

HERITAGE MARKHAM EXTRACT

DATE: March 16, 2006

TO: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning;
R. Blake, Manager, West District;
E. Wimmer, Senior Planner

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM #20 OF THE THIRD HERITAGE MARKHAM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 8, 2006

20. REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK
THORNHILL YONGE STREET STUDY (16.11)
Extracts: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning;
R. Blake, Manager, West District;
E. Wimmer, Senior Planner
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Heritage Markham committee at its meeting of February 8th, referred this matter to the Architectural Review Sub-Committee for further review and comments. The Manager of Heritage Planning reported that the Architectural Review Sub-Committee met on February 22nd with Heritage Section staff and Planning and Urban Design staff, Ron Blake and Elizabeth Wimmer. As a result of this meeting, the Architectural Review Sub-committee has provided comments to the Heritage Markham committee for consideration.

There was an extensive exchange of comments and concerns by committee members. Thornhill representatives expressed that the area considered on the study is smaller than the boundaries of the Heritage District Conservation Areas. It was suggested that the area of study should be extended to the north and south in order to include the entire area of the heritage districts. The importance of protecting the integrity of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District was strongly stated as well as the importance of maintaining uniformity and cohesiveness throughout the Markham and Vaughn heritage districts.

HERITAGE MARKHAM RECOMMENDS:

THAT Heritage Markham forward the notes from the Architectural Review Sub-Committee, dated February 22, 2006 to the Planning and Urban Design Department as its comment on the Thornhill Yonge Street Study (2005);

AND THAT the Thornhill Yonge Street Study should respect, support and enhance the Heritage District Conservation District;

AND FURTHER THAT Heritage Markham have the opportunity to review the Thornhill Yonge Street Corridor Area amendment to the Thornhill Secondary Plan.

CARRIED.

Architectural Review Sub-Committee of Heritage Markham

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, February 22, 2006

Ontario Room, 5:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Julie Christian, Chair
Ted Chisholm
Judy Dawson-Ryan
Judith Dawson
Joyce Nelson-Watt

Staff Present:

Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planner
George Duncan, Senior Heritage Planner
Ron Blake, West District Manager
Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Planner, Urban Design

ITEM 5:

Thornhill Yonge Street Study

This item was referred to the Architectural Review Sub-Committee by Heritage Markham at its meeting of February 8, 2006.

Copies of the Thornhill Yonge Street Study, with staff comments written on the pages, were distributed to the members of the Architectural Review Sub-Committee during the week prior to the Sub-Committee meeting. Elizabeth Plashkes provided comments via Email, as she was unable to attend the meeting but did have an opportunity to review the material.

There was much discussion about the Study, with a range of opinions expressed by the members. Town staff members Ron Blake (West District Manager) and Elizabeth Wimmer (Senior Planner, Urban Design) were present to answer questions and address concerns.

R. Hutcheson noted that the Thornhill Yonge Street Study will be revised so that the urban design guidelines become more generic. Specific design guidelines for the portion of the Yonge Street Study area that falls within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District will be included in the updated Heritage Conservation District Plan, currently in progress.

The following is a brief summary of comments made by the Sub-Committee members concerning the Thornhill Yonge Street Study. These comments are not intended to be a recommendation, but rather are intended to provide Heritage Markham with feedback from the Sub-Committee that can be taken into consideration when formulating a recommendation to the Planning and Urban Design staff.

Concerns about the Thornhill Yonge Street Study

- there was concern about the negative impact of further widening of Yonge Street, and that transit initiatives rather than heritage conservation appears to be leading the direction of the Study's recommendations
- the vision statement does not explicitly mention heritage issues;
- there was concern that the maximum height of new buildings within the heritage area (up to 5 storeys), and the proposed densities are not compatible with the preservation of the village-like ambience of old Thornhill;
- there was concern that the effect of the Thornhill Yonge Street Study might be to shrink the boundaries of the Heritage Conservation District;
- there was concern that on the Vaughan side of the study area, a portion of Yonge Street containing several heritage buildings was not included;
- there was concern that increased densities would lead to traffic and parking infiltration into the nearby residential neighbourhood;
- there was concern that fewer entrances onto Yonge Street, and integrated parking schemes at the rear of properties would lead to higher traffic speeds through the Heritage Conservation District and that there does not appear to be any possibility of on-street parking on Yonge Street;
- there was concern about the future of the York Farmers' Market.
- There was concern that street furnishings such as light standards, benches and transit shelters are to be "timeless" in design rather than having a heritage character.

Positive Feedback about the Thornhill Yonge Street Study

- implementation of the design principles of the Thornhill Yonge Street Study will lead to a more economically viable and aesthetically pleasing Yonge Street frontage through the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District;
- the Study presents an exciting vision for the future of the area and addresses the realities of its proximity to Toronto and the role of Yonge Street;
- the design guidelines will help achieve a better quality of development and an attractive streetscape with a consistent vision;
- new investment in Yonge Street properties will revitalize the area and help create a stronger community focus on Yonge Street;
- the Thornhill Yonge Street Study recognizes and protects remaining heritage resources;
- spatial separation of new development from heritage buildings and stepping down of heights adjacent to heritage buildings will help to successfully blend the old and the new;
- implementation of the vision of the Thornhill Yonge Street Study will lead to a vibrant, attractive village where people will live, work, shop and be entertained;
- the core of the vision is the special character of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District;

- integrated parking schemes and underground parking will take cars out of site.

Suggested Heritage Markham Recommendation:

THAT Heritage Markham give consideration to the diverse range of comments and concerns noted by the Architectural Review Sub-Committee when formulating recommendations on the Thornhill Yonge Street Study;