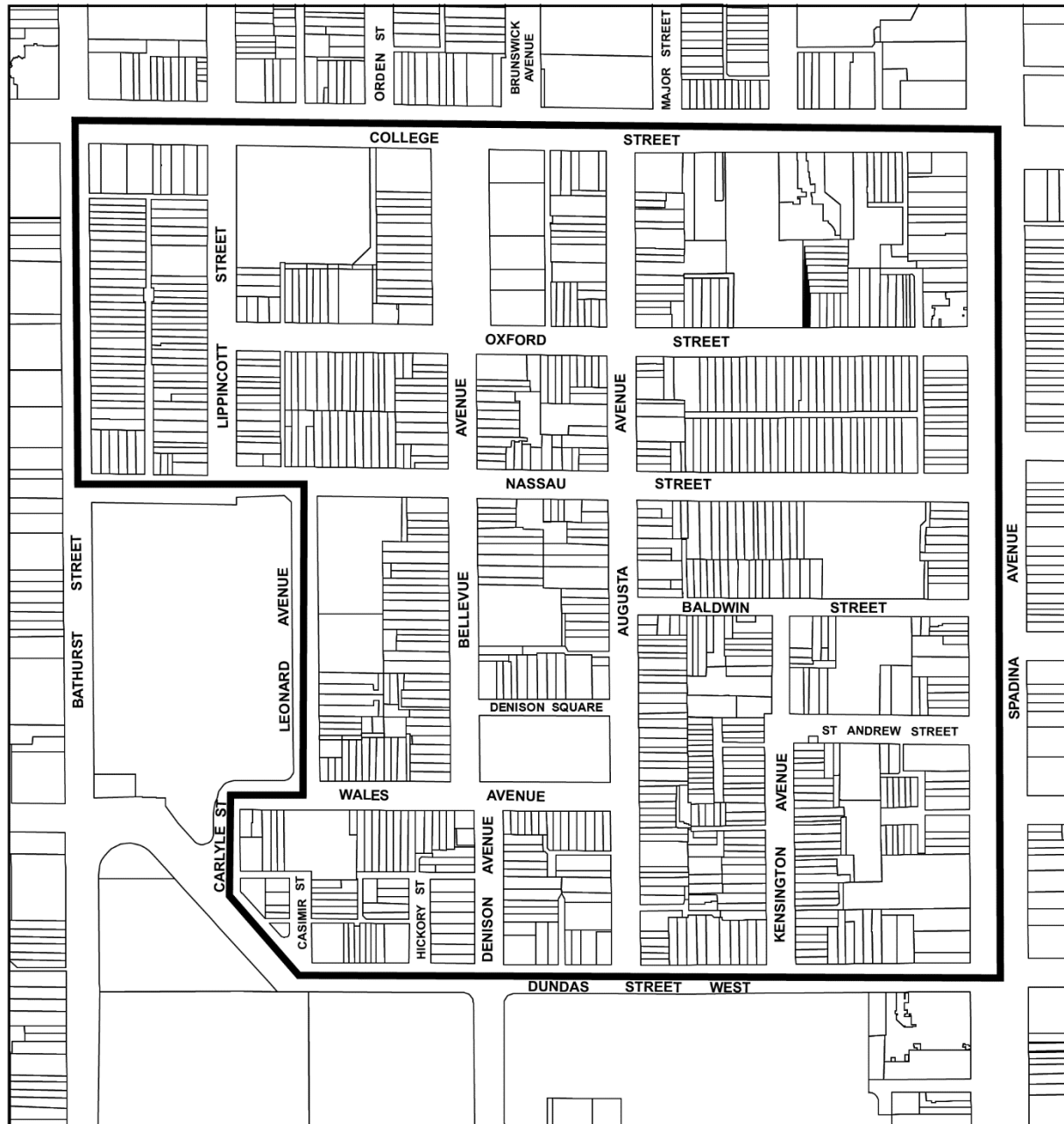
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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District – Boundary
- Attachment 2 – Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District – Draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value
- Attachment 3 – Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District – Draft Statement of Objectives
- Attachment 4 – Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District Study



Proposed Kensington Market Neighbourhood
Heritage Conservation District



Not to Scale
Extracted: 09/06/2017

The Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District is of cultural heritage value for its historical associations with immigration and commercial activity, design value for its collection of vernacular buildings many of which have been modified and for its unique street and block layout, and social value for its active and activist community who engage in a variety of events – commercial, artistic, social and political. The consultant team also identifies the district as a landmark, known to Torontonians and visitors alike.

Description of Historic Place

The Kensington Market Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District is bounded by Dundas Street West to the south, Spadina Avenue to the east, College Street to the north and Bathurst Street, Leonard Avenue and Carlyle Street to the west. It encompasses approximately 35 hectares (88 acres) containing 868 properties. It is a mixed-use area with residential properties generally located in the western portion of the Study Area and retail business in the eastern portion.

Historical and Associative Values

The district's historical value resides in its direct association with the theme of immigration in Toronto from the mid-19th-century to today. Attracted by affordable housing and proximity to employment, successive waves of immigrants have found a home and supportive community in Kensington.

From the 1870s through the earlier 1900s, the district developed as a suburban residential neighbourhood inhabited primarily by immigrants from the British Isles and their descendants. In the 1910s large numbers of Jewish immigrants moved to the area, many from other parts of the city. They recreated a shtetl environment in the district, in part by modifying residential buildings to permit commercial uses. Many Jewish residents converted the single family dwellings into multi-unit apartments or lodging houses. The Jewish Market emerged along Kensington Avenue and Baldwin Street and was known for its chaotic nature and open air display of goods on lawns, doorsteps and curbs. Many merchants lived above their shops, or a short walk away.

Following World War II, large groups of immigrants from Hungary (1940s-1950s) and Portugal (1950s-1960s) settled in the district. Portuguese settlement in the area was characterized by the commercialization of Augusta Avenue, by way of new construction and alterations to existing residences. The market became a centre for overseas importing, a factor which continued to draw immigrant groups to the district.

Subsequent immigrant groups include Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean immigrants (1960s-1980s); Latin American, Southeast Asian, African and Jamaican immigrants (1990s-present). They set up specialized businesses often with goods imported from their native countries and thus targeting to their ethno-cultural group.

Each group has left its collective mark on the district and added to the layers of cultural diversity and vibrant street life through their customs, religious and spiritual practices.

The community's diversity is also reflected in the numerous grass-roots and not-for-profit organizations that provide social services and are responsible for events and festivals throughout the year.

Design and Physical Values

The district's design value results in part from Toronto's Park Lot system, which permitted property owners to subdivide their properties and create streets to suit their own circumstances. Within the Kensington Neighbourhood HCD, three different individuals, each owning a different portion of the district, subdivided their holdings with little regard for the block patterns and right-of-ways created by their neighbours. William Warren Baldwin was the first, creating Spadina Avenue and subdividing his holdings in the 1820s to squat blocks, consistent in size with those from the Town of York in the 1820s. George Taylor Denison began subdividing in the 1850s, beginning with the lands furthest away from his Bellevue Estate. Owing to poor sales, these same lands were re-subdivided in the 1860s, followed by most of the lands associated with the estate itself. George Crookshank began selling his northern holdings in the district in the 1850s, as part of a speculative subdivision that stretched much further west and north.

This uncoordinated and piecemeal pattern of subdivision over the course of half a century created a unique street and block pattern with no two blocks of the same size, and just as many oriented east-west as north-south. It created the north-south and east-west streets of the district, many of which did not align with those of neighbouring parcels, and only two of which continued outside the district. The unique street and block pattern of the district creates a discrete neighbourhood, disconnected from the grid and cross-streets of the broader urban fabric. This physical separation made the district a suitable place for immigrant and minority groups seeking to establish and practice their own culture.

The district evolved into a residential working class area in the late-1880s. The subdivision and subsequent development of semi-detached and row housing stock created narrow property frontages and laneways that characterize much of the neighbourhood. Upon conversion to retail, narrow frontages provided the basis for the district's fine grain commercial space, whose affordability made them amenable to immigrant and minority communities. The continued existence of these narrow frontages are a defining characteristic of the district.

Some of the district's awkward and oversized building lots proved an inefficient use of land. Many of these were re-subdivided, with smaller housing being shoe-horned into the extra spaces off the city streets. These collections of laneway housing were developed in groups, (as in the 'Terraces' and 'Places'), and individually, are an important feature of the district.

Housing in the district reflected contemporary styles (Ontario Cottage and Bay-n-Gable) and forms (detached, semi-detached and rows), generally ranging from one to two-and-a-half storeys in height. These modest two-storey wood structures were gradually modified by successive generations and new immigrants.

The first wave of modifications were undertaken by Jewish immigrants beginning around 1910 when houses along Kensington Avenue, St. Andrew Street and Baldwin

Street were transformed into mixed use buildings with retail establishments on the ground floor and residential above – most often occupied by the business owner. Subsequently, Portuguese immigrants modified properties along Augusta Avenue during the post-World War II era. The concentration of these houses with commercial façade additions within a residential neighbourhood is rare in the city.

Residential buildings also demonstrate an incremental evolution reflecting the district's layered history of inhabitants. Alterations to houses typically include wrought iron porches replacing their wooden precedents, and façades re-painted, re-cladded, or entirely reconfigured.

Two of the district's bounding avenues, College Street and Spadina Avenue, were developed as major commercial streets. They are characterized by bold commercial buildings and historically contained social and recreational spaces serving the surrounding neighbourhoods. They contain excellent examples of Renaissance Revival architecture in commercial rows.

Contextual Values

The built resources in the district, as a layered neighbourhood of altered structures set within current and former residential streets, are tied to the history of the district as a place reworked by successive generations of ethnic and social outsiders. In the 1910s the district's new Jewish community activated the interior streets of the neighbourhood by integrating commercial ventures into residential dwellings. Successive immigrant and social groups have maintained this agency over the built form, continuing to alter the forms and uses of structures to suit their needs and rituals.

The district is known for its distinctly vibrant, colourful, and chaotic character. This is tied to, and supported by the area's history as an alternative market space, established and sustained by various minority groups. As a social enclave and market space, the district has long supported diverse and alternative cultural expressions and practices. These began with Jewish market in the 1910s, when methods of buying, selling, and displaying goods stood in stark contrast to those of other markets and commercial areas of Toronto. Later, additional ethnic and social groups settled in the district, whose diverse expressions and practices added to this mosaic and legacy.

The district is amongst Toronto's most widely known neighbourhoods to locals and visitors alike. Both the physical neighbourhood, and the idea of 'Kensington Market' are considered landmarks.

Social and Community Values

Stemming from its history as an immigrant neighbourhood, the district supports the resilient nature of its community, a trait seen in its novel combination of dynamism and stability. Its ability to absorb changes in built form and demographics without disrupting a core identity is an important historic and ongoing characteristic of the neighbourhood.

Stemming from its history as a space for successive groups of social outsiders, the district is a constantly evolving canvas for public art and expression. These expressions are readily observed in both the public and private realms.

As an area with a history of supporting minority communities, the district has developed a local culture that is both active and activist. Many citizens are highly active in local social, political and commercial matters, an ongoing value that continues to shape the community.

Similarly there is a legacy of institutions serving as support networks, and the district supports numerous organizations and institutions many of which are grassroots and not-for-profit. The district also supports numerous events and festivals, a value tied to its tendency towards activism, community and expression.

Heritage Attributes

Heritage attributes that embody the *historical and associative values* of the district include:

- long-standing tradition of a diverse variety of businesses including food, trades, services and dry goods
- the range of religious organizations and structures
- the affordability of the accommodations making it attractive to successive waves of immigrants
- the tradition, beginning with the Jewish Market, to modify residential buildings to accommodate retail activity at grade

Heritage attributes that embody the *design and physical values* of the district include:

- the unique street and block patterns created and sustained by:
 - an equal number of horizontal and vertical blocks, each having different dimensions
 - a high number of T-intersections and corner properties
 - the high percentage of east-west streets that commence and terminate within its boundaries
 - a variety of street widths, with right-of-ways ranging from 12.2m (40') to 40.23m (132')
 - a high proportion of narrow property frontages - 50% of properties have frontages smaller than 5.5m (18')
 - its unplanned and unsystematic collection of laneways
 - a high proportion of one-way streets
- the variety and number of small-scale, residential vernacular architectural styles and forms (late 19th- and early 20th-century) that create varied and picturesque fine-grain streetscapes
- surviving examples of 19th-century residential styles and forms that reflect workers' housing including the surviving examples of Ontario Cottage (detached and rows) and Bay-n-Gable (semi-detached and rows)
- laneway housing, both rows and individual buildings, located off the major streets
- surviving examples of 19th-century commercial styles including Renaissance Revival style along Spadina Avenue and College Street
- small residential properties supporting smallscale buildings
- storefront additions to residential buildings including one and two-storey additions, as well as garage enclosures
- ongoing and incremental modification of residential buildings to support at-grade retail

- ongoing and incremental modification of residential buildings that promote and reflect individual tastes
- the offbeat and eclectic nature of the built form as a result of incremental and ongoing modification to properties and buildings
- the low-scale (predominantly two-storey) character of the built form
- the ability to access a variety of amenities such as stores, workplaces and schools by walking

Heritage attributes that embody the *contextual values* of the district include:

- organic and evolved design of structures
- physical and often layered evidence of various immigrant groups including
 - alterations and additions to the existing built form (such as storefront conversions, additions, garage enclosures)
 - brightly painted buildings
 - creative use of utilitarian materials
- business taking place within public realm
- permissive commercial activity
- open air display of goods on lawns, doorsteps, curbs creating a chaotic and unique atmosphere
- strong sensory experience of smells, sounds and colours
- small stores and independent businesses
- coexistence of different modes of transportation (such as bicycling, walking and driving)
- streets as a primary outdoor space
- occupancy of public spaces for business, events and festivals
- resourceful use of space and materials

Heritage attributes that embody the *social and community values* of the district include:

- the ability of the district to absorb change and evolve, while retaining a core identity
- sense of a self-contained community that provides basic needs (such as food and shelter) as well as support services
- a community that is highly active in local social, political and economic matters
- a variety of events and festivals
- a variety of community and non-profit organizations
- the district's ability to thrive through numerous community events
- the diversity of the community particularly in terms of age and ethnicity

The overall objective of the Kensington Market Neighbourhood HCD Plan is the protection, conservation and management of its heritage attributes and contributing properties so that the District's cultural heritage value is protected in the long-term. The cultural heritage value of the District consists of its historic, contextual, design, social and community values. The heritage attributes of the District include their built form, public realm and archaeological resources.

Specific objectives of the proposed Kensington Market Neighbourhood HCD Plan are set out below. Although the following objectives are numbered, the numeric sequence does not establish a priority among the objectives.

A Kensington Market Neighbourhood HCD Plan should:

1. Conserve the legibility of the District's periods of significance that expresses the evolution of Kensington Market Neighbourhood.
2. Conserve and enhance the District's contributing properties, Part IV designated properties and listed properties.
3. Ensure complementary alterations to contributing properties and prevent the removal of heritage attributes from contributing properties within the District.
4. Ensure that new development and additions conserve and enhance the cultural heritage value of the District particularly with respect to the historic scale, form and massing of its contributing properties and the public realm.
5. Conserve, maintain, and enhance the cultural heritage value of the District as expressed through its heritage attributes, contributing properties, character subareas, public realm, and archaeological resources.
6. Promote the social and physical conditions that support the cultural heritage values and attributes of the District.
7. Acknowledge the dynamic nature of the District's history, built form and social conditions.
8. Support the ongoing, organic evolution of the District, as related to its contextual values.
9. Provide guidelines for new development that will maintain and enhance the heritage character of the District.
10. Preserve the existing, low-scale heights of the District.

11. Preserve the existing, narrow property frontages (6.7 metres and less) that characterize the District.
12. Allow small, reversible alterations to structures within the District.
13. Prevent demolition of structures that embody the heritage value and attributes of the District.
14. Provide guidelines for new development on the perimeter that mediate differences in height and use with the neighbourhood area behind.
15. Preserve the integrity of the District as a low-scale neighbourhood protected within four larger streets.
16. Promote the respectful co-existence of a variety of uses within a neighbourhood setting.
17. Conserve and enhance the identified views and vistas.