



Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District Study

Meeting Summary: Community Advisory Group Meeting 2

Runnymede United Church, 432 Runnymede Road, Lower Memorial Hall
June 14, 2018, 6:30-8:30 pm



BLOOR WEST VILLAGE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY, MEETING SUMMARY FOR COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP 2

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BLOOR WEST VILLAGE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY, MEETING SUMMARY FOR COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP 2

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting 2 for the Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study was held on June 14, 2018 at the Runnymede United Church, Lower Memorial Hall, from 6:30-8:30 pm. The meeting included a 50-minute presentation, guided discussion, and mapping exercise (Appendix A). The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update of the HCD Study progress, a summary of the response to CAG Meeting 1 feedback, and an update on the character analysis, policy context, and heritage evaluation. Stantec presented key messages/results from CAG1, updates to the history and character analysis, new information regarding the policy context, and the preliminary results of the heritage evaluation. Stantec also presented maps showing the distribution of key characteristics and the preliminary identification of properties with heritage value in the Bloor West HCD Study Area. Stantec took notes throughout the meeting to record the feedback received from the CAG.

The meeting was attended by six out of nine CAG members. Attendance is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Meeting Attendance

Group	Summary of Attendance
Community Advisory Group	<i>Present:</i> Stephen Dewdney (Vice President, Bloor West Village Residents' Association), Joseph Guzzi (Municipal Planner - Fasken Martineau, DuMoulin LLP), Allan Killin (High Park Residents' Association), Nick Singh (Former President, Swansea Area Ratepayers' Association), Natalie Sydoruk (local property owner), Mark Warrack (Former Manager of Culture, Mississauga; local resident) <i>Absent:</i> Alexa Wing (local resident), David Howitt (Chair, Bloor West Village Business Improvement Association [BIA]), Marc Chretien (local resident)
Consultant Team	David Waverman, Heidy Schopf, David Kielstra
City of Toronto	Councillor Sarah Doucette, Pourya Nazemi, Greg Byrne, Gary Midema, Laura Nguyen

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Key Messages

Feedback from CAG Meeting 2 was gathered during the guided discussion period and during the mapping exercise. The discussion questions presented to the CAG were:

Question of Clarification:

- 1) What are your thoughts on the material presented? *Do you have any questions or comments?*

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are your thoughts on the preliminary heritage evaluation presented? *Does this reflect your understanding of the cultural heritage of Bloor West Village?*
- 2) How have cultural groups (i.e. Ukrainian population or other) had a role in defining the character of Bloor West Village?
- 3) How have organizations such as the BIA influenced the evolution of the Bloor West Village we see today?

Mapping Exercise Questions:

- 1) Do you agree with the key characteristics identified for Bloor West Village? *Key characteristics: 1) buildings constructed between 1900-1939, 2) buildings between one to four storeys, 3) fine grain historic properties, 4) landmark buildings, 5) architectural style*
- 2) How do you interpret the distribution of key characteristics? *Are there distinct heritage areas within the Bloor West Village HCD Study Area?*

Key messages received are provided in Section 2.0 and a detailed summary of feedback is provided in Section 3.0. Next steps for the CAG are presented in Section 4.0.

2.0 Key Messages

The following key messages were gathered during CAG Meeting 2:

- **Urban Fabric:** The urban fabric of the Bloor West Village HCD Study Area was discussed at length. It was agreed that the fine property grain found in sections of the Study Area is character defining and should be conserved. It was also noted that Bloor West Village is commonly cited as a “model” village and is used as an example of good planning by other urban communities. Physical characteristics of the area, such as the width of the sidewalks, scale of the buildings relative to the width of the road, and arrangement of parking were noted as positive and valued

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Key Messages

aspects of the neighbourhood. In addition, High Park, the bridge over the Humber River, and South Kingsway were noted as potential gateways. The CAG noted that High Park and the Humber River act as natural bookends or boundaries to the Study Area.

- **Planning and Policy:** The planning and policy context of the Bloor West Village HCD Study Area was discussed at the CAG Meeting 2. The CAG asked if the HCD Study would address whether mid-rise buildings are an appropriate built form in Bloor West Village. In response, it was noted that the HCD Study will address the existing conditions and heritage value of Bloor West Village. Specific policies and guidelines would be developed during the HCD Plan Phase. The Study Team explained that the objective of the HCD Study will be to identify the most appropriate and effective planning tools to conserve the cultural heritage value of Bloor West Village. The CAG also noted that capping store sizes seems to be an effective tool to conserve the fine grain property sizes in the area. It was suggested that 1,750 square feet is an ideal store size in Bloor West Village.
- **Natural Features:** The contextual importance of High Park and the Humber River were discussed at CAG Meeting 2. It was noted that these parks are natural “bookends” for the Study Area. It was questioned why High Park is not included in the Study Area. In response, it was noted that High Park is a listed property and is currently protected as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). It was also noted that the cultural heritage value of High Park relates more to the park itself than to Bloor Street West. Stantec suggested that the High Park has its own significance and that other methods of protection, rather than inclusion in the Bloor West Village HCD Study, may be more appropriate for the park. In addition, a CAG member noted that the Humber River is not visible from the Study Area.
- **Role of the BIA:** The historical and ongoing role of the BIA in Bloor West Village was discussed during CAG Meeting 2. It was noted that the BIA effectively conserved the fine grain character of Bloor West Village through supporting local businesses. It was also suggested that the BIA had a role in supporting infill that was appropriate and respectful of the existing urban fabric of Bloor Street West. One CAG member posited that the BIA ensured that the heights and number of bays of infill buildings was sympathetic to the existing historical buildings along Bloor Street West.
- **Ukrainian Community:** The CAG was asked to clarify the historical, and ongoing, role of the Ukrainian community in Bloor West Village. The CAG noted that the Ukrainian population was historically high in the area but that the presence of this community has decreased over the past 10-15 years. This is reflected in the decreased number of Ukrainian bakeries and shops along Bloor Street West. The CAG also noted that churches in the area (i.e. St. Pius Church) have a Ukrainian

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Detailed Summary of Feedback

population that travels from outside the area to attend. The CAG did not note any other cultural groups as being associated with Bloor West Village.

- **Heritage Evaluation:** The draft heritage evaluation was presented to the CAG by Stantec. It was clarified that the evaluation criteria come from the *City of Toronto's Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference* (2012). It was also clarified that the key characteristics identified for the Study Area are unique to Bloor West Village and were identified based on the results of the character analysis. The CAG voiced general concern with the "Contributing" vs "Non-Contributing" property categories. Specifically, the CAG is concerned that two-storey, fine grain historic buildings may be demolished if they are not identified as "Contributing" properties. It was clarified that both "Contributing" and "Non-Contributing" properties in an HCD have policies and guidelines that are developed to conserve the cultural heritage value of the area.
- **Mapping Exercise:** A mapping exercise was carried out where maps showing the distribution of key characteristics and draft "Potentially Contributing" vs "Non-Contributing" properties were presented. It was stressed that the maps were in draft form and were for discussion purposes only. The CAG noted that there were concentrations of key characteristics in the High Park Frontage and Village Main Street character sub-areas. The CAG asked whether a contextual discussion of "Non-Contributing" properties is needed since a number of properties with some key characteristics were not identified as "Potentially Contributing" properties, due to non-sympathetic building alterations. It was clarified that "Non-Contributing" properties within an HCD still have policies and guidelines, but that these would differ from policies and guidelines for "Contributing" properties.
- **General Comments:** Several general comments were received during CAG Meeting 2 related to property taxes, terminology, the listing of heritage properties, and the history section of the report.

3.0 Detailed Summary of Feedback

3.1 Urban Fabric

Several specific points regarding the urban fabric of Bloor West Village were raised during CAG Meeting 2, including:

- Gateways:
 - It was noted that a primary gateway at the west of the Study Area is the South Kingsway/Riverview Gardens area.

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- Opinion was voiced that High Park and the Humber River act as gateways to the area.
- The bridge over the Humber River was noted as a gateway on the west end of the Study Area.
- Stantec discussed the presence of mature trees within the Study Area and noted that a contributing factor is the potential presence of original soils, which would have been left *in situ* by pre-First World War construction techniques.
- Fragmentation of historical properties in the Study Area is concentrated towards the Humber River where new development disrupts the streetscape and views towards the west.
- Historical lot sizes: It was noted that service stations were located at Armadale Avenue and Willard Avenue. These service stations no longer remain but they had larger lot sizes, which are reflected in the current urban fabric on the south side of Bloor Street West.
- A member of the CAG asked if the HCD Study will identify if mid-rises are appropriate within the Study Area. Stantec noted that there are examples of historic mid-rises in Bloor West Village.
- Bloor West Village has been often cited as a model “village” in terms of road widths, relationship of scale of buildings to the streetscape, sidewalk/pedestrian accessibility and on street parking. It was suggested that this theme could be used in the HCD Study.
- The fine property grain within the Study Area was noted as a character defining element that should be valued and recognized.
- The width of the sidewalks and arrangement of public parking along Bloor Street West were noted as positive features of Bloor West Village.
- The area is highly walkable due to smaller block sizes.
- Bloor Street West should be considered a ‘village’, not just a linear corridor.
- Store sizes were noted as being a contributing factor in the maintenance of the fine property grain along Bloor Street West.
- Building bays should be considered when determining property grain.

3.2 Planning and Policy

Comments were received regarding the planning and policy context of Bloor West Village, including:

- A member of the CAG asked if the HCD Study will address whether mid-rise buildings are appropriate in the Study Area. Stantec noted that the HCD Study will address the existing conditions and heritage value of Bloor West Village.
- It was noted that the objective of the HCD Study will be to identify and assess the potential heritage values and attributes of the Bloor West Village HCD Study Area and to determine whether the area or portions therein meet the criteria in [Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies, and Terms of Reference](#) for designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act

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- The CAG noted that maximum store sizes have had an important influence on the area. The cap placed on store sizes and restaurants has conserved the fine property grain in the area.
- Individuals in the CAG felt that 1,750 square feet is an ideal store size in the area.

3.3 Natural Features

The contextual importance of High Park and the Humber River was raised during CAG Meeting 2. Comments received include:

- Opinion was voiced that High Park and the Humber River are the natural “book-ends” of the Study Area
- A member of the CAG noted that the frontage of High Park should be included in the Study Area. Stantec noted that High Park is an ANSI under the MNRF and is a listed heritage property. In terms of cultural heritage, the frontage of High Park relates more to the park itself, and not to Bloor Street West. Other means could be explored to protect High Park, including individual designation or a Conservation Management Plan for this property. High Park likely requires a separate set of policies/guidelines to conserve its cultural heritage value.
- It was noted by a member of the CAG that the Humber River is not visible from the Study Area. Stantec agreed and noted that the Humber River is not visible from the Study Area even during the winter when foliage is not present.
- It was noted that High Park is not part of the Study Area but views of the park along Bloor Street West are significant.

3.4 Role of the BIA

The role of the BIA in the historical, and ongoing, development of Bloor West Village was discussed at CAG Meeting 2. Comments received regarding the BIA include:

- The role of the BIA in Bloor West Village goes beyond conservation since they had an influential role in supporting appropriate infill in the neighbourhood. Infilling service stations is an example. BIA helped infill those areas with compatible fabric for those areas. Infill is noted as different (mostly intermediate or larger property grains). A member noted that the BIA ensured that infill heights and the number of bays were respected.

3.5 Ukrainian Community

The role of the Ukrainian community in Bloor West Village was discussed at CAG Meeting 2. Relevant comments include:

- CAG members identified that there used to be a high population of Ukrainians in the area but this population has decreased in the last 10-15 years.

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- The presence of Ukrainian bakeries and shops has decreased.
- There are remaining cultural links between the Ukrainian population and the churches in the area. St. Pius Church has a known Ukrainian congregation and people travel from outside the area to attend this church.
- It was suggested that City Directories may contain information on the historical presence of Ukrainian businesses along Bloor Street West.
- The annual Ukrainian festival is ongoing and draws many people to the area.

3.6 Heritage Evaluation

The draft heritage evaluation was presented at CAG Meeting 2. CAG members were asked for feedback on the draft evaluation. Comments received include:

- It was clarified that the evaluation criteria are from [*Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies, and Terms of Reference*](#) (City of Toronto 2012).
- The key characteristics identified in the Bloor West Village HCD Study are specific to the area and were identified following the results of the character analysis.
- It was noted by the CAG that the Humber River may contribute to the contextual value of the Study Area.
- A few CAG members voiced concern over using the term “Non-Contributing” fearing it will give developers the attitude that they can tear down at will fine grain buildings.
- There was general consensus that two-storey, fine grain properties in the Village Main Street character sub-area could be considered “Potentially Contributing Properties” since these buildings maintain the streetscape.
- There was resounding support for making 2545 Bloor Street West, located at the southwest corner of Bloor Street West and Brule Terrace, a Potentially Contributing property
- It was questioned whether the funeral home (2357 Bloor Street West, located at the southwest corner of Bloor Street West and Windermere Avenue) is a Potentially Contributing property due to its large property grain and presence of the parking lot along the street.

3.7 Mapping Exercise

CAG Meeting 2 included a mapping exercise where maps showing the distribution of key characteristics and a draft of Potentially Contributing vs Non-Contributing properties were shared. Copies of the marked-up maps are included in Appendix A. Comments received regarding Key Characteristics Map and Potentially Contributing vs Non-Contributing Map include:

- The CAG noted that high numbers of fine grain properties are located in areas with concentrations of key characteristics.
- CAG members asked if there was a link between lot widths and cultural heritage value. It was clarified that fine grain property widths are considered to be a key

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characteristic of Bloor West Village but that fine property grain alone does not necessarily confer cultural heritage value since the heritage integrity of the whole property has to be taken into consideration.

- Property typologies can be used to identify what is appropriate (in terms of building and landscape design) for the area.
- The High Park Frontage character sub-area should be identified as a cultural heritage area.
- Non-Contributing vs. Potentially Contributing properties: A few CAG members voiced concern using the term: “Non-Contributing” fearing it will give developers the attitude that they can tear down at will fine grain buildings and “do what they want with the building”.
- McDonalds (2218 Bloor Street West, located at the northeast corner of Bloor Street West and Runnymede Road) used as an example of a Non-Contributing infill. While not a heritage property, this building respects the size, grain, and style of the rest of the block.
- Individuals discussed whether context for some Non-Contributing properties is needed. Specifically, it was asked if heavily altered two-storey buildings with historical fine property grain should be considered “Potentially Contributing” even if the architectural integrity has been compromised.
- It was clarified that Non-Contributing properties within an HCD still have policies and guidelines, but that these would differ from policies and guidelines for Contributing properties.
- Property size contributes to the overall scale/morphology of the neighbourhood
- 308 South Kingsway, the Tudor style residence at the intersection of Mossom Road, South Kingsway, and Bloor Street West, could be added to the Study Area and identified as “Potentially Contributing”.
- There was a discussion of the distribution of key characteristics. It was noted that key characteristics are concentrated along the High Park Frontage and Village Main Street character sub-areas.
- It was noted that there are gaps in the distribution of key characteristics in the Study Area. The gaps are generally located between Riverside Drive and Jane Street, and between Runnymede Road and Clendenan Avenue.

3.8 General Comments

- CAG members voiced again that the commercial property taxes make it extremely difficult to support the validity of small commercial operations within a fine grain footprint.
- One CAG member expressed that they did not like the terminology of “linear corridor” but to refer to Bloor Street as a “main street.”
- A question was asked about batch listing of potential heritage properties, referring to comments made by Tamara Anson-Cartwright (from Heritage Preservation Services) at the last CAG. Pourya Nazemi responded to say that properties of heritage potential outside of recommended HCD(s) could be batch listed.

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Next Steps

- The history section of the HCD Study must include pre-historic period, rivers and creeks, and topography.

4.0 Next Steps

The results of CAG Meeting 2, in the form of this summary, are to be posted online on the City's *Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District* [website](#), when ready. A third CAG meeting will potentially be held in September 2018, pending availability of CAG members. Details regarding Community Consultation Meeting 2 (CCM2) will be shared when available. It is anticipated that CCM2 will take place in November 2018.

Appendix A Mapping Exercise



Figure 1: Distribution of Key Characteristics



Figure 2: Draft Overall Heritage Contribution