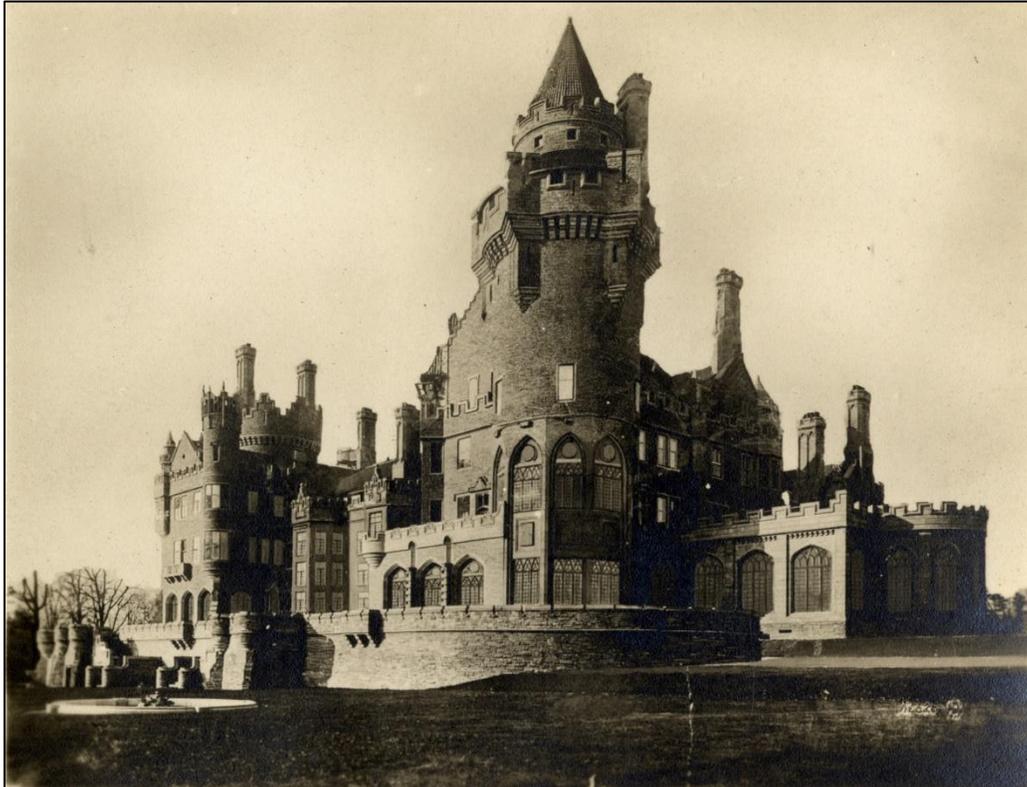


Casa Loma Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study

Community Consultation Meeting #1 – Summary Report



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1. Introduction

Study Purpose

In March 2015, Toronto City Council prioritized the Casa Loma neighbourhood for study as a potential Heritage Conservation District (HCD). The purpose of the Casa Loma HCD Study is to research, survey and analyze the neighbourhood's history and existing conditions (e.g., buildings, structures, archaeology, public spaces and other features) and develop an understanding of the area's heritage character. The Study includes:

- A sidewalk survey of all properties within the area;
- An analysis of prevailing conditions (setbacks, building materials, tree canopy, height, etc.);
- An analysis of the existing planning framework and development trends; and
- An evaluation of the neighbourhood's overall historic character.

Study Area

The Casa Loma HCD study area contains approximately 516 residential properties, as well as City-owned parkland and a select number of institutional properties. The study area is located directly north of the Davenport escarpment, with significant topographic features defining its north, west and east boundaries as shown in Appendix A.

More information about HCD's in Toronto can be found on the City of Toronto's [blog](#).

2. Community Consultation Meeting #1

Meeting Objectives

Community consultation and engagement is an important component of the HCD study. The City of Toronto held the first Community Consultation Meeting for the Casa Loma HCD Study on September 28, 2017 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the City of Toronto Archives (255 Spadina Road).

The purpose of the event was to:

- Introduce the Casa Loma HCD Study;
- Present background material and a preliminary understanding of the area;
- Answer community member questions about the HCD Study process;
- Obtain community input on current conditions and historical areas of interest in the study area; and
- Highlight next steps in the study process.

A copy of the meeting notice is included as Appendix B.

3. Summary of Feedback

The Community Consultation Meeting was designed as an Open House offering community members an opportunity to learn about the HCD study, speak to staff and consultants, and share feedback. The Open House was organized into five stations, enabling community members to focus on the HCD topics of interest to them. The five stations were:

1. Project and Planning Overview;
2. History of the Area;
3. Existing Conditions;
4. Landscape; and
5. Maps.

Approximately 60 community members participated.

In addition to public meetings, a Community Advisory Group (CAG) will be formed to obtain feedback from a diverse range of residents and voices within the study area throughout the HCD Study process. Copies of the draft Terms of Reference and an application form to participate on the CAG were also made available at the Open House.

What We Heard

The purpose of this phase of consultations was to obtain community input on current conditions in the study area. A summary of the feedback received through the Community Consultation is presented below and organized by the discussion questions featured at each station. The summary provides a high level synopsis of recurring comments, concerns or suggestions from community members and is based on 46 Idea Rating Sheets seven (7) feedback forms, and two (2) email submissions.

Station 1: Project Planning and Overview

Discussion Question: What are the most important and character-defining heritage features of the Casa Loma neighbourhood? Are they captured within the Study Area boundaries?

The most important and character-defining heritage features identified by community members include:

- The historic properties located in the area such as Casa Loma and its stables, Spadina House and its gardens, Ardwold gatehouse, and Wychwood Library.
- The overall tree canopy and presence of “old growth” oak trees, particularly on streets like Wells Hill, Hilton and Lyndhurst Avenues.
- The bowling green, parkland (e.g., Wells Hill Park) and greenspace.
- The character created by the mix of older detached homes and “antique” apartment buildings.
- The local road network/configuration and pedestrian laneways.
- The overall feel of the Casa Loma neighbourhood.

Station 2: History of the Area

Discussion Question: What are the most important cultural or historical features (notable people, events) in your neighbourhood?

Feedback from community members identified several cultural or historical features in the neighbourhood, including:

- Historic homes – Casa Loma and stables, Woolworth Manor, MacLean House, Connable House, Neilson House, and Spadina House and its gardens; and
- Historic buildings – Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate Convent on Austen Terrace, Wychwood Library, and Wychwood Barns.

It was noted that Sir John Craig Eaton, Ernest Hemmingway, Marshal McLuhan, John Adaskin, St. Clair Balfour, and members of the Neilson family (of the Neilson Dairy business) all lived in the neighbourhood during their respective lifetimes. Famous visitors to the neighbourhood also included Lucy Maud Montgomery and Albert Einstein.

Station 3: Existing Conditions

Discussion Question: What positive/negative changes have you seen in the neighbourhood?

Several changes to the neighbourhood emerged in the feedback provided by community members, such as:

- The use of Casa Loma as an event venue – This has led to an increase in traffic and parking issues, as well as noise and light show impacts on residents living on adjacent streets.
- Home renovations and redevelopments – This has resulted in an “eclectic” mix of housing styles that some community members feel is not consistent with the original character (i.e., Victorian-style) of certain neighbourhood streets (e.g., Walmer Road). Feedback from other community members indicated that some renovations and/or redevelopments have resulted in homes that blend in well with existing building styles (e.g., Wells Hill near Melgund Road, renovations to McLean and Neilson Houses).
- Tree removal – The removal of large, “old growth” trees during home renovations or redevelopments was cited as a negative change; it was noted that these trees contribute to the neighbourhood’s ambiance.
- Conservation of greenspaces – The preservation of the ravine parkland near Sir Winston Churchill Park was noted as a positive change.
- Changes to street configurations – The closure of Austen Terrace in 1973 was welcomed as a change by some residents as it ensured Lyndhurst Avenue and Wells Hill Avenue did not become a speedway.
- Infill development – The construction of two blue houses on the west side of Walmer Road replaced a vacant lot between 1942 and 1948.
- Changes in density – The changes in density of some residences (i.e., Austin Terrace, opposite Casa Loma, was built as a four-plex, but several units have been converted to

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six or more bedrooms) or streets (e.g., less rooming houses on Wells Hill Avenue) conveyed both positive and negative perceptions toward changes in density.

- Increase in young families – A rise in the number of young families was noted as a positive change in the neighbourhood; however, more would be welcome.
- Set-backs – The long set-backs of homes from the curb were cited as common on some streets, but have been decreasing as houses are re-developed.

Station 4: Landscape

Discussion Question: Do you have any other comments, questions, concerns or input to the Casa Loma HCD Study you would like to share?

Recurring comments raised the need to:

- Replace the loss of many mature trees in the neighbourhood, particularly on Walmer Road between Austin Terrace and Russel Hill Drive.
- Clarify which materials are appropriate for permeable parking spaces.
- Improve the amenities (e.g., benches, gardens, patios, etc.) in Wells Hills Park as a means to attract a diversity of park users

Station 5: Maps

Discussion Questions: Are there specific areas within the Casa Loma neighbourhood that you think are historic (buildings/blocks/parks/views)? What makes them unique to you? Identify the buildings, blocks, parks, landmarks and features that are important to you.

In addition to the features noted earlier, community members who attended the open house highlighted several neighbourhood features (i.e., buildings, blocks, parks and views) with on aerial maps. These features include:

- Building materials (i.e., use of clinker bricks on Wells Hills Avenue);
- Building styles (e.g., arts and crafts);
- Specific buildings and homes (e.g., multiple homes on Wells Hills Avenue, Lyndhurst Avenue, Austin Terrace, Austin Crescent, Walmer Road, and Ardworld Gate);
- The views overlooking the city from the north side of Davenport Road (i.e., south of Spadina House and Casa Loma);
- A former pond near Lyndhurst Avenue and Austin Terrace that was used as a staking rink in the winter; and
- The pedestrian laneway linking Connable Drive and Walmer Road.

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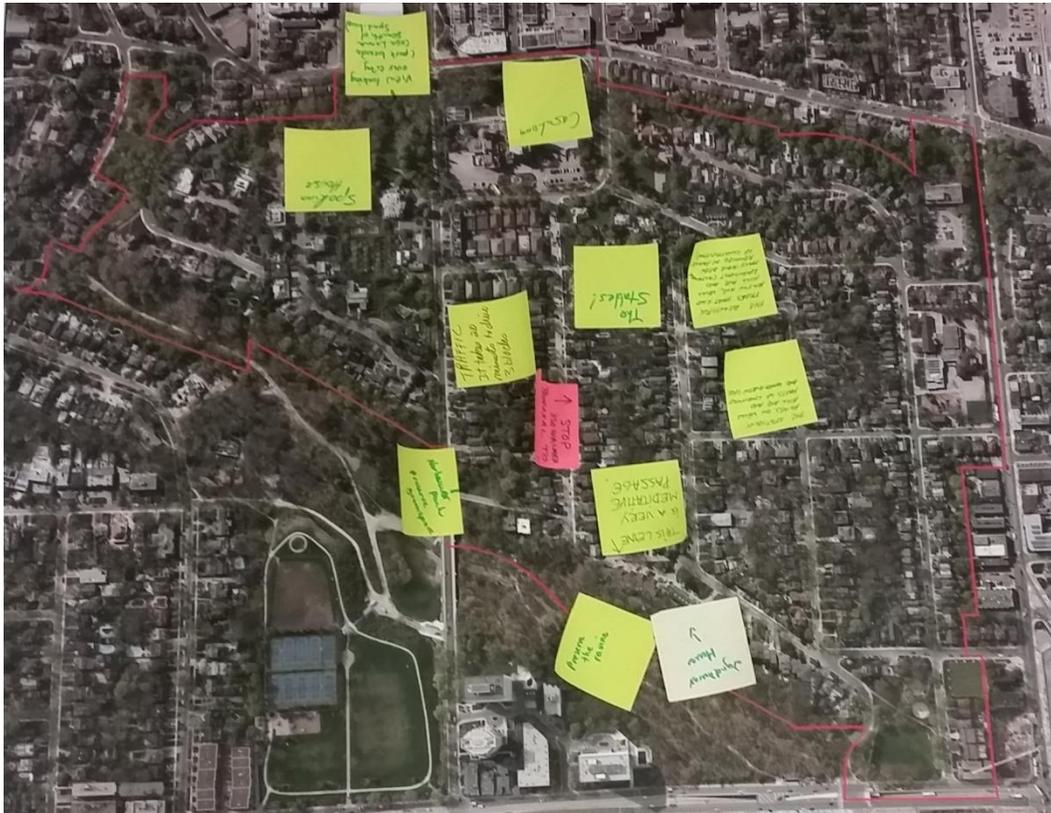


Figure 2: Aerial map of the study area with comments and feedback from CCM participants.

Additional Feedback and Areas for Clarification

Community members provided many other comments about the study, as well as those that are outside the scope of the project. The list below highlights the top recurring additional comments that emerged in the feedback:

- Concern that an HCD designation will impact property values – Recurring comments expressed concern that a heritage designation will negatively affect real estate values and/or the ability of homeowners to renovate their properties. In relation to this, suggestions were made to designate specific buildings within the study area rather than applying a district-level designation. Conversely, a few property owners specifically requested the removal of their properties from the study area on the basis that they do not have any heritage value.
- Support to designate the study area as an HCD – Multiple comments conveyed support to recognize the area’s built heritage and character formally through an HCD.
- Need for more parking and noise bylaw enforcement – There is concern that the City is not enforcing parking and noise bylaws related to the use of Casa Loma as an event space, and the general increase in front yard parking (often without permits).

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4. Next Steps

Feedback obtained at the first Community Consultation Meeting will be considered as part of the HCD Study. The CAG will also be established following the Community Consultation Meeting, with the first meeting anticipated for fall 2017. Project updates will be posted on the City of Toronto's [blog](#).

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Appendix A – Casa Loma HCD Study Area Boundary

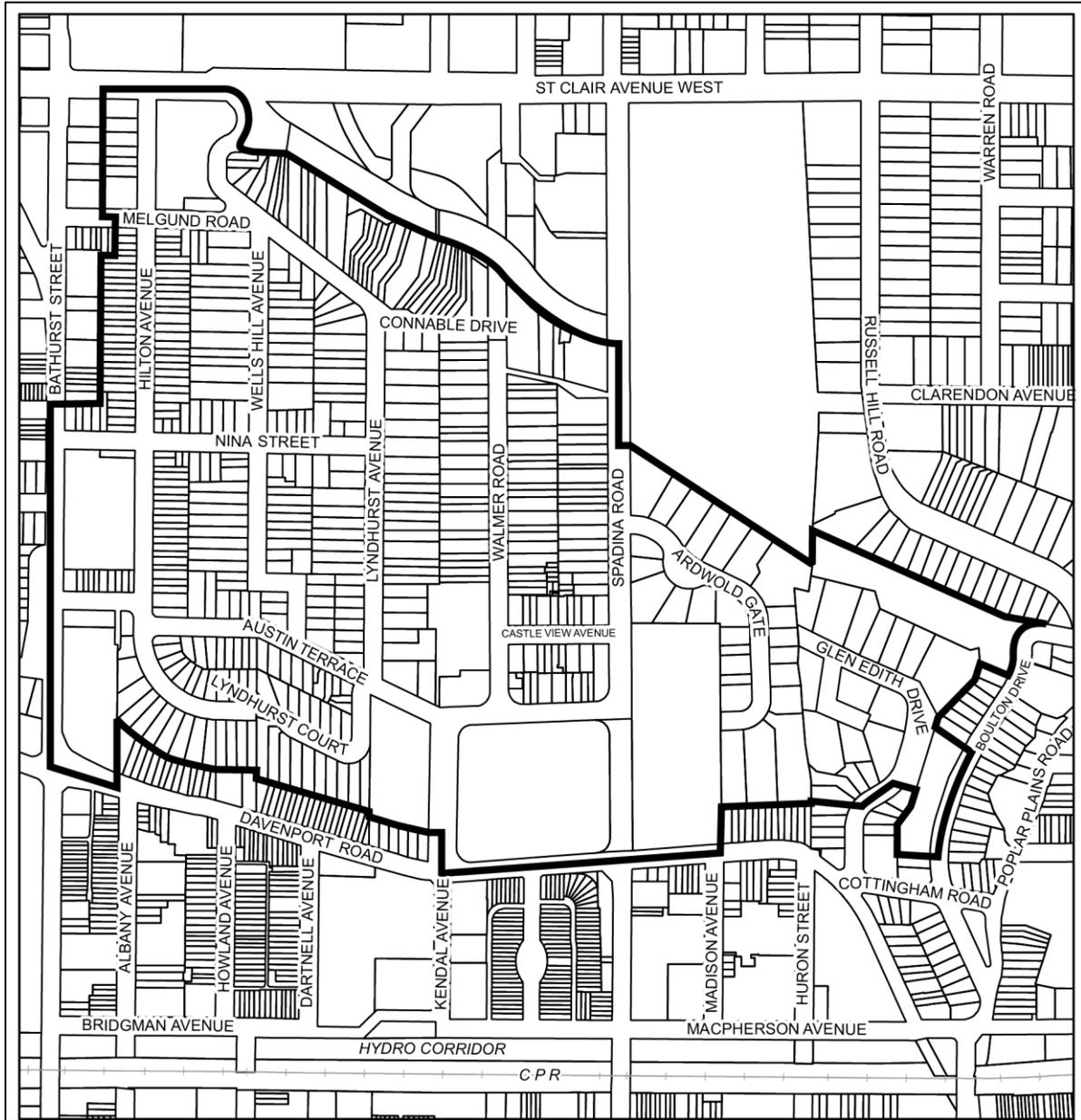


Figure 3: Casa Loma HCD Study Area

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Appendix B - Community Meeting Notice



The City is holding the first Open House for the Casa Loma Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study, where you can drop by to gather information, speak with staff and consultants and share comments.

Date: September 28, 2017
Time: 5pm-8pm (drop-in at any time)
Place: City of Toronto Archives
255 Spadina Road, Ground Floor Atrium

City Planning initiated the Casa Loma HCD Study in order to research, survey and analyze the neighbourhood's history and existing conditions and develop an understanding of the area's heritage character. This Study was authorized and prioritized by City Council to determine if the Casa Loma neighbourhood may warrant designation as an HCD. The HCD Study includes:

- a sidewalk survey of all properties within the area
- an analysis of prevailing conditions (setbacks, building materials, tree canopy, height, etc.)
- an analysis of the existing planning framework and development trends
- an evaluation of the neighbourhood's overall historic character

Community consultation and engagement is an important component of this study. This Open House will provide an overview of the HCD Study process and preliminary findings from the heritage survey and research. Please drop by to share your thoughts on the Casa Loma neighbourhood, ask questions and participate in the process. Additional meetings will be held through the course of the study.



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For more information on HCDs, visit the HCD Blog:
www.hcdtoronto.wordpress.com

Information will be collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record. Our public meeting locations are wheelchair/mobility device accessible. Other reasonable accommodation or assistive services for persons with disabilities may be provided with adequate notice. Please contact the Planner above with your request. The City of Toronto is committed to taking the necessary steps to insure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.