

87 Highland Avenue - Alterations to a Designated Heritage Property in the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District

Date: June 30, 2026

To: Toronto Preservation Board

From: Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: University - Rosedale - Ward 11

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council refuse the alterations to the designated heritage property at 87 Highland Avenue under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

This is a C-rated property located in the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (HCD). The property owner has removed architectural elements, including the dentils on the east gable and the brackets on the north gable, along with the Tudor detailing on the north and east gables, and installed new elements in their place. Additionally, a new front porch has been constructed and new windows installed along the front and side elevations. The property owner has also applied a white coating to the masonry on the existing two-storey dwelling and new brick wall at the front of the property. These alterations were done without a heritage permit.

The alterations that were undertaken without a permit have been reviewed and staff are of the opinion that the changes do not comply with the North Rosedale District Plan, the Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (the official document guiding planning and conservation of heritage properties in the City of Toronto) and the Official Plan. As such, staff are recommending that a heritage permit for this work be refused.

If City Council refuses to grant approval for the alterations noted above, Heritage Planning staff will continue to work with the owners to find solutions to restore the historic character and appearance of the designated property at 87 Highland Avenue in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Official Plan, and the North Rosedale District Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council refuse alterations to the designated heritage property at 87 Highland Avenue in the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District under Part V, Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, comprised of the construction of a new front porch, installation of new windows on the front and side elevations, removal of architectural elements, including the brackets, dentils and Tudor detailing on the north and east gables and their incompatible replacement, and the application of a white coating to the masonry on the two-storey house and brick wall at the front of the property, in accordance with the submission package dated October 3, 2025 submitted by Giamo + Associates Architects Inc., on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. If the owner appeals City Council's decision to refuse the alterations to the heritage property at 87 Highland Avenue under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council direct the City Solicitor and the appropriate City staff to attend the Ontario Land Tribunal hearing to oppose the appeal.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

On September 30, 2004, City Council adopted By-law 749-2004 to designate the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (NRHCD). https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/9536-CityPlanning_NorthRosedale-HCD.pdf

There have been no previous reports to Council regarding the property at 87 Highland Avenue.

BACKGROUND

The property at 87 Highland Avenue is located within the North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District (HCD). It is situated on the south side of Highland Avenue between Bin-Scarth Road and Roxborough Drive.

Constructed in 1912 in the English Arts and Crafts style with Tudor Revival influence, 87 Highland Avenue is classified as a C-rated property in the North Rosedale District Plan, defining it as a dwelling that "contributes to the overall heritage character of the neighbourhood, district or area, and which merits preservation because of its contribution to and support of the neighbourhood character". It is situated within Zone 1 of the North Rosedale HCD, otherwise known as the Ravine Lands. This area is bounded by ravines and includes sloping land and dense vegetation. It includes a variety of buildings with "(revived) English vernacular" and "fine Arts and Crafts style houses". The North Rosedale District Plan notes that this zone's character has "qualities of heaviness and stolid permanence... due to the abundance of thick brick and stone masonry".

Permission is required under Section 42 (1) 1 of the Ontario Heritage Act to alter any part of a property, other than the interior of any structure or building on the property, within a heritage conservation district. The North Rosedale District Plan states that permission is required "for alterations visible from the street including matters such as: masonry cleaning or painting and replacement of existing architectural features...".

According to the submission package, which provides a detailed description of various works that were undertaken to the exterior of the property without a heritage permit, the existing multi-coloured clinker brick was tinted white during construction, using a semi-opaque Sol Silicate stain. The newly constructed brick wall in the front yard has also been tinted the same colour. The decorative half-timbering (Tudor detailing) on the north and east gables has been removed and replaced with horizontal lap siding. Decorative brackets and dentils on the same gables were also removed, with two new brackets installed incorrectly on the front gable. A new front porch has been constructed along with the installation of new windows along the front and side elevations.

Application History

On May 30, 2022, a Heritage Permit was issued for the property at 87 Highland Avenue for the construction of a rear 3-storey addition and exterior alterations.

On September 12, 2024, Heritage Planning staff were notified of alterations to the property at 87 Highland Avenue that had not been applied for nor included in previous heritage permits. Following a site visit, Heritage Planning staff confirmed the extent of the alterations and notified the property owner of the violations. The owners were advised to cease this work and seek the required approvals under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

On October 3, 2025, the property owner applied for permission for the unauthorized alterations, including the construction of a new front porch, installation of new windows along the front and side elevations, the removal of significant architectural elements and their incompatible replacement, and the application of a white coating to the masonry on the existing two-storey dwelling and masonry wall in the front yard. Since that time, staff have continued to work with the owner by requesting changes that would bring the work closer to compliance with the district plan, and with the expectation that the owner would address staff concerns.

Heritage Policy Framework

Official Plan

The City of Toronto Official Plan provides the policy framework for heritage conservation in the City. The following Official Plan policies apply to heritage conservation districts and properties on the Heritage Register:

3.1.6.4: Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council.

3.1.6.5: Proposed alterations, development, and/or public works on or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will ensure that the integrity of the heritage property's cultural heritage value and attributes will be retained, prior to work commencing on the property and to the satisfaction of the City.

3.1.6.33. Heritage Conservation Districts should be managed and conserved by approving only those alterations, additions, new development, demolitions, removals and public works in accordance with respective Heritage Conservation District plans.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (Standards and Guidelines) is the official document guiding planning, stewardship and conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City of Toronto. The Standards and Guidelines state:

- Conserve the heritage value of an historic place. Do not remove, replace or substantially alter its intact or repairable character defining elements. Do not move a part of an historic place if its current location is a character-defining element. (Standard 1)
- Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention. (Standard 3)
- Recognize each historic place as a physical record of its time, place and use. Do not create a false sense of historical development by adding elements from other historic places or other properties, or by combining features of the same property that never coexisted. (Standard 4)
- Evaluate the existing condition of character-defining elements to determine the appropriate intervention needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect heritage value when undertaking an intervention. (Standard 7)
- Maintain character-defining elements on an ongoing basis. Repair character-defining elements by reinforcing their materials using recognized conservation methods. Replace in kind any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements, where there are surviving prototypes. (Standard 8)

- Make any intervention needed to preserve character-defining elements physically and visually compatible with the historic place and identifiable on close inspection. Document any intervention for future reference. (Standard 9)
- Repair rather than replace character-defining elements. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair, and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements. Where there is insufficient physical evidence, make the form, material and detailing of the new elements compatible with the character of the historic place. (Standard 10)
- Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place. (Standard 11)

Section 4.3.5 includes guidelines for windows, doors and storefronts. They state:

Windows are among the most conspicuous of any building's features. Their arrangement and design are fundamental to the building's appearance and heritage value. They come with a wide range of functional and decorative components, including frames, sashes, muntins and glazing.

The Standards and Guidelines do not recommend the following:

- Removing an irreparable window and replacing it with a new one that does not convey the same appearance or serve the same function.
- Creating a false historical appearance because the new window is incompatible or based on insufficient physical and documentary evidence.
- Installing new windows that are incompatible with the building's style, era and character, or that obscure, damage or destroy character-defining elements.
- Removing an irreparable window and not replacing it or replacing it with an inappropriate window.

Section 4.5.2 includes guidelines for wood and wood products. They state:

" These guidelines provide direction when wood and wood products are identified as character-defining elements of an historic place".

The Standards and Guidelines do not recommend the following:

- Replacing an entire wood element, when repair and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts is appropriate.
- Using a substitute material for the replacement part that neither conveys the same appearance as the wood element, nor is physically or chemically compatible.

- Removing an irreparable wood element and not replacing it or replacing it with an inappropriate new element.

Section 4.5.3 includes guidelines for masonry. They state:

"The aesthetic characteristics of the masonry, such as the finish dressing, texture and colour of the stone, brick or mortar, the coursing pattern, and the joint width and profile...., all contribute to its heritage value and require careful consideration".

The Standards and Guidelines do not recommend the following:

- Applying paint, coatings or stucco to masonry that has been historically unpainted or uncoated (4.5.3.10).

<http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/standards-normes.aspx>

North Rosedale Heritage Conservation District

The guidelines within the North Rosedale District Plan were established for managing property alteration and development in the Heritage Conservation District with a view to the preservation of the existing architectural character of the District and its streetscape as defined in the Heritage Character and Streetscape Character Statements. These guidelines are based on Heritage Character Statements found in Section 5 that define and describe the subtle qualities of the area and its buildings and identify the constituent elements that combine to create a sense of place. These descriptions, says the District Plan, serve to guide new development to understand and complement existing character.

Section 6.3 states: "When a Heritage Permit application does not, in the view of City staff, comply with the district design guidelines.... City Council will decide on the application. In making its decision, Council will be provided with the advice of the City's Heritage Preservation Services Section".

Section 7.2 states: " Most construction in the District will occur as alterations or additions to existing buildings. It is the intent of these guidelines to encourage the preservation of existing heritage buildings, to aid sensitive and contextual design for new work, and to strengthen and support the heritage character of the District."

1. Alterations and additions to heritage buildings should maintain or enhance rather than detract from the existing architectural style and character of the building and those surrounding it. To this end:

- Reasonable effort should be taken to repair rather than replace significant architectural elements.
- Using heritage buildings in the District and the building concerned as a guide, alterations and additions should be consistent with their size, scale, proportion and level of detail.

- No alteration or addition should visually overwhelm the building in question or neighbouring buildings.
- Alterations and additions should, to the extent reasonable, maximize the use of materials that predominate in the building concerned or in buildings of similar architectural style in the area.
- Windows, doors and detail should relate in scale and proportion to the existing

COMMENTS

Constructed in 1912, in the English Arts and Crafts style with Tudor Revival detailing, the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue is a significant heritage resource that contributes to the heritage character of the North Rosedale HCD. Character-defining attributes of the building include the decorative dentils and half-timbering at the gables, reflecting Tudor Revival influences, as well as the decorative brackets and multi-coloured clinker brick typical of the Arts and Crafts style. The removal of the significant architectural elements along with their incompatible replacement, and the application of a white coating to the masonry neither maintains nor enhances the architectural style or character of this property and its surrounding context. These alterations are also inconsistent with recognized principles of good conservation practice.

The guidelines within the North Rosedale District Plan are based on Heritage Character Statements found in Section 5 that define and describe the subtle qualities of the surrounding area and its buildings and identify the constituent elements that combine to create a sense of place. These descriptions serve to guide alterations and new development to understand and compliment the existing character of the different zones and District as a whole. The North Rosedale District Plan identifies three distinct sub-districts (zones) of development that each exhibit their own development patterns, architectural heritage and streetscape character.

87 Highland Avenue is located within the Ravine Lands zone. The District Plan highlights the architectural qualities of this part of North Rosedale which apply directly to this property. It states, "qualities of heaviness and stolid permanence predominate, due to the abundance of thick brick or stone masonry". One of the building's most important attributes is its masonry and its historical character and appearance is that of a building with unpainted masonry. Heritage Planning staff are of the opinion that this character is undermined by the introduction of a white coating to the existing masonry on the two-storey house and masonry wall in the front yard.

In its streetscape character statements, the District Plan also emphasizes that many dwellings within this area are characterized by the asymmetrical and varied elevations associated with revived English vernacular architecture and highlights the fine examples of Arts and Crafts-style houses found throughout this part of North Rosedale. The dwelling at 87 Highland Avenue is one such example. One of its defining features is its

multi-coloured clinker brick. Its variation in colour, irregular shapes and rustic textures embody the Arts and Crafts movement's emphasis on natural materials and an inherent appeal of hand-crafted products. The introduction of white coating to the masonry on the existing dwelling and wall structure in the front yard detracts from the property's architectural character and the material characteristics that define it and the surrounding streetscape. In doing so, it undermines the subtle details that define this part of North Rosedale.

A minimal intervention approach, consistent with good conservation practices outlined in the City's approved guiding documents, would support masonry repairs, repointing and brick cleaning. This would provide a more uniform appearance to the masonry while maintaining and enhancing the architectural style and character of the house. Any purported defects in masonry should be repaired and not concealed by applying a coating or tint.

The removal of the Tudor detailing, decorative brackets and dentils, together with their incompatible replacements detracts from the architectural style and character of this dwelling and undermines the heritage qualities that define this part of North Rosedale. These details reflected the Arts and Crafts architecture with Tudor Revival influence present in the design of the residence, serving as character-defining features that contributed to the building's architectural style and contribution to the heritage character of the streetscape. Comparable elements remain evident on neighbouring properties at 85 and 89 Highland Avenue, which were also constructed in similar architectural styles, reinforcing their contribution to the character of the streetscape and this part of North Rosedale.

The removal of architectural elements at 87 Highland Avenue, and their incompatible replacements, result in the loss of significant architectural features and diminishes the heritage character of the existing dwelling and surrounding context. Furthermore, no documentation or condition assessment was provided to demonstrate that these elements were beyond repair or otherwise warranted removal. As such, these alterations conflict with the North Rosedale District Plan, which directs that significant architectural features be retained and that reasonable efforts be undertaken to repair rather than replace or remove heritage attributes wherever possible.

The preexisting windows, although not original, featured traditional proportions and multi-lite configurations with a visual relationship to the Arts and Crafts character of the dwelling. The new windows have required physical alterations to the proportions of some of the openings and incorporate a contemporary industrial aesthetic that is not compatible with the heritage character of the property or surrounding streetscape. While the preexisting windows were not original and Heritage Planning raises no objection to the principle of their replacement, the new windows, as specified by the District Plan, must maintain or enhance the existing architectural style and character of this dwelling and those surrounding it. Compared to what previously existed, the style and detail of the replacement windows, in this instance, does not effectively accomplish this. As a result, the window alteration does not comply with the North Rosedale District Plan, nor does it accord with appropriate conservation principles as outlined in the City's approved guiding documents.

Similarly, while the preexisting porch was not original, it was considered generally compatible with the architectural character of the dwelling due to its modest scale, simple form and style. The replacement porch is visually more dominant and incorporates heavier square columns with a formal portico expression. This alteration introduces a fundamentally different architectural expression, creating an appearance that resembles Georgian/Classical architecture which is incompatible with the existing Arts and Crafts home. Consequently, this alteration detracts from the existing architectural style and character of the residence and creates a false sense of historical development for this property. As such, the new porch does not comply with the North Rosedale District Plan nor recognized principles of good conservation practice.

Should City Council refuse the alterations noted above, Heritage Planning staff will continue to work with the owners to find solutions to restore the historic character and appearance of the designated property at 87 Highland Avenue in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Official Plan, and the North Rosedale District Plan.

CONCLUSION

Heritage Planning staff are of the opinion that the alterations to the designated heritage property at 87 Highland Avenue do not comply with the North Rosedale District Plan, the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada and the Official Plan. As such it is recommended that permission under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act be refused.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map

Attachment 2 - Photographs

LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT 1

87 Highland Avenue



Map showing the subject property's location outlined in red at 87 Highland Avenue on the south side of Highland Avenue between Bin-Scarath Road and Roxborough Drive. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).

PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT 2

87 Highland Avenue



Photo of the north elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue prior to the unauthorized alterations (Google Maps, 2020).

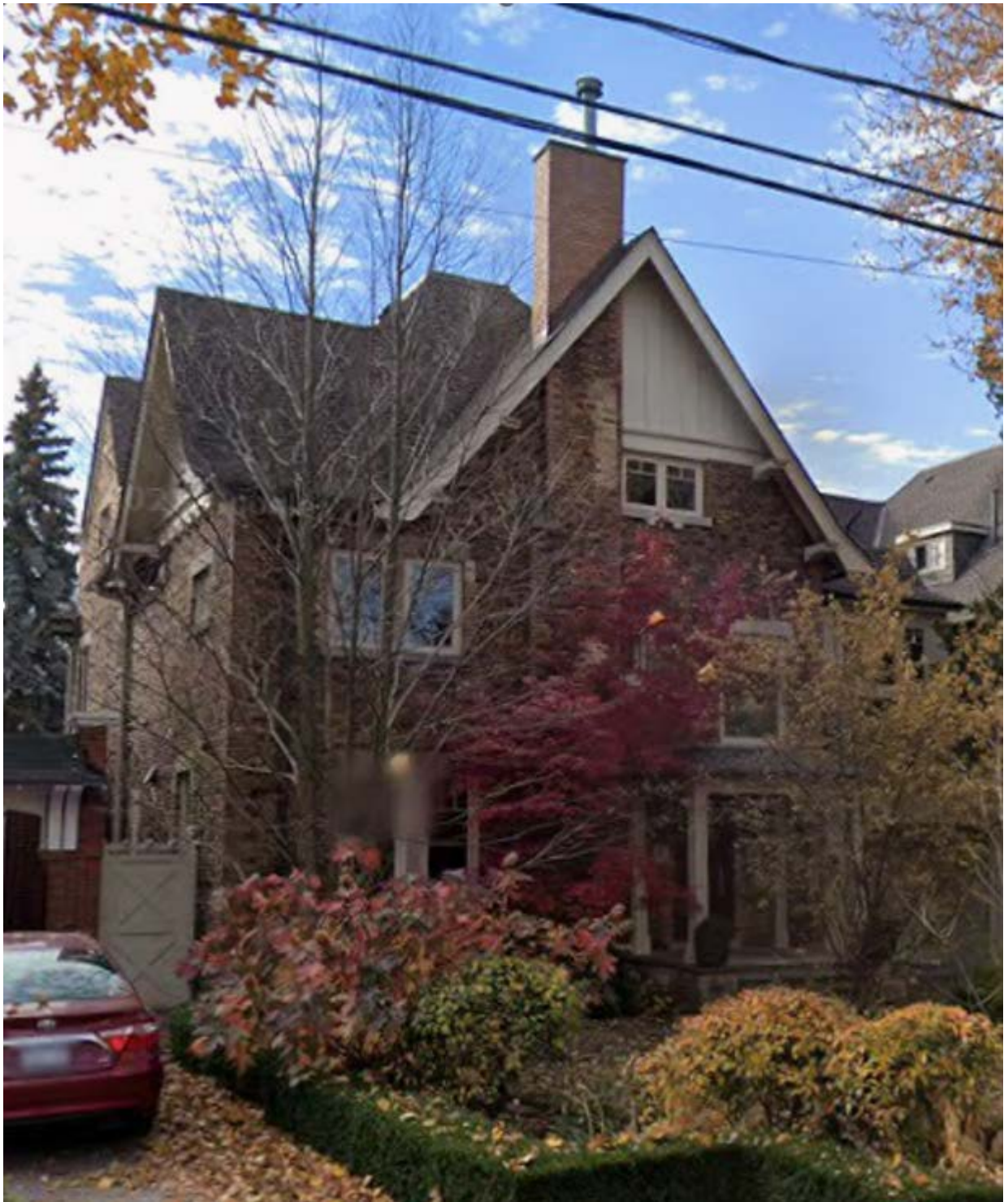


Photo of the northeast elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue prior to the unauthorized alterations (Google Maps, 2020).



Figure 1 - Image of previous brick colour, from Google Streetview.

Detailed photo of the existing masonry at 87 Highland Avenue showing the multi-coloured clinker brick with contrasting quoining prior to the unauthorized alterations (Giamo + Associates Architects Inc, 2025).



Detailed photo of 87 Highland Avenue showing the multi-coloured clinker brick and the decorative half-timbering and brackets in the front gable before (left) and after (right) the unauthorized alterations (Giamo + Associates Architects Inc, 2025).



Photo of the northeast elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue showing architectural elements found on the east gable, prior to the unauthorized alterations (Google Maps, 2019)



Photo of the east elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue showing architectural elements found on the east gable, prior to the unauthorized alterations (Google Maps, 2019)



Photo of the north elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue after the unauthorized alterations (City of Toronto, 2025).



Photo of the northeast elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue after the unauthorized alterations (City of Toronto, 2025).



Detailed photo of the northeast elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue after the unauthorized alterations (City of Toronto, 2025).



Detailed photo of the north elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue after the unauthorized alterations (City of Toronto, 2025).



Detailed photo of the north elevation of the existing building at 87 Highland Avenue after the unauthorized alterations (City of Toronto, 2025).