

# Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District Plan

## Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Community Advisory Group Meeting #5

July 25, 2023

Webex

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

## Attendees

### Community Advisory Group (CAG) Members

- Jordan Allison, Cabbagetown Heritage Conservation District Committee
- Judith Crichton, Resident
- Martha Fusca, Resident
- Karen Marren, Cabbagetown South Residents Association
- John Rider, Resident

### Project Team

- Tamara Anson-Cartwright, Program Manager, Heritage Planning, City of Toronto
- Clint Robertson, Heritage Planner (project lead), City of Toronto
- Emma Doedens, Assistant Heritage Planner, City of Toronto
- Dima Cook, EVOQ
- Mark Elsworthy, EVOQ Strategies
- Alexander Furneaux, LURA Consulting
- Lovely Juson, LURA Consulting

## Purpose

The City of Toronto hosted the fifth Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District Plan (HCD) Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting on July 25, 2023 via Webex. The purpose of the meetings was to:

- Provide a refresher on the HCD background.
- Share changes influenced by planning and heritage policy framework changes (Province's Bill 23 changes to the Ontario Heritage Act and the City's Expanding Housing Opportunities in Neighbourhoods, EHON).
- Share updates on the draft policies of the HCD Plan.
- Gather feedback on policy updates.

## Overview

Clint Robertson, City of Toronto opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Alexander Furneaux of LURA Consulting, delivered the Land Acknowledgement, reviewed the agenda, and facilitated a round of introductions. Dima Cook, EVOQ, presented the project background, including HCD objectives and boundaries and timeline update. Mark Elsworthy, EVOQ

Strategies, explained the draft policies and guidelines of the Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District Plan. Alexander Furneaux facilitated a round of questions of clarification with the CAG members on the draft policies and guidelines. Lastly, Alexander Furneaux wrapped up the meeting and reviewed the next steps.

## Discussion

*The guided discussion followed the questions outlined below. CAG member responses are summarized as bullets under each relevant question.*

### Feedback

Overall, CAG members expressed their support and thanks for the work completed by the City and its consultants EVOQ regarding the development of the HCD Plan to-date. Members were grateful for the progress to-date and the update on work completed since their last meeting. Members are eager to review the HCD Plan when it is released for comments/feedback.

#### Are these revisions to the plan clear?

- The setback policy presented is good and should ensure that there are appropriate transitions and setbacks to protect the cornice line of buildings.
- Desire to see language incorporated related to by-law enforcement of the right-of-way and streetscape. Specifically:
  - Advising against hardscaping or large accessory structures on front yards.
  - Acknowledgment of existing by-law permitting front yard walkways up to 48 inches wide.
  - Specify appropriate fence heights and materials for front and flanking fences. Ideally 24 to 30 inches, but no more than 36 inches.
- Desire to see language pertaining to use of unit pavers. Transportation Services has proposed pavers as an alternative to asphalt for laneways and Anniversary Park which more closely resembles historic red brick beneath some roads in the district.
- Signage language should apply to mid-rise coming to the neighbourhood – desire to not see backlit signs.
- Concerns regarding exterior pot lights being installed in front soffits. Desire to see recommendations for heritage-sensitive lighting options.

**Question:** What qualifies as “adequate documentation” when properties are being renovated or repaired? For instance, if a person was looking to rebuild a porch, would the presence of a porch on a similar property that had maintained a historic porch be able to act as a precedent?

- **Answer:** Adequate documentation generally refers to historical photos. Many of the properties have similar existing features that can serve as a reference point.

**Question:** Are these policies aligned with current practices of other HCDs in the City of Toronto?

- **Answer:** Yes – policies for the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD Plan have been updated based on the recently approved Garden District HCD Plan.

**Question:** Is the variety store at the corner of Gerrard Street and Ontario Street (237 Gerrard Street East) listed or designated? Several properties are continually changing owners and not getting the attention to upkeep they need.

- **Answer:** 237 Gerrard Street East is listed along with all properties on the south side of Gerrard Street from 237 to 251. A map of heritage register status is available on the City's website at <https://cot-planning.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PanelsLegend/index.html?appid=a90bf1e72b694db5a4892dc6b170688d>

**Question:** A few properties are cut out at the southeast corner of the plan area, though there is historical significance to some of these. How will these properties be handled?

- **Answer:** 10 properties on Berkeley and Streets near Shuter were listed on Toronto's Heritage Register in December 2020.

*Discussion Topic: Do policies respond with greater clarity and guidance for managing change in the area?*

**Question:** Do the policies of the HCD Plan support the design discussions pertaining to Plaza Corp's redevelopment of the Beer Store site on Gerrard Street?

- **Answer:** Given that the site falls within the HCD Plan area which is not yet in force, the design is different than what would have been permitted had the HCD Plan been in force.

**Question:** Can windows be replaced with a modern equivalent that has greater insulating properties, but which unless you were up close presents as if it were the original?

- **Answer:** Windows are subject to policies of the HCD Plan. It is recommended to conserve and repair rather than replace windows. Designated properties, including those in an HCD, are eligible for heritage grants to help cover costs of conservation and restoration.
- **CAG Follow-up:** CAG members identified that most property owners don't know this.

*Are there any issues in the neighbourhood that we should be aware of when planning the Community Consultation Meeting in the Fall?*

- There should be resources at the meeting that are prepared to speak to specific homeowner concerns such as renovation requirements, heritage grants, and insuring heritage designated properties.
- The Allan Garden encampment has been a high-profile point of discussion within the community. Some may feel that work on the HCD is misaligned with the housing crisis apparent in the community, while others may come to vent about their frustrations generally relating to encampments.
- Design consultant for Anniversary Park was not aware the park is in an HCD Plan area. Desire for Heritage Planning to have some oversight of this process so that elements such as the iron fence are maintained.

## Other Questions

**Question:** How does the requirement to designate heritage properties within 2 years of being added to the heritage register list impact this HCD? What happens if the HCD Plan is appealed?

- **Answer:** The City can only keep an individual property listed for up to 2 years. After that the property either needs to be designated, or it is removed from the register list and cannot be added again for a period of 5 years. This requirement is specific to individual

properties only and does not impact the HCD Plan. If the HCD Plan were to be appealed, properties could be listed while appeals are processed. The goal is to avoid appeals to the Plan. Recent Parkdale HCD Plan only had two appeals related to two properties for development, rather than the entire plan.

**Question:** Are there any by-laws that require homes in an HCD to meet a specific standard of maintenance?

- **Answer:** There are general property standard by-laws, and within HCDs there are requirements for compliance with provisions of the plan only when changes are made. The City cannot force property owners to undertake maintenance beyond what is specified in the by-laws, nor can the City require a property owner to undertake renovations or restorations.

**Question:** Is there a roster of companies that do heritage restoration work? This could be a helpful resource for people to undertake quality restoration.

- **Answer:** No – the City does not maintain a roster of companies who do heritage restoration work. Generally, property owners communicate recommendations by word of mouth.

**Question:** Regarding EHON, does a laneway house fall under the total number of residences on a property?

- **Answer:** No, each property can now contain up to 4 units in addition to an accessory dwelling unit (laneway/garden suite).

**Question:** When will the CAG be able to review and comment on the full draft language of the draft plan?

- **Answer:** It was anticipated that a draft of the HCD Plan copy could be available by Sept 21 to the CAG (subject to change). *NOTE: A draft copy of the draft HCD plan will be available to the public in first half of October on the HCD webpage.* The HCD Plan recommended by City Planning will be attached to the staff report to the Toronto Preservation Board (TPB) meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. If adopted by the TPB, the staff report will go to Toronto-East York Community Council in January (date to be announced) and then City Council in the first quarter of 2024.

**Question:** Why can't the Gerrard Street Slip north of Anniversary Park be closed to vehicle traffic? Improving this park without addressing the challenge that it is an island surrounding by roads will mean whatever improvements are advanced will continue to be hindered by inhospitable surroundings.

- **Answer:** While not in the scope of the HCD Plan, design concepts for the park envision a more shared street for the Gerrard Street Slip similar to Market Street next to St. Lawrence Market. The road cannot be permanently closed because there are properties facing this short section of street. More information on the project is available at <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/construction-new-facilities/park-facility-projects/anniversary-park-improvements/> or you can contact the Rachel Weston ([Rachel.Weston@toronto.ca](mailto:Rachel.Weston@toronto.ca); 416-937-3481), Senior Project Coordinator.

## Next Steps

Alexander Furneaux shared the next steps for the project team. The City will hold an Open House style Community Consultation on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The Open House display boards will be made available online. Feedback from the Community Consultation Meeting and online comments will be solicited and considered. The HCD Plan which will be presented at the Toronto Preservation Board on December 7, 2023. The project team is aiming to present the Plan before Community Council in the First Quarter of 2024, for consideration by City Council shortly after. These timelines are intended to see the Plan considered by City Council before its busy annual budget cycle meetings<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *The timing of the Plan's consideration is related to scheduling a date in Council's regular calendar of meetings prior to budget deliberation in February/March 2024 (regular Council meetings are suspended during this time). The funding for this Plan's development has already been accounted for.*