

Heritage Vaughan Committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, March 22, 2023

WARD: 2

TITLE: PROPOSED INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR RENOVATIONS TO THE CITY OF VAUGHAN WOODBRIDGE LIBRARY LOCATED AT 150 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE, IN THE WOODBRIDGE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek Heritage Vaughan Committee's support and recommend to the Committee of the Whole approval for the proposed renovation of the City of Vaughan Woodbridge Library building at 150 Woodbridge Avenue, a property located in the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District and designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (as shown on Attachment 1).

Report Highlights

- The City is proposing the renovation of the City of Vaughan Woodbridge Library at 150 Woodbridge Avenue.
- The existing heritage resource is identified as 'contributing' in the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District ('WHCD').
- Heritage Vaughan review and Council approval is required under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- Staff is recommending approval of the proposal as it conforms with the policies of the WHCD Plan.

Recommendations

1. THAT Heritage Vaughan recommend Council approve the proposed exterior renovation of the City of Vaughan Woodbridge Library at 150 Woodbridge

Avenue in the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District under Section 42 of the *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 submit 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 present-day Woodbridge Library consists of the front façade of a former Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) branch built in 1922 and a late 20th century addition to this structure completed in 1982. In 1957, RBC built a new branch at present-day 174 Woodbridge Avenue and the former branch (at 150 Woodbridge Avenue) was acquired by the Village of Woodbridge and used to house the municipal offices of the community. In 1971, the Village of Woodbridge was amalgamated into the new Town of Vaughan. In 1982, the newly completed structure contained 10,000 square feet of space and was a two-storey split level structure with an open court. Interior alterations were completed in 2000 and 2004 to update the circulation desk area.

The City is proposing renovations to the City of Vaughan Woodbridge Library to improve accessibility, particularly in the entrance/foyer and basement auditorium areas. The proposed design would include demolishing the late 20th century entrance area and brick colonnade and constructing an extension that extends to the location of the existing colonnade and connects to the existing structure at the rear and west sides. The southeast corner of the structure is chamfered. There are no proposed impacts to the 1922 façade.

Previous Reports/Authority

Not applicable.

Analysis and Options

All new development must conform to the policies, objectives and supporting guidelines within the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District Plan.

The following is an analysis of the proposed renovations to the City of Vaughan Woodbridge Library located at 150 Woodbridge Avenue according to the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District Plan ('WHCD') guidelines.

6.1.1 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE

Heritage Attributes:

- 1. Main Street character, with pedestrian oriented retail at grade level and a variety of other uses above grade, mostly residential.*
- 2. A street wall of buildings averaging between 3 and 4 floors, with some buildings rising up to 6 floors.*
- 3. Storefronts open directly onto the sidewalk and provide pedestrians with a variety of storefronts, which change every few steps.*
- 4. Buildings are often built with zero (or minimum) setback.*

Guidelines

- 1. The ground level of buildings along Woodbridge Avenue must be flush with the sidewalk, with direct access from the street.*
- 2. Generally, new buildings along Woodbridge Avenue should be no taller than 4 floors (13m) and must be sympathetic to, and transition from, the height of adjacent contributing buildings with a minimum 45 degree angular plane, starting from the existing height of the contributing building, measured at the building's edge, (see section 6.4 - Built Form Framework).*
- 3. New buildings may be allowed an increase in building height to 6 storeys provided that they meet official plan policy. In such cases, a podium of a minimum 2 floors and a maximum of 4 floors is required, with the additional two floors stepping back on a 45° angular plane.*
- 4. Storefronts must be oriented towards the street and should be experienced as a collection of small scaled retail, with operable doors.*
- 5. New buildings should be built directly to the front property or street line to establish a continuous street wall. When located adjacent to existing contributing buildings that are set back from the property or street line, new buildings should transition back to the setback line of existing contributing buildings in order to maintain open views and vantage points from the street to the contributing buildings.*
- 6. Existing contributing building should retain their historic setbacks, and create front landscaped courtyards that open onto Woodbridge Avenue to build on the "green" character of the street. (See Section 6.4.1.2 for setback guidelines).*

The proposed design is contemporary and focuses on maintaining the appropriate scale of the building and height level and incorporates post and beam on the structure's interior (also visible from the exterior due to the level of glazing). The new design places the lowest line of the roof profile in line with the top glazing of the adjacent 1922 façade windows.

6.2.8 APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

Exterior Finish: Smooth red clay face brick, with smooth buff clay face brick as accent, or in some instances brick to match existing conditions.

Exterior Detail: Cut stone or reconstituted stone for trim in brick buildings.

Shopfronts: Wood frames, glazing bars, and panels with glazed wood doors are preferred. Metal shop fronts, detailed and proportioned to be compatible with heritage shop fronts, are acceptable.

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 architectural 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 with real glazing bars; wood french doors for porch entrances; single-bay, wood panelled garage doors.

Windows: Wood frames; single or 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.

Flashings: Visible step flashings should be painted the colour of the wall.

The proposed design incorporates red brick on the lower portion of the exterior cladding, to be salvaged from the existing structure matching the remainder of the building and the 1922 façade. The use and placement of the red brick is placed in contrast with the contemporary glass upper portion of the building, which helps to distinguish the new design from the previous one. This design creates lightness with the new structure which provides a contrast to the historic 1922 brick façade and 1980s full brick wall on the east elevation.

6.3 Architectural Guidelines for New Buildings, Additions and Alterations

Within the heritage district new architecture will invariably be constructed. This will occur on vacant sites, as replacement buildings for non-contributing existing structures, or severely deteriorated older buildings.

Entirely new buildings may be proposed:

- where no previous buildings existed or,*
- where original buildings are missing or,*
- where severely deteriorated buildings are removed through no fault of the current owner, or*
- where non-contributing buildings are removed.*

In order to avoid the deterioration of contributing buildings, the City should enforce a Municipal By-Law that establishes a minimum level of maintenance required to ensure their conservation.

The intention in creating designs for new buildings should not be to create a false or fake historic building. Instead the objective must be to create a sensitive well-designed new structure “of its time” that is compatible with the character of the district and its immediate context. Designers of new buildings in the district should have a proven track record with the creation of designs in similar historic contexts.

The design of new buildings in the HCD should carefully consider requirements elsewhere in this document for density, scale, height, setbacks, coverage, landscape open space, view corridors, angular plane and shadowing. Further, character areas have been identified in the district. Each character area has identifiable characteristics including commercial mainstreet as opposed to residential, building scale, spacing, and setback, which should also be understood and respected.

New buildings will fall into two categories - replica or reconstructed buildings, and contemporary buildings.

The proposed new design is a ratio of approximately 74% glazing to 26% solid wall. Higher brick wall proportions were considered but were determined by the design team to create an awkward proportional effect. When considering the nature of the immediate context for new buildings per the HCD guidelines it was determined the level of transparency would be a good fit. At the property, this ranges from the historical 1922 façade and nearby 19th century structures to contemporary shopping plazas with storefronts and multi-residential apartment buildings.

6.3.2 CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Just as it is the characteristic of the Woodbridge HCD to contain contributing buildings in at least 12 recognizable styles, contemporary work should be “of its time”. This is consistent with the principles stated in the Venice Charter, Appleton Charter and other charters recognized internationally as a guide for heritage work. This does not mean that new work should be aggressively idiosyncratic but that it should be neighbourly and fit this “village” context while at the same time representing current design philosophy. Quoting the past can be appropriate. It should, however avoid blurring the line between real historic “artifacts”, and contemporary elements.

“Contemporary” as a design statement does not simply mean “current”. Current designs with borrowed detailing inappropriately, inconsistently, or incorrectly used, such as pseudo-Victorian detailing, should be avoided.

The proposed design for the library’s new entrance area and lounge is contemporary and stands out as a design that is not a replica of a historical style. While it is distinct for its more contemporary form and roof profile, it incorporates materials and a scale that is sympathetic to the heritage character of the Woodbridge Character Area of the Woodbridge HCD.

6.5 TRANSITIONS OF NEW BUILDINGS IN RELATION TO HERITAGE RESOURCES

Key to the Woodbridge HCD is, first, conserving the structures and landscapes that contribute to the HCD's heritage character, and second, managing the introduction of new structures and landscapes in such a way that they harmonize with contributing buildings and contribute to the district's heritage character.

The following guidelines, as established in the Woodbridge HCD Study, shall be used to assist in the process of achieving the proper transition of building scales, heights and presence in order to create a harmonious relationship between new structures and landscapes with contributing properties within the Heritage District.

1. Conservation of Heritage Resources

- *Buildings and structures listed as 'contributing' in the Woodbridge HCD may not be demolished or moved.*
- *The City of Vaughan may require a Heritage Impact Assessment when it considers that cultural heritage value may exist, or be effected by any new construction.*

2. Conservation of Heritage Character

Contributing buildings display a variety of setbacks and side yard conditions, reflecting the different construction periods and original use.

- *New development must be sympathetic to this character and must develop in a way that does not detract, hide from view, or impose in a negative way, on existing heritage contributing resources, as per the following height and setback guidelines.*

3. Height Guidelines

The height of contributing buildings should be maintained.

- *The setback requirement to adjacent contributing heritage buildings must be at least half the building height. This transition pertains to the back and side yards of a contributing building, (see Diagram A).*
- *New buildings must transition from the height of adjacent contributing buildings with a minimum 45 degree angular plane, starting from the existing height of the contributing building. The height of a contributing building is measured from the average elevation of the finished grade at the front of the building to the highest point of the roof surface for a flat roof and a mansard roof; and to the mean height between the eaves and highest point of a gable, hip, or a gambrel roof, (see the following Diagram B).*

The proposed design maintains a one-storey height, as did the previous library the adjacent parapet of the 1922 façade and slopes upward to the east towards the one-and-one-half-storey and taller structures on the east side of the Market Lane plaza entrance. The proposed design has a higher proportion of glass to solid materials on the upper half of the structure, but the glazing is visually broken up by the interior timber posts. The higher use of glazing in this area is intended to offset the solid brick wall on

the remainder of the east elevation from the existing library and offer lightness to highlight the brick of the adjacent 1922 façade.

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 project conforms to the policies and guidelines within the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District Plan. Accordingly, staff can support a Heritage Vaughan recommendation for Council approval of the proposed renovation of the City of Vaughan Woodbridge Library at 150 Woodbridge Avenue under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

For more information, please contact: Wendy Whitfield Ferguson, Cultural Heritage Coordinator, ext. 8813.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – 150Woodbridge_Location Map

Attachment 2 – 150Woodbridge_CHIA

Attachment 3 – 150Woodbridge_Site Plan

Attachment 4 – 150Woodbridge_Existing Drawings

Attachment 5 – 150Woodbridge_Proposed Drawings

Attachment 6 – 150Woodbridge_3D Renderings

Attachment 7 – 150Woodbridge_Proposed Materials

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