Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan

Virtual Community Consultation Meeting #1 – Summary Report



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1526, File 9, Item 33

January 27, 2021 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Prepared by LURA Consulting for the City of Toronto



Introduction

Project History

The Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study was prioritized by City Council in March 2015 and initiated in Spring 2018. The HCD Study included research, a built form survey, analysis and evaluation to determine if the Study Area warrants designation as a Heritage Conservation District. The Heritage Conservation District Study and staff recommendation to develop a Heritage Conservation District Plan for the neighbourhood was presented to the Toronto Preservation Board on June 20, 2019.

The HCD Plan process was initiated in Summer 2020. This process includes developing policies and guidelines to conserve the area's heritage value as well as community and stakeholder consultation. The final report will be presented to the Toronto Preservation Board, Community Council and City Council in Summer 2021.

Study Area

Sherbourne Street generally binds the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Study Area to the west, Carlton Street to the north, Parliament Street to the east and Dundas Street East to the south, with extensions on Seaton Street, Ontario Street and Berkeley Street.



Proposed HCD Plan Boundary



Figure 1: Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Plan Area

More information about the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Plan can be found on the City of Toronto's <u>website</u>.

Virtual Community Consultation Meeting #1

Meeting Objectives

Community engagement is an important component of the HCD Plan. The City of Toronto hosted the first Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District Plan Community Consultation Meeting virtually on January 27, 2021. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Introduce the Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan, process and project team.
- Review background information, including the framework, scope and process of a Heritage Conservation District.
- Present the preliminary recommendations for the Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District, including identifying the boundary and period of significance, contributing properties, objectives, scope and structure of the HCD Plan and an overview of proposed policies and guidelines.
- Discuss and collect feedback on compatible uses in residential neighbourhoods, mixeduse streets and the public realm.

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

Meeting Format

The meeting featured a virtual open house with a plenary presentation and three breakout rooms, offering community members an opportunity to learn about the HCD Plan, speak to City staff and the consultant team, ask questions and share feedback. An online questionnaire was also made available following the event for those who wanted to provide additional feedback.

Jim Faught, LURA Consulting, welcomed attendees to the virtual meeting, provided a Land Acknowledgement, introduced the project team and provided and reviewed the agenda. Councillor Wong-Tam, Toronto Centre, offered opening remarks.

Alex Corey, Senior Heritage Planner, City of Toronto, presented background about the HCD Plan, its framework, scope, and process. Dima Cook, EVOQ Architecture, presented the preliminary recommendations for the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD. This included identifying a refined boundary and period of significance, contributing properties, objectives, scope and structure of the Plan, and an overview of proposed policies and guidelines.

Seventy-two (72) people attended the meeting, and five (5) participants shared their feedback via an online questionnaire.

Summary of Feedback – What We Heard

The following summarizes the feedback provided through three breakout room sessions, and the online questionnaire. Community input will be reviewed by the project team and assessed systematically. The final HCD Plan recommendations will be based on a range of information sources and analysis, including reviewing community inputs. A copy of the Consultation Boards used in the breakout room discussions is included in Appendix B.

Residential Areas

Susan Hall, LURA Consulting, Emily Cheng, EVOQ Architecture and Kirstin Flood, City of Toronto, provided an overview of the residential streets and asked participants, "What incremental changes to properties are compatible with the heritage character of the neighbourhood?" Feedback is summarized below.

Feedback on Incremental Compatible Changes to Properties - What We Heard

Participants felt the following elements would help to retain the heritage character of the neighbourhood:

- Provide guidelines for porches, awnings, and railings on upper porches.
- Provide guidance on paint.
 - Recommend heritage colours. Some participants noted that the website CabbagetownHCD.ca run by the Cabbagetown Heritage Conservation District Committee, can provide advice on paints.
- Consider Cabbagetown as one neighbourhood, not just the Southwest District in isolation.
- Provide guidance on windows.
 - Different window styles can change how houses look (removing sash windows, altering the window's shape). Guidance for windows would help homeowners.
 - Providing more information about the history of stained glass on many of the neighbourhood's houses would be helpful.
- Provide guidelines for laneways.
 - Providing guidance on façade treatment that allows for flexibility and creativity in terms of colours and mural work.
 - Note: An HCD Plan would not address laneway buildings.
- Restrict parking pads.
 - There was a desire not to see a lot of parking pads added to the front of houses.
 - Note: An HCD Plan will not address the presence of parking pads.

Gerrard Street and Dundas Street (Mixed-Use Streets)

Jim Faught, LURA Consulting, Mark Elsworthy, EVOQ Strategies, Dima Cook, EVOQ Architecture and Pourya Nazemi, City of Toronto, provided an overview of the mixed-use streets. They asked participants, "What forms of adaptive re-use would be compatible with the heritage character of the mixed-use streets?" Feedback is summarized below.

Feedback on Compatible Forms of Adaptive Re-Use - What We Heard

Participants identified the following considerations for developing the HCD as they relate to mixed-use streets, including:

- Provide guidance on maintenance.
 - Participants indicated that some of the properties that are not in keeping with the rest of the block make it look untidy. Dundas Street has not yet matured into a commercial street; some commercial properties are difficult to sustain.
- Protect old storefronts.
 - Properties that contain old storefronts are vital to protect in the neighbourhood because they are the right size for small businesses, and the rents are not as high as they are in new condo buildings.
- Keep street-level retail.
 - The addition of retail is sometimes problematic because of signage and façade changes to the building. Retail signage can clash with the surroundings, as new lighting can be too bright, and windows might be altered.
 - Some of the 1970's storefront conversions along Gerrard Street are now deteriorating.
- Maintain facades.
 - The HCD Plan should provide guidance on how the design of retail storefronts on the mixed-use streets, particularly Gerrard Street East. There is a desire to maintain facades successfully, as seen on Parliament Street.
 - Having retail spaces and maintaining the façade in its entirety can be a challenge, as it is not conducive to all retail spaces. The City's Façade Improvement Grant is not sufficient to support upgrades.
- Provide guidance on signage within the HCD.
- Provide guidance on the types of materials.
 - Note: Guidance will be developed on materials within the policies and guidelines.
- Provide direction on new development.
 - Along Gerrard Street East and Dundas Street East, some commercial properties will be redeveloped. There will be pressure on the streets in terms of competing heights and a desire to demolish some properties.
 - Compatibility considerations are important for new development on mixed-use streets.

- Identify important intersections.
 - It may be worth identifying intersections on Gerrard Street East and Dundas Street East with heritage properties and highlighting specific attributes at those intersections. These intersections may become points of interest or destinations in the neighbourhood.
- Landscape and design of mixed-use streets.
 - Access is one issue for storefronts along Gerrard Street East; mainly when garbage collection occurs, there is no room on the sidewalks. When Gerrard Street East is repaved, it would be helpful to widen the sidewalk. Historically, the right-of-way had a lot more green space before the road was widened.

Public Realm and Landscape

Melissa Galina, LURA Consulting, Christophe Rivet, EVOQ Strategies and Alex Corey, City of Toronto, provided an overview of the public realm and asked participants, "What public realm features support the heritage character of the neighbourhood? What can be enhanced?" Questions and answers, and recommendations are summarized below.

Feedback on Public Realm Features - What We Heard

Participants identified the following considerations for developing the HCD as they relate to mixed-use streets, including:

- Provide guidance on the types of materials.
 - Certain types of pavers can enhance the heritage character of the neighbourhood.
 - Provide more lighting in the laneways between the houses, with light posts that have a vintage look.
 - The work done along Drovers Lane is fantastic and environmentally friendly and would be good to see throughout the community.
- Provide guidance on fencing.
 - Front yards and gardens are key features of the neighbourhood. One thing that is coming up with the Resident's Association is front yard fence replacement in the right-of-way. Direction for how those fences will be installed, designed, and their height could be helpful.
 - Sometimes tall wood fences are erected on the front of the property. The tightlyspaced horizontal boards on these fences do not allow airflow into the garden.
- Integrate streetscape and public art.
 - In heritage areas elsewhere, it is nice to see public art, wide walkways with planters and gardens, pedestrian streets, and slow traffic.
 - Enhancing the Heritage Conservation District's intersections is important, especially along Gerrard Street East, to highlight the mixed-use and residential areas. This could include street trees, planters, and large tree canopies, especially in the parkette at Parliament Street.

- Protect mature trees.
 - There was concern about mature trees disappearing from the neighbourhood and not being replaced. Large trees in the neighbourhood are coming to the end of their lifespan. New trees in the neighbourhood are much smaller (e.g., Japanese Maple).
 - There are very few trees in some of the blocks. Gerrard Street East at Ontario Street looks very desolate, whereas heritage should have a vibrant look.
 - \circ $\;$ There is interest in protecting existing trees since the canopy is disappearing.
- Provide guidance on signage.
 - Consistency in signage styles to create a sense of place within the district and across the other Cabbagetown HCDs is important. It is important to recognize the similarities within the neighbourhood while acknowledging differences.
- Integrate park improvements.
 - Seating should be considered within the parks.
 - Discourage loitering.
 - Parks that allow for play but also other forms of recreation are important.

Next Steps

Jim Faught, LURA Consulting, thanked participants for their feedback. He indicated that the project team would review all the feedback provided, complete policy and guideline development and illustrations, test policies against scenarios, and review their consistency with the existing planning framework. Jim shared that the Heritage Conservation District Plan would be brought back to the community for review in Spring 2021.

Appendix A – Notice of Community Consultation Meeting

TORONTO Community Consultation Meeting

The City of Toronto holds public consultations as one way to engage residents in the life of their city. We invite you to get involved.

Heritage Conservation District Plan – Cabbagetown Southwest

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) guide change in neighbourhoods that represent Toronto's social, cultural and architectural history. Toronto City Planning is now preparing a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan for the Cabbagetown Southwest area, following endorsement of the HCD Study in 2019 by the Toronto Preservation Board, which recommended that the area receive heritage designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The HCD Plan, once complete, will be considered by City Council before the end of 2021.

Virtual Consultation details are as follows: Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm Registration: bit.ly/CabbagetownSW

Agenda

This virtual consultation will provide an opportunity for residents and the public to meet the project team, learn about the HCD process, and to provide comments and ask questions. The meeting will include a 20 minute presentation by the Dima Cook, Director at EVOQ Architecture and lead project consultant. At 7:00 pm participants will be divided into three smaller break-out sessions to provide feedback on the types of change that the HCD Plan will regulate and inform, including architectural design, conservation, massing, and public spaces, and to connect with their neighbours.



Registration in advance using the link above is welcome, and participants are encouraged to log-in to the meeting in advance of 6:30 pm.

Study Area Boundary Proposed HCD Plan Boundary

The Virtual Consultation is one way in which you can learn about and participate in the HCD Plan process. The project website will be regularly updated with more information, including summaries of all public meetings and events, and a second community meeting will be held in late Spring 2021. You can also provide comments and ask questions by contacting City staff.

To learn more about the HCD Study and the history of the neighbourhood please visit the study website: <u>https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/cabbagetown-</u> <u>southwest-heritage-conservation-district-study/</u>

You can contact Alex Corey, Senior Heritage Planner, City Planning at Alex.Corey @toronto.ca or 416-338-1092 or you can contact Councillor Wong-Tam at Councillor_Wong.Tam@toronto.ca or 416-392-4091

Notice to correspondents:

Personal information received at community consultation meetings or contained in correspondence with the City is collected under sections 8 and 136 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 specifically for creating a public record of information potentially relevant to making an informed decision. Questions about the collection of this information may be directed to the Planner listed above. Compliance with City Council policy respecting Notice may result in you receiving duplicate notices.

Appendix B – Consultation Boards





Comments

language for architects to develop designs

for signage

and lighting

Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Plan - Community Consultation - January 27,2021

Public Realm and Landscape

What public realm features support the heritage character of the neighbourhood? What can be enhanced?

Comments



Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Plan - Community Consultation - January 27, 2021



EVOQ

Appendix C - Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire was made available following the event for those who wanted to provide additional feedback. Five participants completed the questionnaire and provided the following inputs for consideration by the project team. The final HCD Plan recommendations will be based on a range of information sources and analysis, including reviewing community inputs. The perspectives shared below are those of participants and not to be understood as having been answered by the City or its consultants.

Residential Neighbourhood

Compatible Additions to Existing Homes

What should be considered to ensure that additions to historic homes are compatible with the neighbourhood's residential streets' heritage character?

- Provide guidance on additions to homes that are visible from the street.
 - Additions and decks should not be visible from the street, including those visible above the building's roofline and on corner buildings.
- Provide guidance on fencing.
 - New and replacement fences should conform in style, size and materials to the heritage period home and streetscape.
- Provide guidance on materials.
 - Historic brick/stone fronts should not be painted; paint for trims should be consistent with heritage colours.
 - Doors, porches, steps, gates, fences, cladding and all other portions of buildings visible from the front need to use materials, colours, style and scale consistent with the heritage homes and streetscape.
- Restrict parking pads and select entrances.
 - Entrances to legal basement apartments should be at the back.
 - Moratorium needs to continue on parking pads.
 - Need moratorium on rooming houses (no grandfathering).
- Consider density and use restrictions.
 - On the number of units and occupants in a residential building.
 - On residential homes being used for business and the number of employees
 - To enforce heritage and building permits applied for and displayed, and consideration of objections to variances.
- Protect tree canopy.
 - Protect all trees due to significant loss of trees; the young trees need to reach maturity.

- Provide guidance on compatible landscaping.
 - Landscaping should be compatible with the heritage homes, streetscape and yards should be primarily soft landscaping.
 - The City needs to plant large native species trees in the boulevards to replace and enhance the tree canopy.
 - Heritage homes that are solely rental units need a minimum of landscaping and maintenance.
- Provide adjacency and buffer around heritage areas.
 - Ensure that heritage areas have a significant enough size to ensure that development and alterations adjacent to the district conserve the District's cultural heritage value.

New Home Compatibility

What do you think should be considered to ensure that new homes are compatible with the neighbourhood's residential streets' heritage character?

Respondents identified setback, size and scale, cladding and all other materials, style, roof shape, doors, porches, colours, fencing, landscaping, etc.

Compatible Small-Scale Changes

What types of small-scale changes to properties do you think can improve the neighbourhood's residential streets' heritage character? Are there small-scale changes that are not compatible?

Respondents identified the following:

- The City should provide incentives for restoration or repairing, replacing or reconstructing missing period details to match the original details.
- Changes should be compatible with the heritage character of the existing home, the neighbourhood's homes and streetscapes.
- Changes should be consistent with the character of the facades.
- Changes to bring back the original character as much as possible/feasible.
- Changes/additions to a heritage building should be required to ensure that the look and character of the building is maintained.

Priorities for Residential Street Policies

Are there specific priorities that you would like to see reflected in residential streets' policies and guidelines?

- Provide incentives for restoring or repairing heritage homes and period details.
- Ensure entrances to legal basement apartments are at the back.
- Restrict parking pads and rooming houses.
- Control density on residential lots.
- Protect trees, not only mature trees.
- Require compatible landscaping.

- Reduce oversized and illuminated signage.
- Remove graffiti.
- Identify methods for monitoring/reporting and compliance of policies and guidelines.
- Provide residents with information on heritage policies and bylaws.
- Consider sustainability and densification.
- Protect the heritage character on main streets as well residential streets.

Mixed-Use Streets: Gerrard and Dundas

Important Heritage Features

What do you think are the most important heritage features along Gerrard and Dundas?

Respondents identified the following:

- Heritage buildings and period details, character of period design and style, congruent scale, height and width (on Gerrard).
- The specific buildings, prevailing scale, fine-grained (narrow) buildings and storefronts, streetscape features keep the character integrity of the street while including modernity
- The many beautiful old heritage buildings on the north and south of Gerrard between Ontario St and Parliament.
- The old building on the southeast corner of Gerrard.
- The new construction to replace the Beer Store at Ontario and Gerrard should be in keeping with the heritage style and green space.
- The corner of Gerrard and Sherborne offers an opportunity to create something creative. A multi-unit residential building with a courtyard in the middle with retail on the ground floor like Berkeley Castle in the Esplanade and Berkeley St.
- Each corner of Dundas and Ontario has beautiful old buildings that should be preserved.

Compatible Additions to Historic Buildings on Gerrard and Dundas

What do you think should be considered to ensure that additions to historic buildings on Gerrard and Dundas are compatible?

Respondents identified the following:

- Consideration should be given to the consistency with existing heritage buildings and period details, the character of period design and style, congruent scale, height and width, setback, materials, articulation.
- Setbacks and green space are important, but on Dundas and Gerrard, the scale should not be a factor.
- Style/design in keeping with the historical character is critical.
- Minimal additions/changes to the front of properties should be in keeping with the building's historical/heritage nature. Many excellent examples exist in the general area.

New Building Compatibility on Gerrard and Dundas

What do you think should be considered to ensure that new buildings are compatible with Gerrard and Dundas' historic character?

Respondents identified the following:

- Consistency with existing heritage buildings and period details, the character of period design, style, colours, congruent scale, height, width, setback, cladding and materials.
- Articulation, density add to the aesthetics of streetscape and neighbourhood.
- Compatible fencing and non-polluting lighting.
- Avoid unnecessary and oversized, and illuminated signage.
- Sufficient space for large mature trees.
- Landscaping strategies for storing waste bins, reducing waste and deterring rodents.
- Ensure that new construction/design/building materials when they get City approval are in keeping with the character of the historical nature/character of the area and mass.
- Ensure that all new construction has some percentage of affordable housing.

Laneway Use and Enhancement

How do you use the laneways in the neighbourhood, and how could they be enhanced?

Respondents identified the following:

- Reduce/avoid garage/laneway apartments & occupancy.
- Improve paving and maintenance.
- Improve sightlines at laneway intersections.
- Improve City lighting.
- Identify strategies to deal with intrusive private lighting in laneways.
- Reduce or avoid excessive and oversized, and illuminated signage.
- Provide incentive and tools for homeowners to address graffiti and vandalism.
- Identify strategies to avoid laneway blockages by vehicles/trucks and strategies for snow.
- Identify strategies for litter and garbage removal in laneways.
- Encourage owners, commercial property owners, and renters to maintain and clean up their properties.
- Integrate signage.

The Value of Guidelines

Would the provision of guidelines (non-mandatory) assist owners in fencing, paving strategies, and landscaping be of value to the neighbourhood?

- Most respondents indicated that guidelines would be of value to the neighbourhood.
- All new and existing property owners and managers could receive all policies and guidelines relating to heritage properties and the HCD. They should receive the City's bylaws and codes relating to the buildings and properties (i.e., fence height restrictions, waste bins, permits, legal basement apartments, noise, tree removal, etc.).

Neighbourhood Parkette Features to be Enhanced

What features do you appreciate in the neighbourhood's parkettes, and how could the parkettes be enhanced?

- Accessibility.
- Places to sit.
- Quiet -visual aesthetics and nice views.
- Historical and period features, a walking tour or historical photos.
- Variety in landscaping, native species including tall trees or water features.
- More lighting and accommodation of family use.
- Keeping them clean.
- Integration of trees along many of our streets.