



MEMORANDUM


TO: Mayor Scarpitti and Members of Council

FROM: Jim Baird, Commissioner of Development Services

PREPARED BY: George Duncan, Senior Heritage Planner

DATE: November 25, 2008

SUBJECT: Interpretive Plaques for Mount Joy Heritage Buildings
Agenda Item 14 (Nov 18, 2008)
Additional Information



At the meeting of the Development Services Committee on November 18, 2008, staff was directed to provide additional information on the selection of a blue background colour for the interpretive plaques for heritage buildings in the Mount Joy area of Markham Village and to explain how the existing colour schemes for each Heritage Conservation District were selected.

Proposed Blue Background Colour

The blue colour proposed by Donna Wigmore as the project representative of the Markham Village Conservancy is taken from a selection of colour chips contained in a book on early American folk art. The colour is labelled "Prussian Blue," which is a rich dark blue colour that was used for decorating interior trim of houses, furniture and other household items in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This colour was also used in Upper Canada.

Quoting from a reference book titled *At Home in Upper Canada*:

"Scraping down to first coats of paint on woodwork in houses built before 1830 reveals the same colours repeated again and again. White, **Prussian blue**, Venetian red, Spanish brown, yellow ochre, umber, raw and burnt Sienna, and occasionally green, are found."

Mount Joy, in Markham, is named after the Mount Joy community in Pennsylvania. This part of Markham was settled by Pennsylvania-German families in the early 1800s. Locally, the most prominent of the original settler families were the Ramers, whose place of origin was Mount Joy, Pennsylvania.

According to Ms. Wigmore's research, the blue colour is one of the colours used in Pennsylvania on barn "hex signs" and to decorate household items. The blue colour was selected by Ms. Wigmore and the Conservancy to recognize the area's historic connection to Pennsylvania. An American paint company (Old Village Paints) that specializes in a line of historic colours carries this particular shade under the name Old Village Blue. Historic paint colours made by paint manufacturers are generally based on colours documented on early buildings and furniture.

Heritage District Signage Colours

The current colour schemes for the entry signs and street name signs within the three designated Heritage Conservation Districts: Thornhill, Markham Village and Unionville, went through a community consultation process and review, were supported by Heritage Markham and approved by Council in 2002-2003.

In the case of Thornhill, the beige and brown colour scheme had been established in the 1970s by the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill and was not altered. In Unionville, the community desired a distinct colour scheme, and agreed on the burgundy background with cream accents. The golden brown background colour for Markham Village was proposed by a local designer and member of the Main Street Markham Committee, and was accepted by the community.

The coordinated approach to signage in the heritage conservation districts was developed by Heritage Section staff to help reinforce the boundaries of each district and, from a marketing and community identification perspective, help brand each area through consistent colour and design features.

Review of Plaque Sizes

For Council's information, Staff has provided a sample of the bronze designation plaques currently in use to mark properties with individual heritage designations. Staff has also provided full-sized samples of the 10 by 17 inch plaque proposed by the Conservancy, and the 9 by 15 inch plaque size recommended by staff. These items will be on display in the Councillor's lounge on the day of the Council meeting, and will be brought to the Council meeting in the evening.