

Heritage Vaughan Committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, July 20, 2022

WARD(S): 5

TITLE: RESTORATION, ADDITION AND NEW OFFICE-RESIDENTIAL
MIXED-USE CONSTRUCTION – ADAPTIVE REUSE OF
EXISTING HERITAGE STRUCTURE LOCATED AT 46 CENTRE
STREET, THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek Heritage Vaughan Committee support and recommend to Committee of the Whole approval for the proposed adaptive reuse and renovation of an existing built heritage resource, including a new addition and a separate new construction of an office/residential mixed-use building located at 46 Centre Street, a property located in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District and designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as shown on Attachment 1.

Report Highlights

- The Owner seeks a recommendation for approval to renovate for adaptive reuse an existing built heritage resource and to build a new addition and a separate new construction at 46 Centre Street
- The existing main dwelling is identified as a contributing property in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District ('THCD') Plan
- The proposal is consistent with the relevant policies of the Thornhill HCD Plan
- Heritage Vaughan Committee review and Council approval is required under the *Ontario Heritage Act*
- Staff supports approval of the proposal as it conforms with the policies of the THCD Plan

Recommendations

THAT Heritage Vaughan Committee recommend Council approve the proposed adaptive reuse and renovation of an existing built heritage resource, including a new addition and a separate new office/residential mixed-use construction at 46 Centre Street under Section 42 of *Ontario Heritage Act*, subject to the following conditions:

- a) Any significant changes to the proposal by the Owner may require reconsideration by the Heritage Vaughan Committee, which shall be determined at the discretion of the Director of Development Planning and Manager of Urban Design and Cultural Heritage;
- b) That Heritage Vaughan Committee recommendations to Council do not constitute specific support for any Development Application under the Ontario Planning Act or permits currently under review or to be submitted in the future by the Owner as it relates to the subject application;
- c) That the applicant submits Building Permit stage architectural drawings and building material specifications to the satisfaction of the Vaughan Development Planning Department, Urban Design and Cultural Heritage Division

Background

The subject property is municipally known as 46 Centre Street and is designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as part of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan ('THCD').

The existing built heritage resource is a 1 ½ storey wood structure likely constructed prior to 1845 and is located on the north side of Centre Street west of Yonge Street as shown on Attachment 1. It includes a pair of late 19th century additions immediately north and a larger gable-roofed addition (late 20th century). Originally constructed as a residence it was subsequently converted to commercial use. A complete history of the property is available in the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment ('CHIA') forming Attachment 2. The building is currently vacant.

The L-shaped parking lot wraps around the north and east side of the building with the driveway approximately centred on the site and abuts the east wall of the building as shown on Attachment 4. The original 1840's structure is to be retained on site and adapted for reuse with a new extension replacing the current addition built circa 1996. The applicant also proposes to build another structure on the east portion of the property.

Previous Reports/Authority

A previous proposal was submitted for review and recommendation to the Heritage Vaughan Committee in January 2021. However, the Committee expressed concerns regarding the proposed new construction, so the application was withdrawn for further consideration and redesign.

Analysis and Options

The proposed project as shown on Attachment 4 can be divided into three components between the adaptive reuse of the main house and construction of a new building to the east:

- 1) Conservation and retainment of the existing main house (referred to as **Building A**). This includes a rehabilitation scope for wall cladding, doors, windows, trim and roofing; as well as reinstatement of the roof at the northwest corner; and removal of the east elevation's ahistorical window opening.
- 2) The replacement of the existing tail addition and third addition with a 1 ½ storey addition within and smaller footprint (referred to as **Building A addition**). Height of existing building is 5.7m, height of addition will be 6.1 metres. The main house and new addition will have a single, retail function.
- 3) A two-storey infill building to the east of the original main house (referred to as **Building B**) setback almost 5m from the permitted footprint to minimize its presence on Centre Street. Building height will be 7.8m mid-roof, similar to building heights along Centre Street. The building will accommodate office functions on the ground floor and residential on the second.

All new development must conform to the policies and guidelines within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan. The following is an analysis of the proposed development according to the THCD Plan.

9.1.1 Heritage Styles Residential Buildings

- *Vernacular “Loyalist” Cottage 1800-1850*
- *Neo-Classical 1800-1830*
- *Ontario Gothic Vernacular 1830-1890*
- *Victorian Vernacular*
- *Queen Anne Revival 1885-1900*
- *Vernacular Homestead 1890-1930*
- *Four-square 1900-1920*
- *Edwardian Classic 1900-1920*

The existing heritage resource at 46 Centre Street is identified as an example of a vernacular “Loyalist” Cottage likely built before 1845 and is a contributing property to the

THCD. It is to be retained on site, at its existing location. The proposed addition and new construction are respectful and in keeping with this approved architectural style.

9.3.6 Renovations

When a renovation on a heritage building is undertaken, later work that conceals the original design or is unsympathetic to the building should be removed.

Guidelines:

Incorporate restoration of original work in exterior renovation projects.

- *Use authentic original materials and methods. For example, when replacing aluminum siding, use wood siding or board and batten. See materials checklist in Section 9.8.*
- *Replace missing or broken elements, such as gingerbread, spindles, or door and window trims.*
- *Remove items, such as metal fascia and soffits that conceal original architectural detail.*

Staff supports the findings of the Conservation Plan (Attachment 10) submitted in support of the application and prepared in accordance with the City of Vaughan's "Guidelines for Preparing a Conservation Plan for Heritage Resources ('CPHR')". The report provides a detailed description of the current condition of the heritage resource, notes restoration of original architecture where possible, and suggests the use of sympathetic construction materials for the restoration. It also outlines how the existing additions will be removed, documented, and salvaged as appropriate.

9.3.7 New Additions to Heritage Buildings Architectural Style

New attached additions to heritage buildings should be designed to complement the design of the original building.

Guidelines:

- *Design additions to maintain the original architectural style of the building. See Section 9.1.*
- *Use authentic detail.*
- *Research the architectural style of the original building. See Section 10 for useful research sources.*
- *Follow the relevant guidelines for new construction in Section 9.5. New additions to heritage buildings should respect the scale of the original building.*
- *Don't design additions to a greater height or scale than the original building.*
- *Don't design additions to predominate over the original building. Usually, additions should be located at the rear of the original building or, if located to the side, be set back from the street frontage of the original building.*
- *For garage additions,*
- *Use appropriate materials.*
- *Avoid destruction of existing mature trees.*

The proposed addition is subordinate to and compatible with the main house but maintains a visually distinguishable presence. Specifically, the proposed siting of the addition, being located entirely to the rear of the historic building and having its east and west walls inset from those of the main house hides the addition. Subordination is also achieved through the simple roof shape, front facing gable, wall heights lower than those of the main house, and the use of a light-to-medium-gray wood board and batten cladding that maintains a subtle wood grain and natural warm tones.

The proposed addition is compatible with the main house in scale and form and does not negatively impact the front or side elevations. The use of historically appropriate materials, including board and batten siding and wood roof shingles provides an additional dimension of compatibility.

Lastly, the proposed addition is distinguishable through the use of vertical board and batten siding of a different colour in contrast to the horizontal siding of the main house. The colour palette for the addition contrasts the bold colours of the main facade of the heritage resource (main house). In addition, a pronounced eave and roofline is incorporated, and a prominent fascia board has been added at the roofline to reinforce the eave. A skirt board at the bottom of the wood cladding enhances the horizontal emphasis of transitions in cladding material. The architectural recess at the junction between the two structures (old and new) further emphasises the distinction between historic and new construction.

9.5.2.2 Architectural Styles

New buildings in the residential areas should reflect the historic built form of their historic neighbours.

Guidelines:

- *Design houses to reflect one of the local heritage Architectural Styles.*
- *Hybrid designs that mix elements from different historical styles are not appropriate. Historical styles that are not indigenous to the area, such as Tudor or French Manor, are not appropriate.*
- *Use authentic detail, consistent with the Architectural Style.*
- *Research the chosen Architectural Style.*
- *Use appropriate materials.*

The design of the new building, known as “Building B” does reference a local heritage style – the Vernacular Village Shop from Section 9.1 of the THCD plan. As part of the original and current fabric of the neighborhood, this style follows known historical examples of how these mixed-use buildings would have been built to provide work or commercial space on the main floor (in this case office space) and living quarters above on the second.

The design of the proposed new office/residential mixed-use building (**'Building B'**) references the gable-roofed town barn or stable shop, an architectural style that exists in the THCD. As part of the original and current fabric of the neighborhood this style complements residential building typologies and is commonly located at the rear or side of residential buildings along the street. In direct reference to the Town-Barn style, **'Building B'** displays a front-facing gable roof with a proposed 'barn door' style shutter system for door and window openings, with vertical wood siding spaced for ventilation. The cladding extending to the first floor presents a solid front that reinforces the clear vertical barn profile form.

The proposed new construction also references the history of the property (and similar buildings in and around Thornhill). Initially, the main building was constructed as a residential building and served that function until the early 1980s when it was converted to commercial use. While in use as a residence, the subject property contained a 1-storey shed (demolished when the house was converted to the commercial use). Similar examples of the Town-Barns characterized by 1½ - 2 storey height, limited window openings, vertical wood siding (sometimes board and batten), were located near residential buildings throughout Thornhill. The new construction revives this reference.

9.5.2.3 Scale and Massing

New residential construction in the residential villages should respect local heritage precedents in scale and massing. In almost every case, new construction will be replacement houses on existing built lots. Note: It is recommended in Section 7.3 that the zoning by-law be amended to recognize the smaller scale of historic village development as contrasted with modern suburban development.

Guidelines:

- *New buildings should be designed to preserve the scale and pattern of the historic District.*
- *New houses should be no higher than the highest building on the same block, and no lower than the lowest building on the same block.*
- *As far as possible, modern requirements for larger houses should be accommodated without great increases in building frontage. For example, an existing 1½-storey house could be replaced by a 2-storey house with a plan that included an extension to the rear. This might double the floor area without affecting the scale of the streetscape.*
- *Follow the policies in Section 4.2 of the THCD Plan concerning height and depth of buildings and garages.*

The proposed new office/residential mixed-use construction is in scale with the existing heritage resources on site and to the neighboring property, as established by the historical precedents noted in the CHIA. At a height of 7.8 m, the new construction is well within the existing fabric of the surrounding streetscape.

9.5.3.8 Heritage-Friendly Design of New Developments

Not All Stepbacks Are Created Equal: The function of façade stepbacks is to create an architecturally legible street wall that encloses the public realm, provides some continuity in buildings of different maximum heights, and contributes to the pedestrian-scale environment. Step-backs, and their detail design, should be respectful of the horizontal modules created by adjacent and neighbouring buildings, particularly if those buildings are heritage resources.

Guidelines:

- *The base of a stepped back building should be architecturally legible; it should read as a building from the pedestrian level.*
- *Stepbacks should be sufficiently deep that the upper levels don't overwhelm the base when viewed from the pedestrian level.*
- *The height of the base should usually be 2 or 3 stories high, in keeping with historic patterns.*
- *Cornice and sill heights should relate to adjacent buildings whenever possible.*

The subject property was initially built for residential use. However, like many other properties along this section of Centre Street, it has gradually shifted through a variety of commercial uses. The setback and form allow the proposed new construction to be subordinate to the existing heritage structure and follows policy 9.5.2.4 for preserving the house and residential forms along Centre Street.

9.8.1 Heritage Buildings: Appropriate Materials

Exterior Finish: *Smooth red clay face brick, with smooth buff clay face brick as accent. Wood clapboard, 4" to the weather. Smooth, painted, wood board and batten siding.*

Exterior Detail: *Cut stone or reconstituted stone for trim in brick buildings. Wood shingles, stucco, or terra-cotta wall tiles in gable ends. Painted wood porches, railings, decorative trim, shutters, fascias and soffits. Painted wood gingerbread bargeboards and trim, where appropriate to the design.*

Roofs: *Hipped or gable roof as appropriate to the architectural style. Cedar, slate, simulated slate, or asphalt shingles of an appropriate colour. Standing seam metal roofing, if appropriate to the style. Skylights in the form of cupolas or monitors are acceptable, if appropriate to the style.*

Doors: *Wood doors and frames, panel construction, may be glazed. Transom windows and paired sidelights. Wood french doors for porch entrances. Single-bay wood panelled garage doors.*

Windows: *Wood frames; double hung; lights as appropriate to the architectural style. Real glazing bars, or high-quality simulated glazing bars. Vertical proportion, ranging from 3:5 to 3:7.*

The proposed materials for the restoration, addition and new office/residential mixed-use building are detailed in the CHIA (Attachment 2) and in the Conservation Plan (Attachment 10). The applicant has also submitted a Materials brief (Attachment 7). For the existing heritage structure, the proposed restoration and renovation will use existing or sympathetic materials to stabilize the house for adaptive reuse. The existing additions will be documented, demolished, and any materials salvaged will be reused in the main heritage structure as required.

The cladding materials of the new addition emphasize its subordination to the original heritage structure through colour and orientation. The cladding maintains the heritage expression of wood grain and natural warm tones.

The new construction of '**Building B**' also features board and batten cladding, its trim referencing a similar palette to that of the painted siding of the existing main house. '**Building B**' is distinguishable from the existing main house through the use of vertical board and batten siding and a light-to-medium-gray colour palette. It echoes the '**Building A**' addition through use of a horizontal fascia board that reinforces the eave, a skirt board incorporated at the bottom of wood cladding to provide horizontal emphasis on transitions in material and horizontal breaks in the cladding (between ground and upper floor) and a wide corner board at the building's south face.

9.7.1 Planting

No heritage permits are required for planting activities, but voluntary compliance with the guidelines in this Section can help maintain and enhance the natural heritage of Thornhill and its valleys. Suitable new planting and management of existing flora are a primary means of ensuring the health of the entire ecosystem: plants contribute to stormwater and groundwater management, erosion control, and provide habitat and nutrition for wild fauna.

The Arborist Report (Attachment 8) notes proposed injury to 2 trees and the removal of 10 privately-owned trees on the subject property and recommends replacing the affected trees with 27 new trees. The locations and species are shown on the proposed Landscape Plan (Attachment 9), which also incorporates several aspects of the Thornhill HCD Plan guidelines 9.5.2, 9.5.3 and 9.7 to provide a sympathetic landscape treatment, particularly along the streetscape of Centre Street. The features of the combined effect of the Landscape Plan and the architectural design are evident in the rendered streetscape perspectives (see Attachment 9).

Financial Impact

There are no requirements for new funding associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no broader Regional impacts or considerations.

Conclusion

The Development Planning Department is satisfied the proposed renovation and adaptive reuse of the heritage resource, the new rear addition, and new office/residential mixed-use construction conforms to the policies and guidelines within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan. Accordingly, staff can support Council approval of the proposed work at 46 Centre Street under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

For more information, please contact: Katrina Guy, Cultural Heritage Coordinator, ext. 8115.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – 46Centre_Location Map
- Attachment 2 – 46Centre_Thornhill HCD Plan Excerpt
- Attachment 3 _ 46 Centre CHIA
- Attachment 4 – 46Centre_Site Survey
- Attachment 5 – 46Centre_Plans and Elevations
- Attachment 6 – 46Centre_Conservation Plan
- Attachment 7 – 46Centre_Materials Boards
- Attachment 8 – 46Centre_Updated Arborist Report
- Attachment 9 – 46Centre_Landscape Plan
- Attachment 10– 46Centre_3D Renderings

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