

# BABY POINT HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY



## *Update: Introducing the development of a Heritage Conservation District Plan*

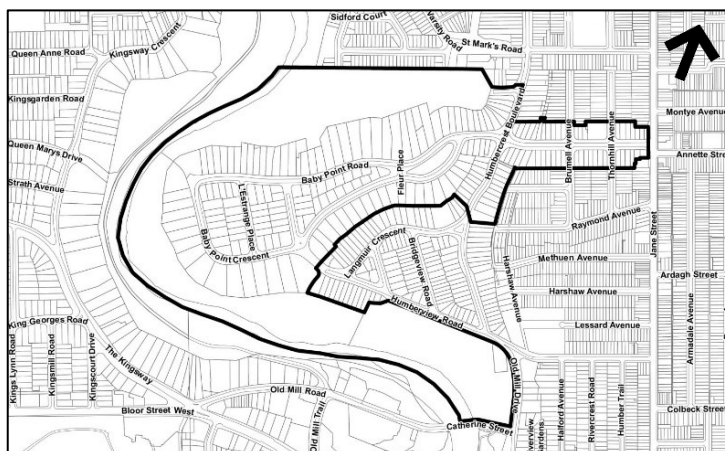
City Planning is leading the study of Baby Point as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

### Background

The Baby Point Heritage Conservation District (HCD) area defined under the Ontario Heritage Act was authorized by Council and completed in accordance with the document “Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto, Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference”. The conclusions of the HCD Study were based on community engagement and consultation. The HCD Study was received by the Toronto Preservation Board on July 2018, including the recommendation to proceed with developing an HCD Plan for the Baby Point neighbourhood including a revised study area boundary (see **Figure 1**).

### What is a Heritage Conservation District?

A Heritage Conservation District (HCD) is an area of the city with significant heritage value that is protected by a municipal by-law passed under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. HCDs provide policies that identify, conserve, and enhance historic neighbourhoods, while allowing for growth and change. HCD Plans guide and inform the planning and/or building permit process to ensure that changes within the HCD maintain the area’s special character by conserving and protecting above and below ground (archaeological) heritage resources.



**Figure 1 – Proposed Baby Point HCD Plan Area**

### Contact



**Heritage Planner**  
 Cecilia Nin Hernandez  
 100 Queen St. W, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, East Tower  
 Toronto ON M5H 2N2  
 Cecilia.NinHernandez@toronto.ca

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## HCD Candidate

The HCD study determined that Baby Point is a strong candidate for a Part V designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, possessing cultural heritage values across the district. The Baby Point neighbourhood demonstrates physical value, contextual value and social and community value relating to its historic and ongoing significance for Indigenous communities and as an authentic example of an early 20th-century garden suburb. It has maintained its original character with few visible modifications to the original Home Smith era houses and generally sympathetic alterations and additions. Today, Baby Point continues to exemplify garden suburb ideals with its curvilinear streets and houses designed in a range of period revival styles. The area has significance to Indigenous communities given its known history as a site used by their ancestors for millennia. Currently, City staff from Heritage Planning and a team of consultants lead by EVOQ, are preparing the HCD plan, required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Baby Point HCD Plan will include objectives, policies and guidelines to manage change within the area in order to conserve the neighbourhood's cultural heritage value, including providing important protections for the Baby Point Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA).

## A Significant Indigenous Heritage

Toronto is the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations who continue to have deep ties to the natural environment, as well as archaeological resources left by their ancestors. Toronto is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and is covered by several treaties.

The Baby Point area, located atop a promontory overlooking the Humber River, is of particular significance to Indigenous communities given its known history as a site used by their ancestors for millennia, including as a place of burial. The area is located at a critical point in the Toronto Carrying Place Trail, an ancient travel route that provided access to hunting grounds, connected Indigenous communities, and served as part of long-distance trade networks. Archaeological evidence suggests repeated use of the Baby Point area over at least the last 8,000 years.

The promontory is perhaps best known as the location of a well-documented, mid-to late seventeenth century Haudenosaunee village named Teiaiagon, which may represent one of the largest archaeological sites in the city of Toronto.

After the Haudenosaunee Confederacy left the region in the 1690s, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation settled in the Toronto area, continuing to use the Carrying Place Trail, the Humber River, and the promontory.

## Archaeological Potential Related to Indigenous Heritage

In recognition of the particular significance of Indigenous archaeological findings in Baby Point, and strong evidence to suggest that many archaeological resources may still remain under the surface, the Baby Point area has been designated an Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA) in the City of Toronto's Archaeological Management Plan.

As part of the HCD Study, properties within the ASA were evaluated and areas of archaeological

potential were refined to determine the likelihood of encountering archaeological resources. The ASA represents an additional overlay within the HCD which applies to properties in the district and which indicates greater potential to impact archaeological resources as part of any soil disturbing activities.

## Heritage of Home Smith and the Garden Suburb

In addition to the area's natural landscape features and significance to Indigenous communities, Baby Point owes much of its present day physical character to Robert Home Smith, who between 1908 and 1911 acquired tracts of land along the Humber River with a vision of building residential suburbs situated in nature on the outskirts of the increasingly industrialized city. Home Smith was a proponent of the garden suburb movement, which sought to provide relief from the congestion of urban centres by constructing spacious new neighbourhoods in garden-like settings. Construction began in 1913 and continued into the 1930s. Today, Baby Point continues to exemplify garden suburb ideals with its curvilinear streets, houses designed in a range of period revival styles, including English Cottage/Tudor Revival style and the Colonial Revival style, large lots, the retention of the existing tree canopy, a valuation of private space and design restrictions intended to protect the neighbourhood's character.

Approximately 80% of homes in Baby Point originate from its early period, resulting in consistent and predominant characteristics such as roof types, building height, and materials.

## Developing the HCD Plan

The HCD Plan will be developed based on the cultural heritage value of the neighbourhood and informed by community input and ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities. The Plan will contain policies, guidelines and procedures to ensure the cultural heritage values, character and integrity of the district are conserved in the long term, and that archaeological resources are protected. The HCD Plan will include clear objectives, policies and guidelines for cultural heritage conservation planning and procedures. The HCD will also identify the alterations or classes of alterations that are subject to deemed permits.

## Types of Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures

An HCD's policies, guidelines and procedures can affect archaeology (cultural heritage resources underground) and the exterior of a property, including but not limited to its landscape. These policies, guidelines, and procedures are tailor-made to suit the district's cultural heritage attributes identified to be conserved. See **Figure 2** for examples included.

Area-specific policies, guidelines and procedures for Baby Point will be developed informed by Indigenous Engagement, community workshops and presentations back to the community when draft policies are being finalized.

Opportunities will be provided throughout the plan phase for community input and feedback, and property owners will be consulted about potential policy impacts, especially as they relate to building permits and planning permissions.

## What can be included in an HCD Plan:

- Archaeological policies for properties with archaeological potential or within the Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA)
- Policies guiding landscape alteration and design (for example, mature tree policy)
- Policies that influence the massing and setbacks of a building or structure
- Policies that specify materials that can be used on the exterior of a building or structure
- Policies related to the design and architectural style of a building or structure)
- Policies that specify what can or cannot be altered or demolished
- Policies and guidelines relating to alteration or infill construction on non-contributing properties

## What cannot be included in an HCD Plan:

- Policies that regulate changes to the interior or portion of the building or structure that cannot be seen from the street, unless other policies in the HCD Plan apply (i.e. archaeological and landscape policies)

## Get Involved

The city will engage with community members in the coming months to inform them about the HCD Plan, answer questions, and gather feedback. The city is also conducting a parallel engagement process with Indigenous rightsholders. Feedback from all consultations will be presented to the public during the process.

Throughout the development of the HCD Plan, the Baby Point HCD project page on the city's website will be updated to provide information on the consultation process, including all workshops, open houses, meetings and key project milestones. The consultant team will find appropriate opportunities to visit the neighbourhood to raise awareness about the HCD Plan, promote workshop registration and take questions. For more information, please check the project website:

<https://www.toronto.ca/baby-point-heritage-conservation-district-study/>

**Figure 2 – What is Included in an HCD Plan**

## 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.