

Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan

Kensington Market Community Advisory Group Meeting #4

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Kensington Market Lofts, Party Room

21 Nassau Street, Toronto

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Summary of Feedback

1. Background

This Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting is the first CAG meeting to be held after the Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study was endorsed by the Toronto Preservation Board on September 28, 2017. This meeting initiated the public consultation process for the Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan phase, in which two more CAG meetings will be held and one Community Consultation meeting (to be open to all members of the public) will be held.

2. Agenda Review, Opening Remarks and Introductions

City Staff welcomed CAG members and thanked them for attending the session. City Staff led a round of introductions of CAG members and project team members and reviewed the meeting agenda. City Staff explained that the meeting would provide CAG members with an overview of the HCD Plan phase, seek community input and inform the members of next steps. Councillor Mike Layton provided opening remarks.

The following individuals attended the meeting:

Community Advisory Group Members	Project Team Members
Robert Allsopp	Tamara Anson-Cartwright
Cassandra Alves	Pourya Nazemi
Yvonne Bambrick	Shelby Blundell
Gwen Bang	Mladen Kukic
Mika Bareket	Councillor Mike Layton
Graham Hollings	Aviva Coopersmith
Mike Shepherd	
Sylvia Lassam	
Pouria Lotfi	
Zenon Mandziuk	
Ian McDermott	
Jeffrey Levy	
Patrick Morrison	
Catherine Nasmith	
David Pearlman	
Heather Shon	
Gaston Soucy	
Dr. George Yan	
Martin Zimmerman	

The meeting agenda is included at the end of this document.

3. Presentation

An overview presentation covering the following topics was provided to CAG members:

- **Kensington Market HCD Study Recap and HCD Plan Approach**
 - Pourya Nazemi and Shelby Blundell, City of Toronto

4. Guided Discussion

CAG members were given the opportunity to ask questions of clarification, questions on the material in the presentation and in response to guided discussion questions provided by City of Toronto staff. A summary of the CAG feedback is presented below, and organized by the guided discussion questions. A comment period was determined by Heritage Preservation Services staff and CAG members provided additional comments after the initial CAG meeting.

Discussion Question: *What has been happening in the Kensington Market Community?*

- There is an issue of increasing land costs, which results in increased rents and evictions.
- There's a trend of converting units into Airbnb's and other forms of short term rentals.
- The neighbourhood is increasingly becoming more of a destination entertainment place, and losing the balance between being a neighbourhood and destination place – there are 43 liquor licensed establishments according to an informal count.
- There is an issue of an increasing number of bars and restaurants in the area which changes dynamic at night.
- Entertainment venues are occupying larger retail spaces and applying for liquor licenses, which is exceeding the permitted entertainment venue ground floor areas.
- The Kensington Market BIA Public Realm Masterplan.

Discussion Question: *Are there any properties you believe hold individual heritage value that have not been identified in the HCD Study for inclusion on the Heritage Register?*

- CAG members were requested by City Staff to explore the market looking for buildings and properties they found had cultural heritage value and/or community importance and send these suggested properties to City staff.
- City Staff will provide the CAG members with the value criteria used to determine cultural heritage value under the Ontario heritage Act as reference.
- The alleys are an invaluable attribute that the Market has. The informal activities and ever-changing art interventions that take place within them are part of the Market's personality.

- CAG members commented on the significance of the streetscapes of Kensington Avenue, Bellevue Square, Fitzroy Terrace and Kensington Place.

Discussion Question: *What are your thoughts on identification of the Contributing properties - Do you associate the value of the area with specific landmark buildings and properties, or holistically as one dynamic area?*

- CAG members commented that there are many "in-between" utilitarian buildings with ever changing uses that may not warrant individual protection through contributing status.
- Kensington Market cannot be defined by its built-form alone, it is a combination of circumstances that - have in the past and still - makes this place special. It is affordable, inclusive, casual, unrestricted, exempt from less critical regulations, and not bound to one specific use or program. This eclectic combination of intangibles is what makes the Market unique and what allows it to survive by keeping anything predictable and ordinary away from its boundaries.
- Many existing structures are in poor or dismal condition. But they are functional and familiar, and give the sense of affordability and of making use of what we have. Kensington Market should stay synonymous with reinvention - using the basic structures that already exist, and making them work for current practices.
- Should find a way to restore even the simplest, boxy structures and protect the underlying layers while continuing to support (in a more constructive way) new and existing additions (where they makes sense), awnings and other creative building extensions such as rooftop agriculture. But these underlying layers need major repair, and hopefully not at the cost of modest small businesses.
- CAG members noted that an overly intrusive HCD Plan for a distinctive area such as Kensington Market poses the risk of detrimental effects on the long-standing delicate balance of ingrained internal change and external administrative control. There should be a sizeable reserve of Non-Contributing properties, both altered and unaltered, that will provide opportunity for the Market to continue to evolve unfettered in its own unique way. Other generally larger properties of traditional historical value that were identified by the HCD Study should be protected according to standard HCD preservation practices. Beyond the scope of an HCD Plan there are also enhancements to zoning that can help protect cultural heritage values of the district.

Discussion Question: *How would you better define the discussed heritage attributes?*

- CAG members commented that smaller lot sizes are integral to the heritage attributes of the village, and there needs to be policies to prevent lot consolidation and reduce new lot sizes. Need to ensure retail floor plates remain small.
- Open market display awnings are an important attribute – but the cost of maintenance and replacement of these awnings must also be considered.
- One- to two-storey additions could be better defined along intersections as one-storey bump-outs.
- Attributes should also be considered in the nighttime context not just during the day – it is a different dynamic. CAG members recommended night-time photos should be taken as well to capture this.

- The HCD Study found a long history of eclectic small-scale modifications of buildings. The modifications are an authentic and prominent tangible heritage value throughout the area and reflect the intangible value of cultural and ethnic diversity of inhabitants. Interestingly, properties attained heritage value by means of eclectic modifications of original built forms which may or may not have had heritage significance prior to alteration. The alterations are dynamic, display a broad range of styles, and have not been subject to onerous proscriptive policies.

Discussion Question: *Are there other attributes you would like be defined and conserved through the HCD Plan?*

- Live music venues, particularly ones that hosted 70's and 80's punk acts, are an integral part of the heritage of the market.
- The musician, artists and film makers all have lived there and has a significant role in defining the market and making this a world renowned cultural tourist destination.
- The public realm is an incredible strength that the Market has. Its flexibility, reflected in lax controls, is a strong reason which allows for Kensington to be different and thus special. The constant and ever-changing street art interventions, the commercial encroachments that have taken over many setbacks with different forms and activities, the intermodal overlaps that cross the boundaries of where the pedestrian realm ends and mixes with other forms of active transportation and vehicular traffic. This informal disregard for the rules is one of the Market's strongest asset. Maintaining this will be crucial to its survival.

Discussion Question: *Are there any other Objectives you would like to be identified in the HCD Plan?*

- The Draft Objectives need to give more value to eclectic alterations, as they should be fully accepted and acknowledged for their value.
- An objective of the HCD Plan should be to conserve the daytime use of the Market and the residential nature of the Market and the balance that must exist with businesses in order to retain the unique quality that everyone loves. The HCD Plan may need to take steps typically outside the scope of an HCD Plan to conserve this character, such as keeping floor plates small.

Other comments from CAG members:

- There are deep lots and L-shaped lots that front onto College Street and any development on these lots will have an impact on Kensington Market.
- The public realm plan is progressing – they're looking at safer streets, more active frontages and potentially planting parts of the public realm.

5. Wrap Up and Next Steps

City staff thanked CAG members for attending the meeting and explained that the presentation materials would be circulated to CAG members for a further two week comment period. The CAG members were informed that the fifth CAG meeting is anticipated for the end of April 2019.



Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan

Community Advisory Group Meeting #4

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Kensington Market Lofts, Party Room

21 Nassau Street, Toronto

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Purpose:

- City Planning (Heritage Preservation Services) to provide an overview of HCD Plan
- Seek Community Input
- Inform of next steps

6:00 pm Opening Remarks and Introductions and Agenda Review

6:15 pm CAG Terms of Reference

6:20 pm Presentation – Pourya Nazemi and Shelby Blundell

- HCD Overview
- Policy Research Undertaken since HCD Study
- Statement of Objectives
- Statement of Cultural Heritage Value
- Heritage Attributes

6:40 pm Mid-Point Break – Guided Discussion

7:00 pm Presentation Continued – Pourya Nazemi and Shelby Blundell

- Contributing vs. Non-Contributing Approach
- Potential Properties of Cultural Heritage Value
- Proposed Timelines & Next Steps

7:15 pm Guided Discussion

7:55 pm Wrap Up and Next Steps – Scheduling of Next CAG Meeting (late April)

8:00 pm Adjourn



Participants:

Mika Bareket (local resident and business owner – Good Egg), Mike Shepherd (Kensington Market BIA), Dr. George Yan (local resident), Cassandra Alves (Kensington Market BIA Coordinator), Gwen Bang (Kensington Market BIA Board Chair), Martin Zimmerman (local business owner – Zimmerman's), Heather Shon (local business owner – Heather Shon CPA), Graham Hollings (local resident), Patrick Morrison (Kensington Market BIA, local resident), Gaston Soucy (local business owner), Zenon Mandziuk (Kensington Residents Association, local resident), David Pearlman (Friends of Kensington Market), Sylvia Lassam (Kensington Market Historical Society), Yvonne Bambrick (Kensington Market Action Committee), Pouria Lotfi (Kensington Market BIA, local business owner and resident), Robert Allsopp (local resident), Michael Franzolini (Goodman's LLP representing UHN), Kate Lyons (Goodman's LLP representing UHN), Ian McDermott (UHN)

Regrets

Catherine Nasmith (local resident and business owner)

City of Toronto

City Planning Division

Tamara Anson-Cartwright, Pourya Nazemi, Shelby Blundell, Mladen Kucic

Councillor Mike Layton, Marco Bianchi