Casa Loma Heritage Conservation District Study
Community Advisory Group
Meeting #1 Summary

1. Meeting Details

Thursday, January 11, 2018, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Spadina House, Basement Meeting Room, 285 Spadina Road

2. Attendees

Community Advisory Group

Pamela Earle, Resident
Karen Edwards, Acting Manager, Museum & Heritage Services
Dave Hardy, Resident
Dyan Kirshenbaum, Casa Loma Residents Association
Robert Levy, Casa Loma Residents Association
Ruth Ann Lockhart, Resident
Susan Morrison, Resident
Diane Pollack, Resident
Jonathon Spencer, Resident

Toronto City Councillors/Representatives

Councillor Joe Mihevc, Ward 21 St. Paul's
Denise McMullin, Special Assistant to Councillor Josh Matlow, Ward 22 St. Paul's

Project Team

Alex Corey, Project Manager and Heritage Planner, City of Toronto
Kristen Flood, Assistant Heritage Planner, City of Toronto
Dima Cook, Consultant Team Lead, EVOQ Architecture
Reece Milton, EVOQ Architecture
Peter Smith, DTAH
Matthew Kelling, Urban Strategies Inc.
Susan Hall, Lead Facilitator, Lura Consulting
Lily-Ann D'Souza, Lura Consulting

3. **Meeting Purpose and Objectives**
   - Review and adopt the CAG Terms of Reference
   - Learn about the Casa Loma Heritage Conservation District Study process
   - Present work completed to date
   - Guided discussion on neighbourhood character and defining features

4. **Meeting Summary**

Review of the CAG Terms of Reference
   - Ms. Hall reviewed the mandate, roles and responsibilities, code of conduct and terms and conditions of CAG membership outlined in the CAG Terms of Reference
   - The Terms of Reference were mutually agreed upon and adopted with no amendments

Presentation - Casa Loma HCD Study Process, Research and Analysis
   - An overview presentation covering the following topics was provided to CAG members:
       - HCD Study Process, Policy Framework
       - Summary of Community Consultation Meeting #1 Feedback
       - History, Existing Conditions, and Survey
       - Landscape
       - Land Use, Setbacks and Planning Framework

Note – in response to a question regarding the study boundary, City Staff clarified that the study area boundary and the inclusion/exclusion of certain landmarks or features (e.g. Sir Winston Churchill Park, Wells Hill Lawn Bowling Club, Wychwood Library, etc.), was based on a preliminary understanding of the history and evolution of the neighbourhood and may change through the study process

Guided Discussion
   - Following the presentation, Ms. Hall led a guided discussion on the neighbourhood's character and history as well as the HCD study process. The following points summarize responses from CAG members:

Identifying Neighbourhood Features and Character
Q. What do you see as the most important features of the Casa Loma neighbourhood?

Built Form
   - The setback of houses from the street (not the same on all streets)
   - The variety of housing sizes

Specific Buildings and Elements
   - Casa Loma and the stables
   - Spadina House and its gardens

- The Baldwin steps
- The convalescent home
- The apartment buildings on Austin Terrace and Castle View Avenue
- Historic stone walls (e.g. remaining stone wall from Ardwold Gate gatehouse)
    - a CAG member noted that some stone walls that appear old were recently constructed

Street Pattern
- The length of local streets (e.g., Lyndhurst, Hilton, and Wells Hill Avenues are unusual in their length which, when combined with the tree canopy, contributes to a strong sense of place)
- The walkability of the neighbourhood

Community Character
- Strong feeling of community, based on and reinforced by design features such as front porches

Q. Are there specific periods in the history of the Casa Loma neighbourhood that you consider to be more evident in its present-day character?

- Advisory group members did not believe that any one specific period of history is more evident in the neighbourhood's present-day current character than any other

Q. Do the housing types identified in the consultant's presentation adequately reflect the prevailing character of the neighbourhood? Why or why not? Are there other types of houses or buildings within Casa Loma that contribute to its character?

- There was some agreement that the housing types reflected the prevailing character, however no thorough explanation from Advisory Group members was provided as to why
- There was concern that the housing types identified did not adequately reference houses constructed post-1970, of which there are a number within the neighbourhood
    - The consultant clarified that all types of housing would be included in their analysis (including modern/contemporary homes) to determine the neighbourhood's character

Q. Does the landscape analysis reflect your understanding of the neighbourhood's landscaping and public space? Are there landscaping features you think are missing or underrepresented?

The following landscape features were noted as contributing to the neighbourhood's character:
- Mature trees and tree canopy (specifically willow and oak trees)
- Public parks and greenspace within and adjacent to the study area (e.g., Spadina Road Park, Spadina Park, Sir Winston Churchill Park, Nordheimer Ravine, Davenport Escarpment)
- Limited or few fences between properties (use of hedges instead of fences)
- Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate Convent front yard (which looks like an extension of the Austin Terrace Boulevard Lands)

Related comments and questions included:
- Park space does not always have to be developed and should enable passive uses within a natural setting (such as Spadina Road Park)
- There was a question regarding the uniqueness of the area's tree canopy in relation to other neighbourhoods. The consultant team clarified was clarified that no comparative studies had been or would be done as part of the HCD Study project, and that similar mature tree canopies may exist within the City

Q. Are there any other elements or features within the neighbourhood that you think contribute to its character? Are there streets or groups of streets that do or do not have a defined character?

Other elements or features that contribute to the area's character include:
- The roof heights of older homes
- The dead-end configuration of Austin Terrace at Walmer Road
- The apartment building at St. Clair and Hilton Avenues

Streets or groups of streets with/without a defined character:
- The diverse and high-quality character of new homes on Ardwold Gate is unique
- The height and setback of certain houses or groups of houses on Wells Hill Avenue (e.g., 18-32 Wells Hill Avenue)
- Walmer Road and Lyndhurst Crescent were noted as not having a defined character

History

Q. Do you have any comments on historical information about a building, street, public space or the overall neighbourhood that you would like add to the history of Casa Loma?

- Advisory Group members noted that some of the most important individuals involved in Toronto's development lived in the neighbourhood, a point that had not been included in the presentation
  - The consultant clarified that the history of residences and residents was not included in the presentation for the sake of time, but would be included in the final report

HCD Study Process

Q. Do you have any questions about the HCD Study process?

- Request that City Staff provide examples of the types of policies and guidelines that an HCD Plan could include, and to provide residents with an opportunity to review and discuss these policies during the study phase

- Comment that there are many beautiful neighbourhoods in Toronto (e.g. with mature tree canopies, deep setbacks, older houses) and that further analysis is needed to demonstrate what makes the Casa Loma neighbourhood unique and meriting of a HCD
- Question regarding the implication that the HCD Study may have on the processing of building permit applications
  - City Staff clarified that building permits will continue to be approved by the City while the HCD Study is underway and that the HCD Study process has no implications on the processing of permits within the study area
- Comment that it seemed as though a decision had been made that the area or portions of would be designated as an HCD
  - City Staff clarified that the decision has yet to be made as to whether the area should be designated as an HCD. Additional review and analysis is required, which will be presented at the next advisory group meeting and a subsequent public open house. The final decision as to whether Staff will proceed with preparing an HCD Plan will be made by the Toronto Preservation Board

Q. Thinking about the role and responsibilities of the CAG and the scope of the HCD Study, how would you define a successful CAG process?
  i.e. number of meetings, methods of engagement, etc.

There were no immediate comments from CAG members. Some suggested they would consider it and follow-up with City Staff. No follow-up comments to this question were received.

5. **Next Steps**
   - LURA provided the guided discussion questions to CAG members for them to consider and provide feedback
   - City Staff will be arranging a second advisory group meeting in early Spring, and a public open house shortly after