

West Annex Phase II Heritage Conservation District Study

Local Advisory Community (LAC)

Meeting #1 Summary of Feedback

Meeting Details

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Location: Friends House (60 Lowther Ave, Toronto ON, M5R 1C7)

Time: 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Attendees

The meeting was attended by the following:

Project Team	Affiliation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamara Anson-Cartwright, Heritage Planning, Policy and Research Program Manager • Ana Martins, Heritage Planner • Emma Doedens, Heritage Planner 	City of Toronto – Heritage Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dima Cook, Architect, Principal, Director • Edward Houle, Heritage Advisor 	EVOQ Architecture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoie Edwards Browne, Associate • Marissa Irene Uli, Community Engagement Specialist 	LURA Consulting

LAC Members	Affiliation
Dan Seljak	Resident
Martin Millican (proxy to Riley Millican)	Resident
Yohann Paris	Resident
Janet Lee	Resident
Sandra Shaul	Annex Residents Association
Rebecca Gimmi	Annex Residents Association
Paul O’Leary	Royal St George’s College
Zsofia Schvan-Ritecz	University of Toronto
Non-LAC Members	Affiliation
Dianne Saxe	Councillor - Ward 11 University-Rosedale

LAC members who sent regrets and were unable to attend included the following:

LAC Members	Affiliation
Mark Sherman	Resident
Riley Millican	Resident

1. Meeting Purpose

The first Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting was held to discuss the West Annex Phase II Heritage Conservation District. The meeting purpose was to:

- Introduce the West Annex Phase II Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study, process and project team;
- Review and confirm the Terms of Reference and role of the Local Advisory Committee;
- Present the results of preliminary data collection and character analysis;
- Highlight feedback received at Community Consultation Meeting #1; and
- Discuss and seek feedback about elements of significance and areas of concern with respect to heritage priorities for the Study Area.

2. Presentation and Process

Zoie Edwards Browne (LURA) facilitated the meeting and provided a land acknowledgement, welcomed all LAC members, reviewed the meeting purpose and agenda, and led a round of introductions among LAC members and project team staff.

After the set of introductions, Zoie reviewed the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) and the code of conduct for the LAC members. LAC members accepted the TOR finalizing the document for the group.

Ana Martins (City of Toronto) presented an overview and process of the HCD Study including public and Indigenous engagement process.

Dima Cook and Edward Houle (EVOQ) presented the West Annex II HCD Study preliminary data collection, methodology and character analysis, which included:

- Review of history of West Annex Phase II HCD Study Area
- Review of preliminary character analysis (architectural styles, building typologies, etc.)
- Next steps: Heritage Evaluation and Recommendations

Following the presentation, Zoie provided a brief overview of feedback received during Community Consultation Meeting #1 and stakeholder interviews completed and planned. Zoie then presented four discussion questions and led a guided discussion to gather detailed feedback from LAC members.

(For further information and the complete Community Consultation Summary, please visit the project webpage: [West Annex Phase II Heritage Conservation District Study – City of Toronto](#))

3. Summary of Feedback – (January 27, 2026) LAC Meeting #1

The summary below includes feedback from the LAC members discussed during Meeting #1 (January 27, 2026) and received after the meeting by email until February 3, 2026. This summary was prepared by LURA Consulting. It is not intended to be a verbatim record of responses; rather, it summarizes and synthesizes the feedback shared throughout the meeting. Four main discussion questions were used during the guided discussion. The feedback received is organized by discussion question and theme. City staff and consultant comments are included for informational purposes only.

Question #1: What specific streets or blocks have distinct qualities in the Study Area?

Walmer Road, Kendal Avenue, Spadina Road and St George Street

- These streets showcase a wide range of architectural styles, ranging from the late 19th century to mid-century modern. There is stylistic variation between houses and apartment buildings.
- St. George Street has many late 19th-century mansions.
- St. George Street is a gateway to the community with a mix of retail within apartment buildings such as convenience stores.
- Lower Walmer Road has a strong historic identity and visual distinctiveness. The iconic zig-zag/curved alignment of the street was partially modified for traffic safety.
- The intersection of Kendal Avenue and Walmer Road with the collection of 1930s infill Tudor revival and stucco apartments

Albany Avenue and Howland Avenue

- These streets are seen to have the most intact historic streetscapes in the Annex. This is particularly evident between Wells Street and Bloor Street. The Edwardian-era character and consistent scale, porches and gardens are unique to Toronto.

Brunswick Avenue (Bloor Street to Wells Street)

- This area has residential consistency and walkable character. It also has cultural and political associations due to past notable residents.
- The bike lane on Brunswick is an important aspect of the West Annex that connects the neighbourhood and encourages active transportation.

Prince Arthur Avenue to Huron Street (Beginning at Bedford Road)

- Prince Arthur Street is a transition point towards the Yorkville area.
- This part of the Annex is anchored by Taddle Creek Park (outside of Study Area), which is a key landscape and social feature.
- While outside of the Study Area, many LAC members emphasized the importance of Taddle Creek Park. One LAC member suggested that the park be included in the Study Area boundary.

- One member highlighted that the park was the site of neighbourhood activism that led to the development of Prince Arthur West of Bedford Road. This is a legacy of Annex Residents' Association advocacy and activism history.

Admiral Road

- This area has high-quality architecture.
- The former house of Lester B. Pearson was at 12 Admiral Road.
- Admiral Road is also a notable walking route and people appreciate the tree canopy.
- There is an unusual road alignment, including a large empty space where a large tree once stood.

Huron Street

- This area has a notable concentration of institutional uses.
- There are a lot of mixed houses, former institutions, apartments and a former convent.
- There are many late 19th-century mansions on the first two blocks north of Bloor Street.

Lowther Avenue from Bedford Road to Spadina Road

- There is a collection of 1930s infill buildings from Tudor revival style architecture and apartment buildings with stucco exteriors.

Spadina Road

- Spadina Road is known as “recovery row” for the concentration of social services and recovery agencies. It is known as a safe place for vulnerable populations, including members of the trans community and people recovering from various substances.

Jean Sibelius Square

- This is a very small, calm, and inviting park described as ‘an oasis within the West Annex’. The square encourages pausing in a busy city and informal gathering.
- The area surrounding the square reinforces a small town and historic feel through the scale and enclosure.
- There is a notable bike route from Brunswick Avenue to the square that is well used by residents.

Parks and Institutions

- Several parks, squares and parkettes were noted as fundamental anchors and contribute to the neighbourhood’s sense of place and overall quality.
- St. Alban’s Square on Barton Avenue is a community-scaled green space that is often used. With the Royal St. George’s College, this is an important institutional district in the community.
- Gwendolyn MacEwen Park serves as an essential third space.

Landmarks

- Church of Christ Scientist is a landmark.
- Recognition of Bloor Street United Church remnants as an Annex landmark.
- Suggest the Study Area also include landmarks such as Taddle Creek Park, York Club and the Jackman Humanities Building (formerly 170 St. George Street).

Gateways

- Many LAC members noted the entrance of the Annex to be often subtle through the streetscapes, trees, and architecture rather than a big signage that they are in the area.
- St George Station was highlighted as an access point.

Tree Canopy

- The tree canopy creates a noticeable climate zone. Noticeable temperate shifts are experienced within the area compared to south of Bloor Street.

Question #2: Are there specific types or styles of properties (houses and apartments) that help give the West Annex area a particular character?

Apartments

- **Modernist**
 - The modernist flair of the apartment buildings is also quite iconic to the area much more than all the present but forgettable postmodern buildings, which tend to blend in more subtly with the surrounding streetscape.
 - Modernist buildings point to what Toronto aspires to be and still could be.
- **Uno Prii designs**
 - Uno Prii designed apartment buildings are highly innovative and sculptural modernist forms. This is central to the West Annex's architectural identity.
 - The concentration of Uno Prii buildings is unusual and allowed the architect to refine his style.
- **Early 20th-century four-storey apartment buildings**
 - The internal layout of these apartment buildings was designed to resemble the layout found in large houses. These are inspired by late 19th and early 20th century architectural styles. They fit seamlessly into historic streetscapes.
- **Lobbies**
 - Lobbies in the mid-century modern buildings often have terrazzo flooring and high-quality finishes.
 - There is a clear visual connection between inside and outside.
 - Lobbies create a cultural space for buildings. These can be very intimate and serve as social gathering spaces, and often people come together around mailboxes to talk or walk around for exercise, especially in the winter months.
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- **Ground-floor amenities**
 - Lobbies can be places for connection and the building at 206 St. George Street is connected to a convenience store on the ground floor which strengthens walkability and daily social life.
 - Gaby's Groceries, at 325 St. George St., is within a renovated house.

Houses

- **Architectural Styles in the Annex**
 - Red brick, architectural roof adornments, large lot sizes, and the overall well-maintained condition of the homes all contribute significantly to the area's character.
 - Romantic styles, Romanesque revival period, turrets and castle-like forms were noted.
 - Architecture in the Annex can present unusual and fascinating detailing.
 - Annex Style / Annex House: No other neighbourhood in Toronto has an architectural style named after the community.
- **F.H Herbert**
 - There is a concentration of F.H Herbert homes along Walmer Road and turrets that are frequently cited as a favourable feature.
- **House Forms**
 - Large, detached homes and semi-detached homes are present in the Annex. These properties can be single-family homes as well as rooming houses and/or student housing.
 - Experimental architectural styles on semi-detached houses can be seen on Walmer Road north of Kendal Ave.
- **Porches and front gardens**
 - Porches and front gardens are important for their old-fashioned style and social uses connect families, friends and neighbours.
 - These are key to neighbourhood life and important to the social interaction of streetscape and the rhythm of the space.

Question #3: What are the differences between the Study Area to the east and west of Spadina Road?

West Side of Spadina

- Many LAC members felt that although there are small pockets of well-maintained homes, the mix of apartments, some of which are perceived to be less maintained buildings, changes the character quite a bit.
- One LAC member perceived the west side of Spadina to be wealthier/having more financial stability with larger homes (especially on the south side of Wells Street), apartment buildings along St. George St., more families with longer leases, fewer student housing and no fraternities/sororities.
- The west side was built later than the east side.

- There are fewer grand mansions and more Edwardian architecture on streets like Albany Avenue and Howland Avenue.
- There is a more walkable and cohesive presence on the west side.
- A strong university/student and young professional presence exist. Historically, this has been associated with services and philanthropic institutions, associations, students, artists, and 'hippies' in the area.

East Side of Spadina

- Many LAC members felt that the east side of Spadina takes on an affluent tone and often perceived as more single-family homes based on some of the earliest grand mansions being in the area that may not have been sub-divided for shared living.
- One LAC member felt the east side is closer to University of Toronto and higher concentration of student housing, sorority and fraternity style houses with less affluent tone due to less maintained houses and more visible garbage.
- One LAC member highlighted that the east side has more postmodern or mixed building styles and less architectural uniformity.
- Although the part of the study area east of Spadina is near the Yorkville shopping destinations, there are also some small retail shops within this neighbourhood.
- Residents shared that they tend to move westward toward Bathurst Street and Seaton Village for their shopping, rather than east toward Yorkville.
- East of Spadina in the Study Area, there is the Sherwood Tuck Shop at 206 St George St. and Gaby's Groceries at 325 St. George Street. These are the only retail stores within the Study Area that are not on Dupont.
- There are more wider roads, which makes the walking experience more challenging. There are fewer destinations to stop at and more of a passing-through feeling.

Spadina Road as a Dividing Line

- Most LAC members get around the Study Area by walking, some bike and very few rely on driving.
- Spadina is seen as a physical and psychological barrier. It is also seen as having an urban identity that is distinct from the districts to the east and west.
- The widening of Spadina Road, by removing boulevards and portions of front lawns, has transformed the leafy street into a fast, unattractive arterial.
- Walkability is more supported at Bloor Street and Spadina Avenue.
- There were many grand houses demolished and replaced by mid-century apartment buildings. An example would be Timothy Eaton's Victorian House, which was replaced by the Uno Prii buildings at 38 Walmer Road.

Question #4: What does the social character of West Annex look and feel like? Are there parts of the built environment that reflect the social character?

Diversity

- There is no monoculture in the area but not all of the Annex is diverse. Diversity is seen as space/area specific.
- A wealth of culture is present. You can often hear various non-English languages spoken when walking down the street.
- The area has something for everyone, at various stages of life including smaller to larger living units and places for owning and renting options.
- There is a diversity of age ranges in the area with many families, seniors and students.

Affordability

- Historically affordable apartments allowed people to find places, making the Annex a landing pad for new residents. According to one LAC member: “The Annex meets you where you are.”
- The neighbourhood can feel aspirational and hopeful, but also exclusionary due to developments planned that threaten affordability. A note about lower present-day population as opposed to the 1970s was highlighted to show the area’s affordability pressures.

Shared Resources (Community of Care)

- There are care-type infrastructure and shared resources such as community gardens, community fridges, classes and programs that reflect care and mutual aid.
- There is stewardship of small squares and parkettes that support social life outside. One LAC member noted that previously, a dog fountain was donated to a park to highlight the community's giving spirit.
- Cluster of recovery services and safe spaces on Spadina Road.
- Sharing culture supports a range of socio-economic groups and reflects the idea that “one can take what one needs” from the neighbourhood.

Shared Housing

- There are several rooming houses and multiplex type housing.
- There are multiple social/community housing properties on Spadina Road and within the area (west of Madison Avenue). These properties have multiple doorbells, first aid and fire equipment to support multiple people within the property. These buildings were expropriated during the cancelled Spadina Expressway project.
- There are fraternities, sororities and student housing. Madison Avenue Pub (outside the Study Area) is a long-standing social hub that has a boutique hotel.

Social, Cultural and Institutional Places

- There are a lot of hidden cultural institutions that are embedded within the residential fabric. This adds cultural depths without dominating streetscapes.
- There are several social services in the area such as Interval House, Sheena's Place, Children's Aid Foundation, Renascent Centre and halfway houses.
- There are several cultural spaces such as Bloor Cultural Corridor (outside of the Study Area), Italian cultural spaces, and community organizations.
- There is an Indigenous presence including Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, Wigwamen and the 'Interconnections' mural at Paul Martel Parkette.
- There are several private and public schools including Royal St. George College, Institute of Child Study, Montessori schools, and Huron Street Public School.
- There are several philanthropic foundations, especially on Madison Avenue (outside of Study Area) including Metcalf Foundation, Zukerman Charities, Neptis Foundations, and the Michael and Karen Vukets Family Foundation.

Additional Comments

Stakeholder Interviews

- One LAC member shared that living in the Campus Co-op home on Brunswick Avenue was a base formative Toronto experience and they would be an excellent candidate for the stakeholder interview.
- Suggestion to interview the Women's Art Association of Canada.

Other

- Possible elaboration of the relationship of Annex residential area to Bloor St already mentioned in ASI report.
- Some LAC members shared that there is a strong community support for heritage protection that emphasizes thoughtful growth in the area rather than preservation that is frozen in time.
- There is a desire for more apartment buildings to improve access to housing in the area, as well as new development, balanced with parkettes and public spaces.
- LAC members have provided City Staff with leads of notable people that could be added to the list that was shared in the meeting presentation. There have been major politicians, television and other media performers, and musicians, as West Annex borders the Bloor Street Cultural Corridor, in addition to academics such as James Lemon, who wrote a geographic analysis of the Annex, Stephen and Adrienne Clarkson, John Ralston Saul and Marget Atwood to name a few.
- The terminology of 'gap construction' was a bit confusing and it was suggested that infill housing could be used instead.

Questions of Clarification

LAC members asked questions during and after the meeting, which are highlighted below. City staff and consultant comments are included throughout for informational purposes only.

- **What is the history of the buildings on Huron Street?**
 - The consultant answered that the area evolved from the single-family homes and mansions into institutional and rooming housing over time.
- **How were rooming houses established?**
 - The consultant answered that rooming houses existed well before formal rooming housing policies were in place. They had informal rooming houses and group living arrangements that were prominent in the Annex. Cooperative, fraternity, sororities and student housing later became a major presence.
- **Who is doing the Indigenous engagement for the Study?**
 - The City will be working with an Indigenous consultant for the engagement process and will involve the urban Indigenous community groups in the area.
- **How did higher-density apartment buildings emerge in the West Annex?**
 - The consultant answered that zoning law changes permitted higher density apartment buildings. Their construction was encouraged with planning changes and the designation of certain streets (Spadina, St. George) as traffic corridors. Transit stations also encouraged higher-density development nearby. With the new development pressure in the 1950s-1970s, apartment buildings were built, many on assembled properties. These changes were controversial at the time, but they reshaped the built forms of the Annex. Residents and early developers were innovators of styles rather than purely preservationist.
- **What influenced the architectural design in the Annex more generally?**
 - The consultant answered that the property owners in the Annex were innovators in the early multi-unit design. Spadina Gardens is an example of this early experimentation, and despite resistance, the Annex has been a place for architectural innovations and new architectural ideas.
- **How will intensification affect heritage in the Annex? Which policy would prevail HCDs or MTSAs?**
 - City staff answered that, currently, Provincial policy prioritizes density. The City will need to update its current zoning and Official Plan in order to implement this new policy direction. However, Provincial policy also directs the City to ensure that heritage properties are conserved as part of any proposed zoning change. It is still being determined how the new provincial policy will be implemented including the City's approach to Part IV and V heritage properties.
- **How are cultural heritage values and area significance determined? How does the LAC help shape the Study?**
 - The consultant answered that, currently, what was presented is preliminary research. We need local knowledge and expert input to identify values and attributes, which is why we established the LAC, to further the research with local experts.

4. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Zoie Edwards Browne, Ana Martins, Tamara Anson-Cartwright and Dima Cook thanked LAC members for their input and discussion, which will be used to further the HCD Study.

Zoie Edwards Browne reminded LAC members that if they have any more comments or questions, they should email Marissa Uli, LURA by February 3, 2026. All input will be considered for the West Annex HCD Study. LAC members will also be able to review the draft summary once it is available. The next LAC members meeting will be planned for late spring 2026.