

North York Community Preservation Panel

April 4, 2017

Planning and Growth Management Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Att: Nancy Martins, Committee Clerk

RE: PG19.2 Update on Heritage Studies

Dear Councillor Shiner, Chair and Members, Planning and Growth Management Committee,

The Panel finds this report to be a useful and comprehensive report on the status of the Heritage Studies and Plans for individual properties and Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs). There is relief that the long overdue infusion of resources for HCD planning that was approved in 2014 may serve to protect some of the City's "character neighbourhoods", as well as recognizing HCD planning as a legitimate city planning process, instead of as a volunteer-based, bake-sale funded process. However improvements are necessary regarding the HCD Study Prioritization and HCD Study Process.

The staff report mentions (on page 2) City Council's direction of January 31, 2017, to report to PGMC by September 2017 ... the report to include:

- (1) business process improvements with Toronto Building staff to develop systems that identify buildings which may be under threat by way of demolition where there is potential heritage significance; and
- (2) the current process within City Planning to prioritize properties for addition to the City's Heritage Register and to make recommendations to improve or enhance the current process that will ensure better protection for properties with potential Heritage values, including specific criteria for prioritization.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PG17.4>

In regard to (2) above, there is a need for revisions in the areas of HCD Study Prioritization and Study Process:

HCD Study Prioritization

In October 2012, City Council adopted an HCD prioritization system for determining which potential HCD studies should be undertaken first. The criteria are: Development Activity; Existing Level of Protection; Fragility of the Area, and [land use] Planning Priorities. In addition, when the system

was applied in February 2015, an additional criterion - Archaeological Value was added.

The City's HCD prioritization process lacks a systematic approach to preserving representative elements of the city's built form, reflecting its history. Surely, the fundamental objective of designating an HCD is to represent the cultural and architectural periods of Toronto's history? Should there not be an effort made to select HCDs that *represent* specific built form types, like Victorian, Edwardian, early 20th century garden city/suburb, Modernist architecture? For example, one of the authorized HCD candidates, but yet to be prioritized, is Leaside which is distinguished as being one of only three early (garden city) new towns in Canada designed by Frederick Todd (the others are Mount Royal in Montreal and Shaughnessy Heights in Vancouver). In addition, Leaside has consistent streetscapes filled with homes demonstrating "modest" Tudor Revival and Georgian Revival architectural styles. And Don Mills, known as Canada's first post war "modern" corporately developed "new town" is not even an authorized HCD candidate currently.

The report notes that while 11 studies are currently underway at various stages, 11 HCD candidate areas are authorized by Council, but not yet prioritized to move forward. Meanwhile, several of these areas, including Leaside and Lawrence Park, face a continuous erosion of the heritage character for which they are being nominated.

HCD Study Process

Secondly, the HCD Study Process requires the completion of detailed property by property inventory sheets for each property in the candidate area. A preferred approach would be to first "survey" an HCD candidate area and then based on the initial survey, decide on the area requiring a property by property level analysis. The current process is extremely time-consuming and expensive and largely accounts for the slow rate of Study completion.

We recommend that as part of staff report back to PGMC, consideration be given to:

- revisions to the HCD prioritization system, including the addition of a “representation” criterion.
- streamlining of the HCD study process (ie more flexibility to take account of the nature of the area).

The NYCPP appreciates your consideration of our comments.

Yours truly,

Geoff Kettel
Chair

c.c. Jennifer Keesmaat, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Mary Macdonald, Senior Manager, Heritage Preservation Services
Joe Nanos, Director, Community Planning, North York District