

Bloor-Yorkville Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment

Heritage Focus Group Meeting #3

Tuesday, November 6th, 2025

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Microsoft Teams

Meeting Summary

Attendance

Paul Bedford (The Greater Yorkville Residents' Association); Mary-Helen Spence (The ABC Residents Association); Linda Brett (Bloor East Neighbourhood Association); Jonathan Demers (Toronto Public Library)

City Planning Project Team: Gary Miedema (Project Manager, Heritage Planning); Liz McFarland (Senior Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning); Vibhuti Joshi (Assistant Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning); Chris Pereira (Planner, Community Planning)

Common Bond Collective: Ellen Kowalchuk; David Deo

Meeting Purpose

Heritage Focus Groups are advisory in nature. Two Heritage Focus Group meetings were held for the Bloor-Yorkville CHRA in 2021, before the project was paused. Reactivated in the summer of 2025, the CHRA conducted a third and final Heritage Focus Group meeting to update members on completed work and to gather input and feedback on refreshed and revised draft final outcomes.

Timeline

The meeting started at 7:00pm.

Gary Miedema welcomed members and opened the meeting with a Land Acknowledgement. After introductions, the purpose of the meeting and the roles and responsibilities of the Heritage Focus Group (HFG) were reviewed.

Chris Pereira provided an update on the status of the Bloor-Yorkville Secondary Plan Study, which was begun in 2021 to expand upon existing built form and urban design policies and provide additional policy direction on built form, area-specific policies, and the public realm. The Study was placed on hold in late 2022 and has not been reactivated. In the meantime, the Downtown Plan (OPA 406), Site and Area Specific Policies (SASP) 211 and 225 have continued to guide development in the area. Staff noted how the CHRA began in 2021 as a component of the planning study but will now be completed independently.

Focus group members were then reminded of the process and typical results of a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment, noting that it starts with documenting and analyzing how an area has developed over time. This work is informed through conversations with community members, which helps identify themes and insights that may not be captured through research alone. Evaluation of properties is then conducted using Provincial criteria in O.Reg. 9/06 to identify properties that may have cultural heritage value.

Staff noted that meeting notes from the previous two Heritage Focus Group meetings had been posted online and shared with members ahead of this meeting. Those notes have informed the work of the CHRA to date.

Ellen Kowalchuk, Common Bond walked through the survey methodology and then reviewed the Historic Context Statement along with the preliminary findings of the heritage survey. David Deo, Common Bond, then shared the draft recommendations of their work, including properties considered to have potential cultural heritage value, a recommendation for further Indigenous engagement and commemoration of Indigenous heritage, and a recommendation for portions of the former old village of Yorkville on Cumberland, Yorkville and Scollard avenues to be considered for an HCD study.

Following the presentation, Gary invited any questions or comments on the material presented and facilitated a discussion (summarized below).

As a wrap up, Gary indicated that City staff would send a summary of the meeting notes and a copy of the presentation to all HFG members. HFG members were encouraged to share any additional feedback on the draft HCS or provide comments on the recommendations prior to November 20. The commenting period was later extended to November 27.

Discussion and Comments from HFG Members

The HFG members expressed appreciation for the work of the CHRA and expressed general support for the properties identified as having potential cultural heritage value

and the recommendations proposed by Common Bond Collective. They also stated that the long pause in the CHRA process, and the continued pause of the Secondary Plan, had left vulnerable the heritage resources within the Secondary Plan area. They noted particular concern for the Yorkville Village core, which will soon face rezoning for increased height and density due to Provincial PMTSA regulations in the absence of the planning and heritage protections that could have been in place earlier. They strongly emphasized the need for the City to act on conserving identified properties quickly now to mitigate the potential impact of study delays.

Discussion RE: CHRA Process

- One member asked how typologies were assigned to properties, and how current use impacted that assignment. Staff confirmed that typologies relate to the original form and use of the property. In the case of 100 Charles Street, now the Gerstein Crisis Centre, it is considered a residential typology.
- One member expressed concern about residential neighbourhoods within the Secondary Plan boundary (e.g., Marlborough and Roxborough) not being included in the CHRA. Staff confirmed that, when the study was initiated, the study area was selected to focus on areas zoned as Mixed-use, where change was expected, and largely excluded areas zoned as Residential.
- One member asked whether the CHRA considered the value of buildings as part of a group, noting that some properties may hold significance collectively rather than individually. Ellen Kowalchuk, Common Bond responded that while the CHRA assesses buildings individually, Provincial criteria do include consideration of how properties may contribute to the broader context of the area, either by supporting the character of their surroundings, acting as landmarks, or helping define the identity of the neighbourhood.
- One member requested clarity about how the list of identified properties had been revised since the pausing of the study in 2021. Staff confirmed that some properties identified as having potential cultural heritage value had been more fully evaluated using O.Reg. 9/06, often due to development applications. Through that process, several properties had been moved to designation or listing, while others did not move forward. Staff further shared an example property- 120 Bloor Street East, which was listed on the Heritage Register in the past year.

Discussion RE: Final Report Recommendations:

- A member expressed interest in sharing a collection of photos of various apartments in the Study Area and offered to give a tour as well.
- Members expressed their previous and ongoing requests to include Village of Yorkville Park and Ramsden Park as part of this CHRA scope of work. Staff responded that Village of Yorkville Park had been included within the boundary of the proposed HCD study area prepared by Common Bond. Staff confirmed that

Ramsden Park remains outside the scope of this study. Members strongly emphasized their desire for Ramsden Park to be assessed as a Cultural Heritage Landscape.

- Members expressed concern about whether Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) designation could compromise protections under the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) – with particular interest in Yorkville, Cumberland, and Scollard avenues. Members emphasized the importance of this area, culturally and economically, to the City. Staff confirmed that the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) is not nullified by PMTSA policies.
- Members asked about the timelines for establishing a Heritage Conservation District (HCD). Staff noted that the consultant's recommendation would need to be considered by Staff, who would need to review the boundary, and to bring a staff recommended boundary to a community meeting. Following the community meeting, staff would need to recommend the authorization of an HCD study to Council. Should Council authorize an HCD study for the area, the Study would determine whether the area merits a Part IV designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. If determined to merit an HCD, a further study would develop an HCD Plan and recommend it to Council for its consideration. The HCD study typically takes 14 months, and the entire HCD Plan process could take 3-5 years, if the HCD Plan is appealed to the Ontario Lands Tribunal. Concern was expressed that this timeline did not match the urgency felt within the community.
- Members asked about whether other tools could be explored to prevent the loss of identified buildings while an HCD process might be underway. Specific reference was made to an interim control by-law. Staff noted this matter for their review and consideration.
- One member expressed interest in why the properties lining the north side of Davenport Road, east of Avenue Road, were not recommended for an HCD study. Common Bond spoke to how these properties were carefully considered for their potential cultural heritage value. While they were found to potentially meet one criteria, they were not determined to merit consideration as an HCD. Staff further explained that the Davenport Road properties were not found to have significance related to their history and design, in addition to the story of their later alterations, that would be required to meet provincial criteria (O. Reg 9.06) for determining cultural heritage value or interest. The member offered to share more information on the early history of Davenport properties for consideration.

Written Feedback and Submissions

Following the Heritage Focus Group meeting, the ABC Residents Association (ABCRA), the Greater Yorkville Residents Association (GYRA), and the Bloor East Neighbourhood Association (BENA) jointly submitted written comments on the Bloor-Yorkville CHRA presentation. These comments are summarized below:

- Generally, there was support for the recommendation to list the 88 identified properties on the Heritage Register. Members suggested including a complete list of all listed and designated properties within the CHRA area in the final report for clarity.
- With concern about delays to the Bloor-Yorkville Secondary Plan and the impact of provincial directives for development in Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) and Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA), the City was asked to expedite a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study for the Village of Yorkville Core.
- Properties should be prioritized for designation based on redevelopment pressure and risk of loss.
- Ramsden Park should be assessed for Cultural Heritage Landscape designation and Davenport Terrace for potential Heritage Conservation District (HCD) designation due to their importance to the community.

Prepared by:

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(Heritage Planning, City of Toronto)

Date:

December 18, 2025