

# Heritage Vaughan Committee Report

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**DATE:** Wednesday, May 24, 2023

**WARD:** 5

**TITLE:** PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION OF DETACHED HOUSE AT 7808 YONGE STREET IN THE THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**FROM:**

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

**ACTION:** DECISION

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**Purpose**

To seek Heritage Vaughan Committee's support and recommend to the Committee of the Whole approval for the proposed demolition of the existing residential structure at 7808 Yonge Street and the proposed new construction of a 2-storey detached dwelling fronting both onto Yonge Street and Old Yonge Street. The proposed development is 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 project proposes a new development at 7808 Yonge Street, replacing the existing contributing structure.
- The existing contributing structure has been altered with unsuitable and dangerous materials, in such a way that the property is no longer suitable for rehabilitation and/or restoration.
- The project proposes the removal of 18 trees, proposes replanting 3 trees and cash in lieu for the rest.

## **Recommendations**

THAT Heritage Vaughan recommend Council approve the proposed development as presented, subject to following conditions:

- a) Any further minor refinements to building design including material specifications shall be approved to the satisfaction of the Vaughan Development Planning Department, Urban Design and Cultural Heritage Division;
- b) any significant changes to the proposal may require reconsideration by Heritage Vaughan Committee, which shall be determined at the discretion of the Director of Development Planning;
- c) That the applicant will document any further building features of interest during demolition and will explore salvage opportunities during the demolition process which will be summarized in a salvage report to Cultural Heritage staff prior to final Building Permit approvals.
- d) that Heritage Vaughan Committee recommendations to Council do not constitute specific support for any Development Application under the *Ontario Planning Act* or permits or requirements currently under review or to be submitted in the future by the applicant as it relates to the subject application.
- e) That the applicant submits Building Permit stage architectural drawings and building material specifications to the satisfaction of the Urban Design and Cultural Heritage Division and Chief Building Official, prior to final Building Permit approval
- f) The subject property has been cleared of archaeological concerns through the Stage 1-3 Archaeological Assessment process. However, deeply buried resources may remain and may be disturbed through the demolition and construction activities. Therefore, the standard archaeological clause shall be applied:
  - i. Should previously undocumented archaeological resources be found on the property during construction activities, the Owner must immediately cease all construction activities and notify the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (the Ministry that administers the Ontario Heritage Act), and the Development Planning Department, Urban Design and Cultural Heritage Division at the City of Vaughan.*
  - ii. If human remains are encountered during construction activities, the Owner must immediately cease all construction activities. The Owner shall contact the York Regional Police Department, the Regional Coroner, the Registrar of the Cemeteries at the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) and the City of Vaughan Development Planning Department, Urban Design and Cultural Heritage Division.*

## **Background**

The property is identified in the Thornhill HCD Inventory as a Loyalist Cottage most likely built circa 1856 (see Attachment 3). A Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA) for the existing structure on the property was submitted in support of the application (see Attachment 2).

A number of different options for conservation were discussed for the property. As discussed in the CHIA in Section 5.6.1, the owner intended to temporarily move the existing house in order to replace the foundation and restore the house on a new foundation. However, several aspects of the house were found to have significant structural deflection or deterioration, and several interior finishes are so fragile that they will probably not survive even a temporary relocation. Further, the existing structure was found to contain several hazardous substances as outlined below and discussed further in the CHIA Section 5.6.2.

Asbestos was present in the following areas:

- Parging cement, containing chrysotile asbestos, on pipe fittings (elbows, tees) of domestic water systems in the Basement in fair to poor condition.
- A white corrugated paper insulation (trade name Aircell), containing chrysotile asbestos, on straight sections of domestic water system pipes in the Basement in fair to poor condition.
- Drywall joint compound, containing chrysotile asbestos, on wall and ceiling finishes in the Back-Entrance vestibule.
- Green vinyl floor tiles, containing chrysotile asbestos, on the floor of the 2nd level Bathroom and Laundry Room.

Lead was present in the following areas:

- White paint on the door in the Living Room and Dining Room
- White paint on the radiator in the Living Room and Dining Room

Other hazardous materials are present including crystalline silica (concrete, mortar, grout, plaster etc) mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls. These materials would be released in the air during any renovation/restoration activity.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

Not applicable.

## **Analysis and Options**

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

The following is an analysis of the proposed development at 7808 Yonge Street according to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan ('THCD') guidelines.

#### **4.2.4 Demolition of Heritage Buildings**

- a) *The demolition of heritage buildings within the District is not supported.*
- b) *The City, under the Ontario Heritage Act, may refuse a demolition permit for either an individually designated building or any building located within the District.*

#### **4.2.5 Salvage of Historic Building Materials and Features**

- a) *In the rare case where a heritage building is permitted to be demolished, the building will be documented and the proponents of the demolition will be required to advertise in the local press, the availability of the building for relocation or salvage of architectural features, as a condition of the demolition permit.*
- b) *The City may require the demolition of a building to be undertaken in such a manner as to expose the construction techniques used for documentation and educational purposes.*

The Thornhill Heritage Conservation District strongly opposes the demolition of heritage buildings within the District.

The CHIA indicates that demolition of the house will have an adverse impact on the historic physical features of the Property and will represent a loss of heritage character to the Thornhill HCD. Section 9 of the CHIA fully discusses 4 options for the property, concluding that demolition may be justified due to the extreme condition of the house and the low probability of adaptive reuse due to extensive structural repair/restoration required and the concern of existing hazardous materials such as asbestos in the interior elements of the house.

The CHIA offers some mitigation opportunities, including documentation of the house and its construction as it now stands. While further documentation might be possible, it will be done secondary to the demolition work so as to take into account any health and safety requirements as a result of the presence of hazardous substances.

The CHIA further recommends that salvage opportunities be explored during demolition of the building and any salvageable material from the house be donated to an organization such as the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store or a similar organization for potential reuse.

Cultural Heritage staff recommends the following, should the demolition of the building proceed:

- a) That a salvage report be prepared addressing salvage opportunities during the demolition of the building and that salvageable material from the house be used and incorporated on-site as the preferred option or be donated to the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store or similar organization if on-site use is not possible. The report should be submitted to Cultural Heritage staff prior to final Building Permit approvals.

- b) That the applicant further document the structure through photography and/or documentation of unusual or historic features, should the opportunity for further documentation of the structure present itself.

### **2.7.5 Objectives for New Development**

*To ensure compatible infill construction that will enhance the District's heritage character and complement the area's village-like, human scale of development.*

*To guide the design of new development to be sympathetic and compatible with the heritage resources and character of the District while providing for contemporary needs.*

The applicant has proposed to construct a new detached dwelling that echoes the original dwelling, is sympathetic to the District and is also of its time. The new construction will replace the existing 1 ½ storey single residential to build a new 2 storey single family residential dwelling.

The new building is designed to work on two facades, one facing outwards to Yonge Street and echoing the Loyalist cottage design, the second facing into Thornhill Village on Old Yonge Street and is inspired by Vernacular Homestead style.

### **4.4 New Residential Buildings**

*New residential buildings on local streets (i.e., single detached dwellings) will have respect for and be compatible with the heritage character of the District. Designs for new residential buildings will be based on the patterns and proportions of 19th-century and early 20th-century building stock that are currently existing or once existed in the village. Architectural elements, features, and decorations should be sympathetic to those found on heritage buildings.*

#### **4.4.1 Design Approach**

- a) *The design of new residential buildings will be products of their own time, but should reflect one of the historic architectural styles traditionally found in the District.*
- b) *New residential buildings will complement the immediate physical context and streetscape by: being generally the same height, width, and orientation of adjacent buildings; being of similar setback; being of like materials and colours; and using similarly proportioned windows, doors, and roof shapes.*
- c) *New residential building construction will respect natural landforms, drainage, and existing mature vegetation.*
- d) *Larger new residential buildings will have varied massing, to reflect the small and varied scale of the historical village.*
- e) *Historically appropriate heights for new residential buildings are considered to be 1 ½ or 2 storeys. New residential buildings should be*

*not less than 80% or more than 120% of the average height of the adjacent residential buildings. Notwithstanding the height limit above, two storey houses are permitted next to one storey houses if the ground floor is no more than 1 metre above original grade. In all instances the height of new buildings shall conform to the City's Zoning By-law.*

- f) *New residential building construction in the District will conform to the guidelines found in Section 9.5.2.*

The chosen architectural style of the street-fronting elevation takes its cue from simple Victorian styles shown in the Thornhill HCD. The overall building takes several cues from early 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings and is harmonious with the design of the front facing house elevation.

### **9.5.2 Residential Area Guidelines:**

#### **9.5.2.1 Site Planning**

*Site new houses to provide setbacks and frontages that are consistent with the variety of the village pattern.*

*Site new houses to preserve existing mature trees. See Section 9.7.*

The proposed new dwelling is consistent with the variety of the village and with the placement of buildings on either side of Yonge Street and Old Yonge Street. The position of the Yonge Street porch very closely lines up with the present house.

While the siting of the house will require some trees to be removed, trees at both the west and east elevations will be conserved.

#### **9.5.2.2. Architectural Style**

*The residential village has a variety of lot sizes, frontages, and setbacks. Houses are mostly of a modest scale, leaving fairly generous yards on all sides. In the historic area front yards tend to be shallow compared to the rear yards, where space was needed for stabling, herb and vegetable gardens, and orchards. The use of the yards has changed, but the original village scale has persisted. Building height, lot coverage, and density are all low. The streetscapes are unified by a canopy of trees, planted in front of, behind, and beside most houses. Elements that define the heritage character of the residential village include:*

#### **Guidelines:**

- *Design houses to reflect one of the local heritage Architectural Styles. See Section 9.1.*

- *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. See Section 9.2.1.*
- *Research the chosen Architectural Style. See Section 10 for useful research sources.*

The proposed design is unique as it is composed of two separate forms, united in the center of the lot (as shown in the architectural drawing set in Attachment 5). The design of the east half of the house, oriented to Yonge Street, is influenced by the Loyalist / Georgian cottage design of the original house. The structure has a symmetrical facade with central door and vertically oriented sash style windows. It has a side gable roof and hip style porch roof. This section of the house will be clad in clapboard siding with a brick chimney.

The west half of the house, facing onto Old Yonge Street will be a frame structure clad in brick and clapboard siding with an asphalt shingle roof inspired by the Vernacular Homestead style. Unlike the east half of the house, this part of the house takes care to demonstrate that it is of its own time, while still providing a silhouette that is in keeping with the character of the street. Parts of the roof will have medium slope (35-degree) gable roofs. In the centre of the building the house will have sections with flat roofs. The siding will be a cement fiberboard product such as Hardiplank. Parts of the building will be clad in brick and it will have brick chimneys.

### **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 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 4.4 of this Plan concerning height and depth of buildings and garages.*

The proposed new structure will preserve the scale and pattern of the District at the streetscape on both streets. This new building will be a two-storey structure and is within the permitted height of the Residential Village area of the District. It is proposed to cover approximately 888.5 m<sup>2</sup> which is approximately 28% of the lot. A straight driveway will extend from Old Yonge Street along the south side of the property adjacent to the house. It will be in the same location as the existing driveway on the Property but will not extend through to Yonge Street as the current driveway does. The new driveway will be wider next to the house to accommodate turning into the garage.

#### **4.5.2 Trees and Shrubs**

- a) Mature trees will be preserved except where removal is necessary due to disease or damage, or to ensure public health and safety, as certified by a professional arborist. Lost trees should be replaced.*
- b) New trees and shrubs should be hardy, urban tolerant in recognition of harsher environmental conditions, but that express form, canopy, leaf and colour characteristics of native, indigenous trees, where possible. Large, urban-tolerant and long-living character trees are to form the framework of street tree plantings in the area and become a defining characteristic of the area. Where sufficient space does not exist for large trees, smaller ornamentals are preferred to induce a pedestrian scale while providing seasonal interest and colour.*
- c) Planting should not obscure heritage buildings, but can frame important features. Planting should screen less attractive sites and prospects in the District.*

#### **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 the Maple and its valley.*

*Street tree planting on arterial roads should conform with Region of York guidelines. Please refer to 'Tree Planting Design Criteria' within the Region's Road Design Guidelines handbook. In general, street trees should be hardy, salt-tolerant 60 mm caliper balled and burlapped specimens, spaced at 8-12 metres on centre, planted 3 metres from any curb or utility pole and offset 1 metre from any sidewalk and 3 metres from any driveway*

An Arborist report was submitted (see Attachment 8) to the satisfaction of staff. Where possible healthy existing trees will be retained as shown in the Tree Preservation Plan in Attachment 9. The property will have lawn in front of and behind the house. Gardens with small deciduous shrubs are planned in front of the Yonge Street and Old Yonge



Street elevations. A row of coniferous shrubs is planned along the south side of the property. Three new deciduous trees are planned on the west half of the Property as shown in the Landscape Plan in Attachment 9.

### **9.8.1 Heritage Buildings Appropriate Materials**

*All construction visible from the exterior requires a Heritage Permit. Visible materials should conform to the following standards:*

- *Exterior Finish: Smooth red clay face brick, with smooth buff clay face brick as accent, or in some instances brick to match existing conditions. 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; 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 materials of the new structure are in keeping with the District guidelines and what has previously been approved in THCD, such as Hardiboard and Hardiplank. While the exact window models have yet to be determined due to current availability concerns, Cultural Heritage staff will have final review over the Building Permit review drawings to ensure that they match the design as proposed and reflect appropriate material construction for the district.

### **Archaeology**

The subject property was subjected to an archaeological assessment through Stages 1 thru 3, when no further archaeological work was deemed necessary. Staff has a copy of the archaeological assessment and a copy of the Letter from the Ministry as shown in Attachment 10. The letter confirms that the report has met provincial standards, that the report has been entered into the provincial repository and accepts that no further work is required.

Cultural Heritage staff concurs with the recommendations of the report and the Ministry. It is recommended that the Standard Archaeological Clause be applied in case of any deeply buried deposits or remains:

- i. *Should previously undocumented archaeological resources be found on the property during construction activities, the Owner must immediately cease all construction activities and notify the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (the Ministry that administers the Ontario Heritage Act), and the Development Planning Department, Urban Design and Cultural Heritage Division at the City of Vaughan.*
- ii. *If human remains are encountered during construction activities, the Owner must immediately cease all construction activities. The Owner shall contact the York Regional Police Department, the Regional Coroner, the Registrar of the Cemeteries at the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) and the City of Vaughan Development Planning Department, Urban Design and Cultural Heritage Division.*

### **Financial Impact**

Not applicable.

### **Operational Impact**

Not applicable.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

Not applicable.

### **Conclusion**

The physical condition of the house was a pre-existing condition at the time of the client's purchase. The house has been vacant for several years prior to the current owner's purchase in 2018, who took steps to secure it from further damage as it was assessed and considered several options for conservation. The CHIA suggests that the demolition of the house will have an adverse impact on the historic physical features of the Property and will represent a loss of heritage character to the Thornhill HCD. However, the building is in poor physical condition and the structural integrity of the house is compromised; plus, a number of hazardous substances are found within it.

The Development Planning Department is satisfied the proposed demolition of the existing contributing heritage structure at 7808 Yonge Street and the proposed construction of a detached dwelling conform to the policies and guidelines within the THCD Plan. Accordingly, staff can support a Heritage Vaughan recommendation for Council approval of the proposed development located at 7808 Street under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

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

## **Attachments**

- Attachment 1 – 7808Yonge\_Location Map
- Attachment 2 – 7808 Yonge\_CHIA
- Attachment 3 – 7808Yonge\_THCD Inventory Excerpt
- Attachment 4 – 7808Yonge\_Current Survey
- Attachment 5 – 7808Yonge\_Architectural Set
- Attachment 6 – 7808Yonge\_3D renderings
- Attachment 7 – 7808Yonge\_materials samples
- Attachment 8 – 7808Yonge\_Arborist Report
- Attachment 9 – 7808Yonge\_Tree Preservation and Landscape Plan
- Attachment 10 – 7808Yonge\_Archaeology, Ministry Letter

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