

Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan
Kensington Market Community Advisory Group Meeting – Mini CAG Meetings

March 2nd, 4th, and 10th, 2021

Zoom

Summary of Feedback

1. Background

Prior to COVID, this Community Advisory Group (CAG) met previously for three meetings and a walking tour hosted by City Planning to provide community input and discuss the development of the Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan.

City Planning recently engaged LURA to support further community engagement during the HCD study and to provide and facilitate virtual engagement opportunities due to the public health 'stay at home' orders issued by the Province.

The purpose of these mini-CAG meetings was to gather inputs and insights to shape recommendations on the boundary, and types policies that the CAG feels should be included in the plan. Materials presented through the meeting are still in the process of being developed, refined, and adjusted based on CAG feedback and continued analysis.

In order to further discuss the development of the HCD Plan a series of three mini-CAG meetings were organized to seek input on key issues and further analysis undertaken by City staff in the past year. All CAG members were notified that they could observe as many of the mini-CAG meetings as they wish. These meetings took place on the following dates and times:

- Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021, from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM
- Thursday, March 4th, 2021, from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM
- Wednesday, March 10th, 2021, from 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings were held online using Zoom with the option for CAG members to join online or by phone. The following sections summarize feedback received through all three (3) meetings and has been prepared by LURA Consulting, the City of Toronto's third-party facilitation and engagement consultant for the Kensington Market HCD Plan.

2. Agenda Review, Opening Remarks and Introductions

City staff welcomed CAG members and thanked them for attending the session. Susan Hall (LURA Consulting) led a round of introductions of CAG members and project team members, and reviewed the meeting agenda. City staff explained the meeting would provide an update on the HCD Plan boundary, contributing and non-contributing properties, character sub-areas, and draft policies and guidelines.

The meeting was attended by the following members of the project team:

- Tamara Anson-Cartwright, City of Toronto – Heritage Planning, Policy and Research Program Manager [All meetings]
- Shelby Blundell, City of Toronto – Heritage Planning, Policy and Research Heritage Planner [All meetings]
- Loryssa Quatrociocchi, City of Toronto – Heritage Planning, Policy and Research Assistant Heritage Planner [Only March 10, 2021]
- Susan Hall, LURA Consulting, Partner [All meetings]
- Liz McHardy, LURA Consulting, Partner [All meetings]
- Alexander Furneaux, LURA Consulting, Community Engagement Specialist [All meetings]

The following CAG members attended the CAG mini-meetings:

Meeting	CAG Members in Attendance
Tuesday, March 2 nd , 2021 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM	Cassandra Alves Mike Bareket Pouria Lotfi Mike Sheppard Zenon Mandziuk [Observing]
Thursday, March 4 th , 2021 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM	Robert Allsopp Sylvia Lassam Gaston Soucy Su Alexanian Zenon Mandziuk [Observing]
Wednesday, March 10 th , 2021 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM	David Pearlman Yvonne Bambrick Zenon Mandziuk Graham Holling Robert Allsopp [Observing]

3. Presentation and Process

Shelby Blundell provided an overview presentation to the CAG members covering the following topics:

- Update on contributing properties and character sub-areas;
- Update on the HCD Plan boundary criteria and analysis;
- Draft policies and guidelines for the HCD Plan; and
- Further engagement.

A copy of the presentation was distributed to CAG members prior to the meetings.

4. Guided Discussion

Susan Hall (LURA Consulting) led a guided discussion of the content provided in the presentation. A summary of the CAG feedback is presented below, organized by theme.

The feedback provided will be used to inform the refined boundary, character sub-areas and policies to be presented to the CAG at the next meeting.

City staff comments are included for informational purposes only.

A. General

- Several CAG members expressed that the HCD Plan needs to integrate innovative and creative solutions that support the directions identified in the HCD Study report. There is a need to have a different approach to viewing socio-cultural heritage and built heritage.
- CAG members requested to receive the policies 10 days before the next CAG meeting to review them and provide consolidated comments.

B. HCD Plan Refined Boundary

- Properties and the public realm leading into Kensington Market form important gateway entrances into the market, providing a sense of arrival. CAG members identified the bike rack and sign at the north end of Augusta, stepped seating, and small gardens as important public realm elements.
- Spadina Avenue storefronts present historical ties to the Jewish market.
- Concerns were identified that the revised boundary does not reflect the historic boundary to the main streets that border the market and that excluding them implies they are distinctly separate or do not belong to the market.
- Concerns were reiterated about the encroachment of tall buildings on the main streets, and the hospital's expansion. CAG members referenced that when an area is clearly defined as part of Kensington Market, this provides the legitimacy and opportunity to sit at the table to discuss changes to the surrounding main streets. CAG members identified this as important to avoid a situation where the borders of Kensington Market are walled-in by new development. Several CAG members highlighted this concern in the context of deep main street lots and Leonard Avenue that if developed, may significantly encroach into the area.
 - **City staff comments:** *There are adjacency requirements for properties outside of the HCD boundary through the Official Plan and for non-contributing properties within the HCD Plan area.*
- There needs to be greater integration of other planning instruments alongside the HCD to ensure Kensington Market's conservation.
- Participants identified community assets not included by the boundary, including:
 - Kensington Market Community School – provides a unique venue for community-minded activities rather than through a community centre. The school functions as a community hub.
 - Seniors' residences – residents of this building are strongly connected and part of the Kensington Market community.
 - Supportive housing on Leonard Avenue and Wales Avenue – community effort to get supportive and rent-geared to income housing on these streets.

- Westside of Spadina – many of these storefronts are important connections to the Jewish market.

C. Character Sub-Areas

- Within the character sub-areas, it will be important to consider the unique qualities of individual streets. Where possible, it would be good to identify which policies apply to specific streets.
 - Some CAG members suggested that the properties facing Bellevue Square on the east side of Augusta Avenue should be included in the Bellevue Square Park sub-area not the Commercial Market sub-area given that many of these properties are primarily residential and view themselves as contributors to the square.
 - The streets of the Commercial Market sub-area (Augusta, Baldwin, and Kensington) have very unique qualities (setbacks, street width, building materials). These qualities should be reflected in policy and identify which streets specific qualities are associated with to avoid mischaracterizing part of the market. Where possible, flexible policies for these streets should be considered.
- Consider removing “Workers” from “Workers Laneway Cottages” title in this sub-character area.

D. Draft Policies and Guidelines

- CAG members were supportive of policies that limit the consolidation of properties to conserve the fine-grain residential and commercial uses throughout the district.
- CAG members were supportive of policies that allow for flexible use of materials when undertaking building maintenance to assist with affordability.
- Concerns were expressed about the possibility that redevelopment of non-contributing properties would encroach on the market.
 - **City staff comments:** *Non-contributing properties would still be guided by the overall low-scale and policies related to adjacency to contributing properties.*
- Allowing properties to continue to grow into open spaces (through front yard additions) could be detrimental in losing limited open space.
- CAG members identified the importance of preserving views such as those of buildings from Bellevue Square Park, Wales Avenue looking west from Bellevue Square Park, and entrances into the neighbourhood.
- One CAG member noted that the Victorian buildings themselves are relatively unremarkable compared to the creativity the people who inhabited these buildings and shaped them into functional spaces expressed. This functional and creative expression is an important quality that should not be over-regulated.

E. Other Comments and Items Outside of the HCD Plan Scope

- Transitions between the main streets that border Kensington Market and the interior of the neighbourhood were a recurring concern, with several CAG members expressing wariness of Kensington Market eventually being enclosed by a wall of taller buildings around its edges.
- Issues have arisen regarding the City's Transportation Division charging market rent of boulevard space used for patios even when these were legally constructed and have been in use for 20+ years. There are concerns that if there is no way to protect the affordability of these uses, property owners will tear down these buildouts to not pay the fee.
 - **City staff comments:** *While the HCD process cannot address the City's fees associated with on-street patios, this feedback can be shared with the Councillor to possibly initiate a separate process for dealing with fees associated with attributes.*
- Residential and commercial affordability played a key role in creating space for Kensington Market to become a destination for new immigrant groups, adding both diversity of peoples and businesses.
 - **City staff comments:** *The HCD Plan does not have tools that deal with affordability. The vision, attributes, and values component of the HCD Plan is where these elements can factor in. Some policies such as limiting property consolidation can help retain the small spaces and cheaper rents many independent businesses need to get their start. The City also offers tax rebates of up to \$50,000 for residential properties to maintain heritage attributes. Examples also exist for how this tax rebate can be applied for commercial and mixed-use properties. The City committed to providing an update to the CAG at their final meeting on what other policy tools could be applied to address some of the concerns outside of the scope of an HCD Plan.*
- Consider a different property tax structure for businesses in Kensington Market, such as raw food and vintage stores, and another for bars and dispensaries.
 - **City staff comments:** *For the final CAG meeting, the City can bring forth some other policy areas that could be coordinated internally to begin to address concerns outside of the HCD By-Law.*
- Allowing the conversion of residential uses to commercial or mixed use (store on the main floor with apartments above, like other areas of the market) might help offset high commercial rents by expanding supply.
 - **City staff comments:** *This would be more within Community Planning; however, the City has previously looked at this through the Bar and Restaurant Study. Ultimately, such a request would need to be brought to the Councillor's office for consideration.*
- CAG members requested to receive the policies 10 days before the next CAG meeting to review them and provide consolidated comments.

F. Questions

Q: Are there policies that can direct what types of businesses can locate in the market to conserve the diversity of independent and small, local chain businesses.

A: City policies outside of the scope of an HCD Plan may be applied to Kensington Market if they are initiated through the local Councillor. The final CAG meeting can include a discussion of what some of these policies might be.

Q: If the HCD Plan is not in force by the time the City completes watermain work in Kensington Market, are there ways to help guide the public realm reconstruction that will follow?

A: If the HCD Plan is not in force due to the appeal period, City staff will work across divisions to ensure there is an awareness of the draft policies when reconstruction work occurs to align objectives for the public realm.

Q: What qualities of the public realm are covered through HCDs?

A: HCDs policies related to the public realm generally speak to avoiding public works that would impact buildings in the HCD. These policies typically are not prescriptive (e.g. specific materials must be used in the public realm, or a certain type of lighting must be used) and aim to foster an awareness of conserving heritage attributes in the HCD.

Q: How are the intangible attributes reflected in the HCD Plan?

A: Intangible attributes are linked back to district attributes and sub-areas. These are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and not included directly in policies and guidelines.

Q: Do properties need to have both a historic and a contemporary connection in order to be defensible?

A: Yes – part of the consideration of the boundary includes the historic AND the contemporary connection of a property to the district.

Q: Why is the north side of Dundas Street West included while the other main streets are not? The association of these buildings seems closer to Chinatown than the market.

A: Staff determined that the properties on the north side of Dundas Street West were consistent with the typology of residential buildings converted into commercial or mixed use buildings as can be seen throughout the Commercial Market sub area. Additionally, many of the corner properties wrap around directly into areas of the Commercial Market.

5. Wrap Up and Next Steps

City staff thanked CAG members for participating and sharing their insights. The next CAG meeting scheduled for April 2021.

CAG members will receive the policies 10 days before the next CAG meeting to review them in advance. CAG members will have the opportunity to review the Statement of Objectives, District Significance, District Boundary, Policies and Guidelines collectively at a future final CAG meeting with all members present. Draft materials will be provided to members in advance of the next CAG meeting. CAG members are encouraged to share their understanding the public realm elements that contribute to and enhance the identity of Kensington Market with the City to help guide the Plan's objectives.

City staff also indicated that they have scheduled meetings with the Chinatown BIA and Friends of Chinatown Toronto to discuss the relationship between Chinatown and Kensington Market in the context of developing an HCD Plan. City staff will provide an update on these discussions at the next CAG meeting.

A Community Consultation Meeting will be held after the final CAG meeting to present the HCD Plan to the public for feedback before being presented to the Toronto Heritage Preservation Board. The City is aiming to bring this item before City Council before the summer, however this may depend new information received during the community consultation.

Addendum 1

The following addendum contains additional input received through communications with the Community Advisory Group following the CAG mini-meetings.

Input received from David Perlman, Graham Hollings, Mika Bareket, Robert N. Allsopp, Su Alexanium, Sylvia Lassam, Zenon Mandziuk to Shelby Blundell:

Resident Members of the Community Advisory Group (R/CAG) March 2021 Response to Draft Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan

Introduction

We wish to thank Heritage Planning staff for their efforts in organizing the ‘mini meetings’ in March 2021 with Kensington Market residents who are members of the Community Advisory Group (R/CAG). These small-group meetings provided excellent opportunities for more focused and open discussion which we very much appreciated. Thank you too for the timely summary notes of the three meetings.

Our R/CAG group has met to further discuss the updates to the study presented in the mini meetings and has invested considerable effort in developing the following response. We hope constructive dialogue will continue and result in a truly effective and relevant Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan.

We have organized our response into four categories. These are summarized below. A more extensive statement of our concerns together with our recommendations in those four groupings follow. An appendix contains flagged projects that raise concerns for the future of the market.

Summary Statement

1. A Made in Kensington HCD Plan

There is need for a Plan that fully recognizes the unique characteristics of the Market and its continued organic evolution. Particularly important is the conservation of the pattern of independent, narrow fronted shops in the commercial market and respect for the adapted forms that reflect the creativity of generations of people who continue to shape and change them. R/CAG believes the HCD Plan should emphasize a permissive rather than restrictive approach to heritage conservation. Kensington Market has always played by its own rules and the HCD Plan should be no exception. R/CAG urges Heritage Planning to prepare a permissive, ‘Made in Kensington’ HCD Plan with guidelines that encourage the ongoing incremental evolution of the Commercial Market. This should include a reappraisal of the current Contributing / Non-Contributing classification method, reflecting an approach that is “referential” rather than “reverential”.

2. HCD Boundary Revisions:

We reiterate our insistence that the boundaries of the Kensington Market HCD include the major bounding main streets: College, Spadina, Dundas West and Bathurst. R/CAG fully endorses the recommendation of the approved HCD Study that notes: “The proposed boundary reflects a combination of historical, contextual, social and architectural factors which considered the site as a distinct area within the broader urban fabric and which contains rich historical and cultural resources” (p.105). R/CAG has brought forward further evidence of the rich historical and cultural resources and connections within the approved boundary in this written response. R/CAG urges the HCD Planning team to reconsider its proposed changes to the HCD Boundary and return to the HCD Study recommendation.

3 Scale of Redevelopment.

In the Market: R/CAG supports the assertion that the key conservation issue in the mixed-use Commercial Market is to maintain the pattern of narrow fronted properties. These have produced the characteristic high frequency along the sidewalks of separate, independently operated retail and other commercial outlets as well as remaining houses. R/CAG urges that the HCD Plan be less concerned with architectural conservation guidance and give priority to policies that discourage small lot consolidations and control the scale, footprint, GFA, and height of redevelopment in order to conserve this pattern in the Commercial Market.

On the Main Streets: R/CAG is concerned that redevelopment on the bordering main streets be compatible with the ‘interior’ of the district. A further concern is that existing heritage resources on the main streets be fully conserved and not diminished by ‘alterations’ that effectively reduce conservation to facadism. Recent experience with redevelopment and the apparent inability of the city authorities to control excessive height and density regardless of the social, environmental and heritage impacts has led to community skepticism. R/CAG urges the coordination of City Planning and Heritage Planning policies and guidance be an essential part of the current HCD planning process.

4 The Public Realm.

Neither the HCD Study nor the draft HCD Plan give much attention to the public realm. Yet the District is perceived and appreciated primarily from within the streets and other publicly accessible places. This perception has less to do with individual, remarkable buildings or artifacts and more to do with a complex, composite cultural landscape/townscape made up of many, mostly ordinary, pieces that are rich in cultural meanings. R/CAG recommends that the HCD Plan give greater emphasis to the public realm and its attributes and establish guidelines for its conservation and improvement.

Appendix – Further Thoughts and Concerns

- a. Augusta Avenue realignment in Alexandra Park – Concern re. potential impact on the Market.
- b. 419- 431 College Street Redevelopment – Concerns re. building height and massing, public realm improvements, residential affordability and suitability for families, inclusion of music venue.
- c. 17 St. Andrews Street Redevelopment – Concerns re. architectural relationships, commercial /retail units, type of housing related to needs of Kensington Market.

Respectfully submitted 31 March 2021

R/CAG Members:

David Perlman, Graham Hollings, Mika Bareket, Robert N. Allsopp, Su Alexanium, Sylvia Lassam, Zenon Mandziuk

Resident Members of the Community Advisory group (R/CAG) - March 2021

Response to Draft Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan

Detailed Statement and Recommendations

1. A MADE IN KENSINGTON HCD PLAN

This is not Cabbage Town nor Queen Street West, yet it appears that the present draft document is moving towards a Plan that is like HCD Plans for those Districts without questioning or addressing Kensington Market's uniquely different characteristics and its special needs.

The present HCD Planning approach does not seem to recognize the unique intrinsic qualities of Kensington Market District that are identified in the HCD Study. Nor does it seem to be on track to adequately guide change that conserves the Market's "organic" evolution and controls the potential threats to this evolution.

A PERMISSIVE PLAN

Except for individual properties and small groups of properties, primarily in the residential areas, where conservation of important architectural or associational heritage resources is appropriate, the policies and guidelines should emphasize a permissive rather than a restrictive approach to conserving the heritage values and attributes of Kensington Market as outlined in the HCD Study's Statement of District Significance.

In the Commercial Market a Permissive Approach is Entirely Appropriate: In the Commercial Market, it is the constantly evolving collective urban landscape that is valued and where architectural design quality or taste in individual component buildings is of not much concern (with a few exceptions). The fundamental issue identified through the Study phase and continued throughout the community advisory meetings, is the need to maintain a pattern of incremental change in the building fabric that is reflective of the small, narrow-fronted property subdivisions of the original Park Lots. Conservation policies and guidelines which dictate what is acceptable will likely result in the "sanitation" of longstanding market features and qualities.

Contributing and Non-Contributing Properties: Applying a Contributing / Non-Contributing metric to the Commercial Market properties coupled with restrictive design policies or guidelines seems likely to be counterproductive. It could be argued that all properties, excepting vacant lots, 'contribute' in some way to the Market. A building may meet none of the conventional design measures and yet be a 'good' contributory market building if it has small-scale, permeable, commercial spaces on its ground floor. In the draft Plan (as circulated), the metrics for assessing a building as 'Contributing' seem to be: (a) That it is a larger, more substantially constructed Corner building or (b) That it is a modified Victorian house. To single out these, regardless of the degree of alteration,

and to require restrictive and demanding standards of design, alterations, materials, signage, etc., etc., etc. is to lose sight of the nature of the Market, its disrespect for authority and its creative impulses.

Creative Adaptation: With a few exceptions, most of the extant Victorian buildings in the Market are relatively unremarkable in themselves compared to their adapted forms that express the creativity of generations of people who inhabit these buildings and continue to shape them into functional spaces. This expression of creative adaptive enterprise is an important value and should not be suppressed by regulation.

Non-Contributing Status: To assign Non-Contributing status to properties implies that they count for less. Yet their contribution should be judged equally important in terms of the Market's overall landscape. Their alteration and replacement should be assessed in a similar way to those that are considered to be 'Contributing'.

Preventing Demolition of Heritage Resources: The ability to delay demolition to allow for an evaluation of a property's heritage values, appears to be the principal justification for classifying some properties as 'Contributing'. CAG suggests that all proposed demolitions and replacements be controlled in a similar manner and may require a "made in Kensington" demolition control mechanism.

Consider an Alternative Approach: While it is understood that the City's Heritage Planning Division has adopted and is committed to the Contributing / Non-Contributing (C/NC) approach for all new HCD Plans, it should be recognized that this does not fit Kensington Market District easily. It is particularly ill-suited to the Commercial Market.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Kensington Market has always played by its own rules and the HCD Plan should be no exception. R/CAG urges Heritage Planning to prepare a permissive, 'Made in Kensington' HCD Plan that has guidelines that will encourage the ongoing incremental evolution of the Commercial Market. This should include a reappraisal of the current Contributing / Non-Contributing classification method.

The HCD Study recommended that "contributing and non-contributing resources be identified during an interim period before the HCD Plan commences" (p. 105). R/CAG urges Heritage Planning to gain community consensus on the approach to Contributing / Non-Contributing classification prior to further work proceeding on the HCD Plan. As a starting point, R/CAG suggests the following approaches:

- **Exclude the Commercial Market from consideration of Contributing/Non-Contributing categories while maintaining this approach in the Residential Areas. Properties of potentially high heritage value to be listed on the Heritage Register.**
- **Change the criteria for determining "Contributing" throughout the District, accompanied by a limited number of permissive policies and guidelines.**

Properties of potentially high heritage value to be listed on the Heritage Register.

- **Introduce a unique Kensington HCD approach (including demolition control policies) and abandon the Contributing/ Non-Contributing approach. Properties of potentially high heritage value to be listed on the Heritage Register**

2. REVISIONS TO THE HCD BOUNDARY

R/CAG unanimously opposes the changes that exclude boundary streets: Spadina Avenue, Bathurst Street, most of College Street and the western blocks of Dundas Street West. The reasons for the inclusion of the properties on these streets were clearly articulated in the 2017 Study, prepared by Taylor Hazell Architects. The Study notes that:

The proposed boundary reflects a combination of historical, contextual, social and architectural factors which considered the site as a distinct area within the broader urban fabric and which contains rich historical and cultural resources (p.105)

R/CAG believes that the entire “super-block”, including the main streets, needs to be viewed as an interconnected whole with fundamental principles that apply across it.

The Study notes the distinctive street layout within the Market, that arose from the uncoordinated subdivision of the area by three separate owners within three separate Park Lots. This highly distinctive feature only makes sense within the context of the main street grid that helps to define it. We believe that truncating the Kensington Market streets before they reach their ends is counter-intuitive and arbitrary, denying the historic and present-day inter-connectedness between the Market and the main streets.

We would like to emphasize that the entirety of the buildings on the main streets have historical and cultural significance, and we would object to any attempts to assign value only to their facades.

The 2017 HCD Study states unequivocally the importance of both College Street and Spadina Avenue for the Jewish segment of the Market’s history.

Spadina Avenue: In her book, *Kensington Market, collective memory, public history, and Toronto’s urban landscape* (Toronto University Press, 2015), Na Li states

The “forces coalescing along Spadina were greatly strengthened by the Jewish community...Secular cultural organizations flourished alongside religious ones... All of this contributed socially, commercially, religiously, intellectually and culturally to the evolution of Kensington Market; it also profoundly shaped Toronto’s character”. (p.37)

We concur that the business enterprises along Spadina Avenue shaped Kensington Market in a crucial way and cannot be eliminated from the HCD. The street offered employment, cultural activities, lodging, and entertainment. Important examples for the stretch of Spadina on the west side between College and Dundas include:

- Hyman’s Book Store at 412 Spadina, – a cultural hub for debate
- The Labour Lyceum at the corner of St. Andrew and Spadina – centre for political activism, particularly around the textile trade
- United Bakers at 338 Spadina, along with Switzer’s Deli at 322 Spadina, are important for their connection to the Market’s most famous product: food. 322 Spadina is also significant as the home of Emma Goldman for a period of time.
- Gwartzman’s Art Supply at 448 Spadina, still in business, and an important connection with the artistic community that continues to flourish in the Market
- The El Mocambo, a music venue at 472 Spadina since the 19th century, is a current business with historic ties to the music scene that is part of Kensington history. Its proximity to the University of Toronto, and George Brown College in the 1970’s made it a popular destination for students, who continue to be an important demographic in the Market. The most recent renovation of the El Mo had input from current residents, who worked with the owner to ensure the venue doesn’t encroach on the neighbourhood through late night noise.

College Street had a similar mercantile and residential relationship to the Jewish community in the early years of the 20th century. The Raxlen Pharmacy at the corner of College and Augusta is a link to the Doctors’ Hospital, which was founded by the Raxlen brothers in 1954 with the express purpose of serving the area’s diverse community.

The Kensington Manor Senior’s Residence connects Oxford and College via the driveway / lane on the east side that is a much-used pedestrian connection between the two streets. The building’s principal entrance is on that lane. The building also has frontages on both College and Oxford. Many of the residents consider themselves members of the Kensington community and it is used as a local polling station during elections.

When the high-rise was recently built at 297 College Street, on the adjoining site to the east, the lane was widened to accommodate vehicular access to the resident parking and commercial parking and loading docks. Retractable bollards, midway along the lane, are intended to prevent vehicular through-movements to Oxford Street. Pedestrian movement is encouraged, and the display windows of the new ground floor retail (occupied by a bank), turn the corner and continue a considerable distance from College Street, down the lane.

College Street has a long-standing connection to the Black community. The Market was a centre for the Black community because most Torontonians refused to tolerate Black people as neighbours; Jewish landlords in the Market were the exception. The United Negro Improvement Association had a branch at 355 College Street, built in 1925 beside the College Press Building. The UNIA Hall, in addition to holding formal associational meetings and events, housed the United Negro Credit Union, the Toronto United Negro Association and the Black Cross Nurses, an organization which promoted good health and hygiene practices within the black community. There were weekly Sunday Mass Meetings that included a choir.

Kensington Community School: The Toronto District School Board acquired its property on College Street after a failed attempt by the University of Toronto to build a student residence. The TDSB was pressured by community activists to work with the neighbourhood to create a non-traditional, locally relevant model, resulting in the Kensington Community School. The complex includes a pool, a daycare, and there have historically been many outreach (e.g. language) programs as well as meeting spaces that involve the neighbourhood. Community groups are still involved in landscaping the school property and it is considered an integral part of the current Kensington community.

East side of Leonard Avenue and South side of Wales Avenue, west of Bellevue Square Park are eliminated in the proposed boundary changes. The Leonard Street buildings include two housing units run by the St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society that came to our community with our full support; many of us advocated for their inclusion in our neighbourhood. Similarly, the housing along the south side of Wales is geared-to-income housing that replaces St. Christopher's University Settlement, a significant part of our history. Eliminating these properties would go against the values of social responsibility and anti-gentrification that are important to us.

The Toronto Western Hospital, included in the Study due to its historic association with the area, really cannot be ignored. Both as a provider of health care, an ever-expanding physical presence, and as an employer, the hospital has exerted a huge influence on the neighbourhood. Its proposed expansion in the 1950's was opposed by the neighbourhood and led to the demolition of a large number of houses north of the original farm site. Community activists fought the burning of biohazardous waste from the TWH incinerator in the 1980's and 90's and are currently fighting noise and light pollution from the Krembil Centre. The principle that the neighbourhood has historically opposed TWH encroachment into the community beyond its property, needs to be articulated in our HCD plan and recognized by the city's planners. Encroachment on the Market area, whether through physical development beyond its current footprint or through negative environmental impact (light, noise, traffic, etc). should be opposed.

The proposed revisions to the Boundary, as presented to the mini sessions of R/CAG, seem focused on the property boundaries of development blocks and the defensibility of inclusions/exclusions on potential LPAT appeal. However, no statements have been

provided to CAG that dispute the rationale of “... a distinct area within the broader urban fabric and which contains rich historical and cultural resources”

While R/CAG recognizes the pressure brought to bear on this issue through recent LPAT decisions, methods should be developed to integrate the objectives and instruments of Heritage Planning with City Planning policies and guidelines. The use of a “Heritage Overlay” (deployed by the City of Ottawa) may be one method to be considered where Secondary Plan Areas overlap with Heritage Conservation Districts. Whatever the methodology, R/CAG requests that a more creative approach should be taken to achieve an integration of both the heritage and city planning objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R/CAG strongly urges the HCD Planning Team to reconsider its proposed changes to the HCD Boundary and return to the earlier HCD Study recommendation that is reflective of the community’s consensual view.

Concurrent with the preparation of the HCD Plan, a review of any inconsistencies in planning policies between the HCD area and overlapping Secondary Plan areas should be identified and recommendations for their resolution prepared.

3. SCALE OF REDEVELOPMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF NARROW LOTS

IN THE COMMERCIAL MARKET

Narrow Frontage Properties are fundamental part of the Market. A very high proportion of property frontages are 6.7 metres or less (HCD Study pg.72) and many of the larger frontage buildings are sub-divided on the ground floor level into independently operated businesses. This has produced a high frequency along the sidewalks of separate retail and other commercial outlets as well remaining houses, that is characteristic of the Market.

This pattern enables incremental change. Any one property may be altered, rebuilt or changed in use, without unduly disrupting the ‘completeness’ of the street. Indeed, it is the frequency of these changes, the constant reinvention of the ‘bits’ that makes the Market sustainable. The loss of this pattern, through consolidation of ownership of small lots and/or large-scale redevelopment, could have major negative impact on the Market’s vitality and viability.

The consolidation of narrow lots and the scale of redevelopment are seen as the number one issue for the mixed-use Commercial Market and on properties on the bounding main streets. The HCD Plan should give highest priority to developing policies that address and control the scale, footprint and height of all redevelopment.

Where such policies are not enforceable through the Provincial Heritage Act, other planning instruments should be brought to bear. A fully coordinated city planning /

heritage planning approach that has the buy-in of other City agencies seems essential to achieving these stated goals.

PROPERTIES ON THE BORDERING MAIN STREETS.

High-rise Redevelopment: R/CAG and the broader Kensington Market community is fearful of a “surrounding wall of high-rise buildings” on the perimeter main streets. While the community welcomes responsible redevelopment, there is skepticism that the City’s urban design policies and guidelines that are intended to protect the residential and commercial parts of the neighbourhood will be adhered to.

While political commentators and journalists may dismiss this attitude as NIMBYism, there is good reason for the community’s skepticism. Three recent high-rise (often referred to as ‘mid-rise’) redevelopments in the area - on Spadina and College - reflect a disregard for some of the basic tenants of ‘responsible planning’ or adhering to the City’s urban design policies and guidance. Such considerations as: maintaining sun access to school playing fields; transitioning built-form towards the low-rise neighbourhoods; limiting overall height and street-wall heights to ensure minimum standards of solar access to streets; providing building profiles that minimize wind turbulence at ground level; maintaining minimum side-yard separations to ensure ‘rights to light’; have all been flaunted in these three recent development projects.

An Unfortunate Precedent: 297 & 301 College Street, is a recent high-density redevelopment directly impacting the Kensington Market neighbourhood. It has egregiously broken many of the ‘rules’ (or they have been ‘negotiated’ away). For example, the Kensington Manor senior’s residence driveway/lane that is the principal entrance frontage, was widened to facilitate the new building’s resident and commercial parking and service access. The new building’s encroachment on the minimum setback from side property line was permitted and there are no angular plane transitions to the low-scale housing to the south. The consequences of these ‘invasions’ are: reduced space between facing buildings; overwhelming high blank walls against low-scale houses; increased vehicular traffic including delivery and service trucks; reduced the sun exposure and very high wind turbulence particularly when the wind is north-westerly. The redesign of the driveway/lane has also eliminated a small garden that was tended by residents of Kensington Manor as well as reduced the size of the individual patio gardens to the ground floor residential units.

The loss of ‘quality of life’ for the residents in Kensington Manor and the overall local community impact is the sort of occurrence that we would like to avoid for others as the area develops.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Narrow frontage lots are an important attribute of the Commercial Market. The HCD Plan should deter multi lot consolidations, control multiple lot redevelopment beyond prescribed limits, control building heights and establish

maximum floor plate sizes of individual ground floor commercial units. Where these controls cannot be implemented through the HCD Plan, other planning instruments should be coordinated with the HCD.

R/CAG urges that Kensington Market be considered a single Planning District, bounded by the main streets – College, Spadina, Dundas and Bathurst – and that the Kensington Market HCD Plan be integrated with other aspects of the City’s official plan policies in order to have comprehensive planning both for the conservation of the District’s heritage resources and for ongoing compatible development.

4. THE PUBLIC REALM

For most people, Kensington Market is experienced and appreciated entirely from within its unusually rich and intricate public realm. Particularly important is the complexity and continuity of the fine-grain network of streets and lanes. In the Commercial Market, the public realm may be considered of higher value than any one of the buildings that line it.

The variety of ways the buildings and other elements give shape and purpose to public spaces is one of the Commercial Market’s major attractions and defining attributes. The HCD Plan should encourage conservation and incentivize improvements and extensions of the public realm network.

No systematic analysis appears to have been made of relationships between various public right-of-way characteristics and the built-form responses. Many of the building typologies that are presented in the HCD Study have clearly evolved in response to their street context.

The boundaries of the Market are historically porous, particularly at College, Spadina and Dundas. There are many opportunities – streets, lanes, driveways and informal paths - for pedestrians to move between the bordering main street sidewalks and the ‘interior’ of the Market. Many buildings ‘turn the corner’ – with frontages on both the main streets and internal Market streets. The perceptual boundaries between Market and neighbouring areas are indistinct and ambiguous. There are many present and historic cultural overlaps between the Market and the surrounding main streets.

Blurred public/private boundaries is a characteristic value. There is synergy between commercial interior building activities and public streets. The temporary or semi-permanent structures and street-furniture sited in the front yard set-back areas and on the margins of the public streets reflect that synergy and are peculiar to the Commercial Market.

Mapping the Public Realm: If the Public Realm is to receive due consideration in the HCD Plan, it should be clearly mapped, and its characteristic attributes identified.

In the Commercial Market, there is considerable difference between the perceived public realm and public ownership. On many of the Market’s streets, some merchants

use parts of the public street for commercial purposes, while other merchants encourage public use of their private property. This kind of territorial “give and take” is a distinguishing attribute of the Commercial Market. In the residential areas, the Toronto convention of incorporating the edges of the public right-of-way into the front-yards of houses, seems to apply throughout the District, (with a very unusual example on the northern part of Bellevue Avenue).

The Market’s Micro-climate: The pedestrian-friendly quality of the Market’s public realm is supported by a comfortable local micro-climate. The unusual streets and blocks pattern that has many “T” intersections, including at the bordering main streets, combined with a relatively consistent pattern of building heights, helps to minimize wind turbulence and to shelter the streets. Low building heights also enable good solar access to its narrow streets.

The relative comfort of sunny and wind-sheltered Market streets is particularly important in Fall, Winter and Spring. Summer heat has traditionally been moderated by awnings and shade structures in the commercial market and deciduous street trees in the residential areas (and lower Kensington Avenue in the Commercial Market).

Where to Draw the Boundary of the Public Realm: There seems to be inconsistencies in the mapping of the public realm to date. It would seem reasonable to suppose that public sidewalks should front every property within the HCD, yet this is not shown in the case of Dundas Street West where the HCD Boundary is drawn at the front property lines and not at the curb line. Similar inconsistencies occur on College Street and other streets within the District.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R/CAG strongly urges that the HCD Plan give greater emphasis to Kensington Market’s Public Realm, clearly identify in words and diagrams the attributes of Public Realm worthy of conservation and establish guidelines for its improvement and expansion.

It is recommended that adjoining sidewalks of all the bordering main streets be included in the definition of the Market’s Public Realm.

APPENDIX: FURTHER THOUGHTS AND CONCERNS

A PRESENT DANGER: THE ALIGNMENT OF AUGUSTA AVENUE IN ALEXANDRA PARK

Nassau Street (one-way west to east) and Augusta Avenue (one-way south to north) are the only continuous through-routes of the Kensington Market District. They both begin and end within the District and have T intersections with bordering main streets. Thus, the principal traffic movements tend to be internal to the Market District and city-wide traffic movements are deterred, though not prevented.

The proposed Alexandra Park redevelopment plan indicates a realignment of streets providing a four-way intersection at Augusta Avenue and Dundas Street West thus extending a direct street connection (Augusta Avenue) between Richmond Street West in the south to College Street in the north. Without traffic management (such as reversing direction of one-way streets), a through-route attracting city-wide vehicular traffic could have disastrous impact on the pedestrian-friendly Market.

RECOMMENDATION: R/CAG urges the Planning Dept. to consider the potential traffic impact on pedestrian and cycle friendly Kensington Market of the proposed alignment of Augusta Avenue in Alexandra Park and to recommend possible redesign or traffic management changes to the new street network in order to mitigate such impacts.

419 – 431 COLLEGE STREET (CORNER OF COLLEGE AND BATHURST) PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

The proposed mixed-use condominium redevelopment (that includes the Sneaky Dees property) raises several concerns for Kensington Market neighbourhood and may establish an unfortunate precedent for future development on College Street: Our concerns regarding built-form relate to overall height and the lack of an adequate angular plane transition to the low-rise residential area in Kensington Market to the south. A 13 storey slab building is proposed. We understand that the mid-rise building guidelines, calculated on the College Street ROW width and based on minimum standards of solar access, provide for a maximum nine storey building. (Presumably, a lower building height would be allowed in relation to the Bathurst Street frontage). We would also suggest that significant public realm improvements should be made on Bathurst Street frontage where sidewalk dimensions are minimal and crowding of pedestrians is greatest. While we are encouraged by the possibility of a music venue within the building, further concerns relate to the size and type of residential units proposed and their affordability.

RECOMMENDATION: R/CAG wishes to see much greater consideration given to protecting Kensington Market from inappropriate development that impinges on the public and private realm of this historic neighbourhood. Housing for families and affordability should also be considered in the Market context.

We further recommend that negative impacts on Kensington Market of 297 & 301 College Street (see above) be evaluated, as a “lessons learned exercise”, before proceeding further with the development review.

17 ST. ANDREWS STREET PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

R/CAG wishes for an architecture that is more referential to Kensington Market and the proposed mixed-use building’s relationship to adjacent property, 13 -15 St. Andrews Street, be carefully considered. R/CAG is concerned that the ground floor retail be subdivided into viable narrow fronted units and that the residential unit sizes and their

marketing be related to the Market neighbourhood. There is a need for housing that accommodates a local working population and families that are more likely to consider the Market as a long-term home.

RECOMMENDATION: R/CAG urges that more consideration be given to developing a building that is more fully integrated architecturally and socially with Kensington Market.

R/CAG also recommends that 13-15 St. Andrews Street be listed immediately on the Heritage Register.

Respectfully submitted 31 March 2021

R/CAG Members:

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