

# Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study

Community Consultation Meeting #1 – Summary Report



Prepared by Lura Consulting for the City of Toronto



# Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study Community Consultation Meeting #1 – Summary Report

## 1. Introduction

### Study Purpose

The Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study was prioritized by City Council in March 2015. The study was recommended to provide an overall understanding of the area's history and heritage character and to determine if designation as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) would be an appropriate heritage planning tool for the area.

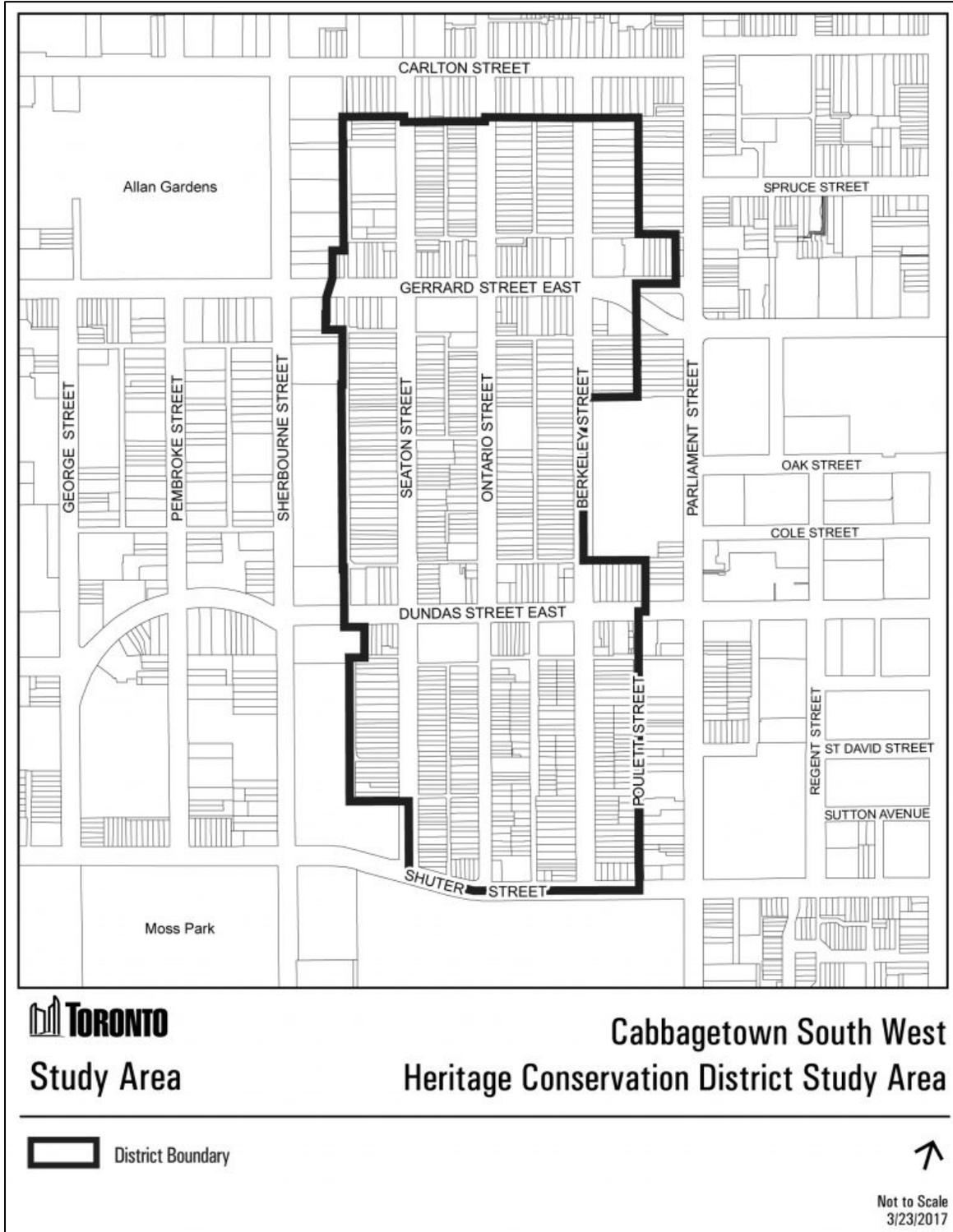
The City Planning Division initiated the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Study in Spring 2018 and retained a project team led by EVOQ Architecture (heritage architects) with Urban Strategies Inc. (planning consultants) and LURA (facilitators) to prepare the study report.

The study includes a comprehensive property inventory, historical research, character analysis, evaluation of the area's heritage value, and a review of the area's existing planning framework. The study process includes two public meetings, as well as a Community Advisory Group (CAG) to provide specific and detailed feedback on research, analysis and recommendations. Once complete, the study report and an accompanying staff report will be presented to the Toronto Preservation Board for endorsement, before proceeding with the development of any possible Heritage Conservation District plan.

### Study Area

The Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Study Area is generally bound by Sherbourne Street to the west, Carlton Street to the north, Parliament Street to the east and Shuter Street to the south. The study area may be changed through the HCD Study process and does not necessarily reflect any potential district boundary.

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**Figure 1: Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Study Area**

More information about the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Study can be found on the City of Toronto's [website](#).

## **2. Community Consultation Meeting #1**

### **Meeting Objectives**

Community engagement is an important component of the HCD Study. The City of Toronto held the first Community Consultation Meeting for the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Study on July 5, 2018 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Central Neighbourhood House (349 Ontario Street).

The purpose of the event was to:

- To introduce the Cabbagetown SW Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study, including approach, timing, and activities;
- To present background material and preliminary understanding of the area;
- To seek participation of members for the Community Advisory Group (CAG);
- Answer community member questions about the HCD Study process; and
- Highlight next steps.

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

## **3. Summary of Feedback**

The meeting format featured an open house with six stations offering community members an opportunity to learn about the HCD Study, speak to City staff, the consultant team and facilitators, and share feedback. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document was provided to all participants, as was a comment form for those who wanted to provide written feedback.

A copy of the FAQ document is included as Appendix B.

The six stations were:

1. Project and Planning Overview/About the Project;
2. Permit Process;
3. Heritage Grant Programs;
4. History of the Area;
5. Character; and
6. Interactive Map.

Feedback was obtained through the following methods:

- a) Input during discussions and sticky notes at the 'History of the Area' station;
- b) Input during discussions and sticky notes and dots at the 'Interactive Map' station;
- c) Feedback forms submitted during, and following, the meeting; and
- d) Direct e-mails to City of Toronto staff.

Approximately 40 community members participated.

Participants were invited to submit comment forms at the event or visit the project website after the event and submit comments and/or feedback via mail or e-mail. The comment forms were collected until July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to be included in this report.

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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 community meeting.

### **What We Heard**

A summary of the feedback received through the community meeting 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 (72) sticky notes and sticker dots, and (6) comment forms submitted at, and following, the meeting.

#### **3.1. Station 1: About the Project and Planning Overview**

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

Participants noted the following character-defining features of the Cabbagetown Southwest neighbourhood:

- Historic nature of the area with Victorian era character of homes with brick facades and completely intact streets;
- Laneways, alleys and parkettes that create a unique connective network within the area;
- Large tree canopies on streets and laneways, particularly mentioned on Seaton Street;
- Front garden landscaping;
- Walkable, intimate neighbourhood with community spirit; and
- Diversity and uniqueness to neighbourhood and buildings.

#### **3.2. Station 2: Permit Process**

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

Participants were invited to ask questions and share comments and/or concerns about the permit process of making changes to properties within an HCD. A few participants inquired about the process of constructing additions, such as a balcony, or modifications to the primary façade. City staff provided clarity about contacting Heritage Preservation Services to consult when homeowners within an HCD are wanting to do work. Additionally, City staff provided explanations about the process to acquire a heritage permit and how a planner would go about working with homeowners to ensure that an addition or modification is supported and constructed with sensitivity.

#### **3.3. Station 3: Heritage Grant Programs**

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

City staff provided explanations about the Toronto Heritage Grant Programs process and participants were interested in learning about different ways they could get financial support for

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work done to their homes. One participant asked if laneways are considered and protected within an HCD designation as it is not visible from the main street however some properties main entrance is from laneways and residents of these properties are interested in preserving the architecture and heritage character through grant programs.

### 3.4. Station 4: History of the Area

**Discussion Question:** What are the stories of your neighbourhood that we need to know to understand it?

In discussing the history of the area, many participants noted that there is a large marginalized community in, and around, the area that needs more help and services. This was particularly noted on Sherbourne Street between Queen Street and Dundas Street. A few participants noted that the marginalized population is increasing in the area. Mental health issues and drug use are significant concerns, particularly in back alleys and laneways.

Participants also provided input on specific homes and properties in the area with a significant historic component. A list of these properties is provided below:

- The Beer Store property on Gerrard Street was formerly a home for girls from the late 1860s to early 1930s. The home for girls assisted with the formation of a home for boys which is still standing at George Street and Gerrard Street;
- There was a home for unwed mothers at the corner of Ontario Street and Gerrard Street (386 Ontario Street – Annex of home);
- Pennington Family Goods Shop was built 140 years ago and became a convenience store that is presently part of CBC's Kim's Convenience;
- There was a dairy at the intersection of Berkeley Street and Milan Street that remained a vacant lot for decades;
- There was a butcher shop at the south-east corner of Gerrard Street and Ontario Street circa 1900;
- Lee Public School was the last standing building in 1900;
- There was a tunnel of unknown origin between 365 Dundas Street condo and home residences;
- Coal and China was found in backyards;
- 231 Seaton was originally home of John Burns and may have been designed by Henry Langley.;
- All homes between Dundas Street and Carlton Street were built before 1900. Cottages were built along Seaton Street near Shuter Street in 1860 and 317 Ontario Street was built in 1840s.

**Discussion Question:** What are the most important people or events in your neighbourhoods past that we should know about?

One participant noted that a Governor General Award and Man Booker Prize winning Canadian author lives in the area. Another participant noted that Sir Charles Tupper, the 7<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of Canada, held the first mortgage at 356 Ontario Street.

### 3.5. Station 5: Character

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

Participants noted seeing the following changes, both negative and positive, in the neighbourhood:

- Laneways and cross-streets are significant but there are concerns of safety and issues of waste, particularly in laneways and alleys. The community hosts an annual street and alley clean-up day which speaks to the nature of community spirit that participants noted;
- Community inspired artwork has added to the sense of community spirit. A mosaic artwork near the Ontario Street Parkette (227 Ontario Street) was paid for, designed and installed by the Cabbagetown South Residents Association in honour of Cruickshank Creek;
- Careless renovations and loss of architectural details was noted. There have been some new renovations done by new owners and renters with “mass produced elements” which has resulted in the destruction of unique features. An example of 7 houses on Ontario Street that have recently been demolished and remodeled was noted;
- The importance of active transportation mobility within the community as well as connecting with surrounding areas in downtown Toronto is increasing. Participants noted the need for additional bike lanes and maintenance of laneways;
- There is an increase of street involved people and drug users, particularly in alley ways and laneways which has led to a decreased sense of safety in the area;
- There have been issues of graffiti and car vandalisms/break-ins;
- Anniversary Park is a great community asset but it needs work to be maintained; and
- There are community concerns about the development of the Beer Store site, particularly from residents on Gerrard Street.

### 3.6. Station 6: Interactive Map

**Discussion Question:** What are the most important features (buildings/streetscapes/landscapes/views) in your neighbourhood?

Participants noted the following features in regards to buildings, streetscapes, landscapes and views as being important to the Cabbagetown Southwest neighbourhood:

- Terrace houses on Berkeley Street between Carlton Street and Dundas Street, particularly on the west side;
- Variety of buildings along Gerrard Street between Parliament Street and Sherbourne Street; and
- The streetscape of Gerrard Street east of Ontario Street, Carlton Street east of Seaton Street and Parliament Street entirely.

Participants noted the following building types and heritage attributes:

- The neighbourhood is a historic area with defining architecture but newer homes can fit in well;
- Homes on Seaton Street, particularly units 139-149 have stone arches over doors and stained glass in tact;

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- The architectural character of storefronts on Gerrard Street are significant, intact and should be protected;
- Apartment buildings within the area are trying to integrate with the style of the rest of the neighbourhood; and
- 376 Ontario Street, 237 Gerrard Street, 249 Seaton Street and other homes on Seaton Street between Shuter Street and Dundas Street are intact homes.

**Discussion Question:** Are there any buildings, blocks or public spaces that are important to the Cabbagetown SW neighbourhood's character and are not captured within these boundaries?

Participants noted the following buildings, blocks or public spaces that are outside of the Cabbagetown SW HCD Study Area as being important to the Cabbagetown SW neighbourhood:

- Carlton Street East of Seaton Street;
- Parliament Street;
- Allan Gardens;
- Commercial buildings between Berkeley Street and Ontario Street along Gerrard Street;
- Anniversary Square and the intersection and street north of the square and adjacent lane; and
- East side of Sherbourne Street (North of Dundas).

### **3.7. Additional Feedback and Areas of Clarification**

Additional feedback and questions were posed by participants pertaining to historical facts of the past and potential developments of the future as well as social environmental issues of the community's current conditions. Specifically, participants asked the following questions:

- What can I do/not to my property?
- Will the Cabbagetown SW HCD be like the rest of the Cabbagetown HCDs?
- How will the Cabbagetown SW HCD affect me and my home?
- Are laneways reflected in the public view (view from the street) within an HCD process?
- How can the Cabbagetown Southwest area find a balance to include the marginalized population?
- How can concerns about social issues particularly pertaining to drug users in laneways be addressed through this process?
- Who lived in the area in the past?
- Why were the building types and styles built in the area?
- When were additions built on the back of row houses on Dundas Street?
- Will 249 Seaton Street be demolished in order to construct a triplex?
- When did the fire that happened south of Dundas Street within the Study Area take place?
- When will the Moss Park towers be demolished and redeveloped?



**Appendix A – Community Meeting Notice**

The City Planning Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study team is hosting a community consultation (open house) where you can learn about the study, ask questions and share your stories about your neighbourhood.

## **Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District Study**

### **Community Consultation (Open House)**

Join City Planning staff and their consultants to learn about the first phase of the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Study. Come to ask your questions to the study team, share stories about your neighbourhood, and learn how to get involved.



**July 5th, 2018**

5:30 PM - 8 PM

[open house - drop-in anytime]



**Central Neighbourhood House, Gymnasium**

349 Ontario Street

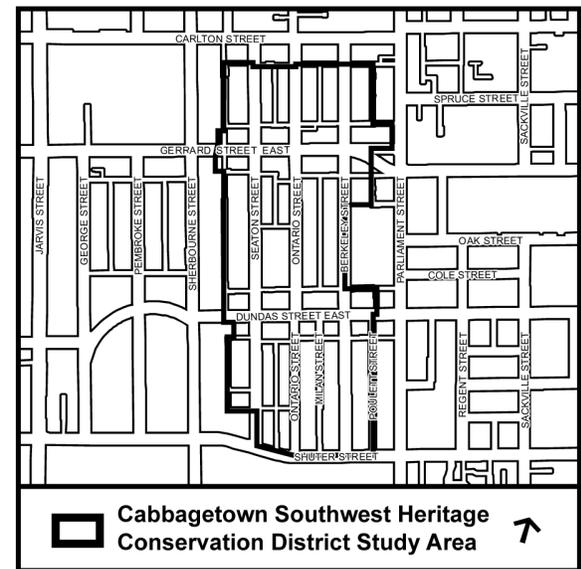
HCDs are neighbourhoods whose cultural heritage value contributes to a sense of place extending beyond their individual buildings, structures and landscapes. City Planning is initiating the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Study ('the HCD study') in order to research, survey and analyze the neighbourhood's history and existing conditions and develop an understanding of the area's heritage character. The HCD study was authorized and prioritized by City Council to determine if the Cabbagetown Southwest 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, height, materials, etc.)
- an analysis of the existing planning framework & development trends
- an evaluation of the neighbourhood's overall historic character

Community consultation is an important component of this study in order to gain an understanding of the social and community values of the neighbourhood. This Open House will provide an introduction to the HCD study and give residents an opportunity to strengthen the study by sharing their insights into the history and character of the Cabbagetown Southwest neighbourhood. We will also be making a call for participation in a Community Advisory Group for the HCD study.

For those unable to attend, additional meetings will be held through the course of the study. You can also learn more about the HCD Study by visiting the study website:

<https://www.toronto.ca/cabbagetown-sw-heritage-study>



**Sharon Hong**  
**Heritage Planner**  
**Heritage Preservation Services**  
**416-392-2653**  
**Sharon.Hong@toronto.ca**

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 accessible.

Please contact Sharon Hong at 416-392-2653 sharon.hong@toronto.ca 72 hours in advance to arrange additional accommodation.

**Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions**

## Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a Heritage Conservation District?**

Heritage Conservation Districts are neighbourhoods that are protected by a municipal by-law passed under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act by City Council. Heritage Conservation Districts are put in place to conserve and enhance the special character of Toronto's historic areas and neighbourhoods.

### **Why and how are Heritage Conservation District Studies initiated?**

Provincial planning policy and the City's Official Plan mandate the City to conserve areas with significant heritage value, wherever they exist. Potential Heritage Conservation Districts can be nominated by community members or can be identified by Staff. Like all planning studies done by the City, Heritage Conservation District studies are conducted by planning professionals, to ensure that the area is worthy of study, evaluate whether it warrants designation, and provide recommendations to the Toronto Preservation Board and City Council.

### **What are the advantages of being part of a Heritage Conservation District?**

Being part of a Heritage Conservation District ensures that changes in your neighbourhood are guided by a clear planning and permit application process, with area specific guidelines. Property owners within Heritage Conservation Districts may also benefit from the Toronto Heritage Grant Program which can assist with the cost of conservation work.

### **How will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect my ability to change my property?**

Heritage Conservation Districts support changes that enhance a neighbourhood's unique character. Property owners within a District are required to receive a heritage permit for additions, alterations or demolition on their property. Changes to the interior, changes to the exterior that are not visible from the street, and routine maintenance like painting do not require a heritage permit.

### **Is there a cost for heritage permit applications, and how long is the application process?**

Heritage permits are free, and are integrated with the building permit process; only one application is required, and the average time for review of heritage permit applications is three days.

### **Will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect the use of my property?**

No. Designation within a Heritage Conservation District does not prevent the use of properties from changing. If a change of use requires alterations to the building, the alterations may require heritage permit approval.

### **Will I have to change my existing windows and doors if the neighbourhood is designated?**

No, you will not be required to replace your existing windows and doors. If you choose to replace your existing windows and doors that are visible from the sidewalk, you will need a heritage permit to do so. The Toronto Heritage Grant Program may be able to assist in the cost of repair or restoration of original windows and doors.

**Will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect my property values?**

Property values are determined by many factors. Recent studies indicate that property values are most often similar or higher in Heritage Conservation Districts when compared to similar properties in undesignated areas. See:

- "Heritage Districts Work! – More Stories of Success", 2012. Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Robert Shipley, University of Waterloo
- "The Economic Value of Heritage Districts: How Assessment Growth in Heritage Conservation Districts Compares With Non-designated Areas in Hamilton", 2016. Urban Insights bulletin, CivicPlan.

**Will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect my insurance premiums?**

The provincial Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Insurance Bureau of Canada have both confirmed that insurance premiums should not go up as result of heritage designation. Heritage property owners are encouraged to shop around to find the right insurance provider, and should contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada if their insurer has questions regarding designation.