

Heritage Vaughan Committee Report

DATE: Thursday, September 26, 2024

WARD: 5

TITLE: PROPOSED RENOVATION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND REAR ADDITION GARDEN SUITE – LOCATED AT 15 MILL STREET, THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek a recommendation of approval from the Heritage Vaughan Committee to Council regarding the proposed renovation of existing structure plus construction of a rear addition at 15 Mill Street, a Listed property in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District and designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as shown on Attachments 1-5.

Report Highlights

- The Owner is proposing to renovate parts of the existing Listed building, and construct a connected rear addition with garage.
- The proposal is consistent with the relevant policies of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District (THCD) Plan.
- Heritage Vaughan review and Council approval is required under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Recommendations

THAT Heritage Vaughan recommend Council approve the proposed renovations of existing structure and proposed rear addition at 15 Mill Street in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District 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 prior to issuance of Heritage Permit, the applicant enters into a Tree Protection Agreement to the satisfaction of the City;
- d) 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

This building is included in the **Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings**. It is an important heritage asset, contributing to the village heritage character.

Built circa 1825, this is the last of the mill workers' cottages that originally overlooked the valley. Robert Lyons PLS prepared Plan 348 for George Monroe, Esquire, locating the building on Lots 5,6, and 7, Range B. This was originally a double house containing two 3-bay dwellings, like 37-39 Colborne Street on the Markham side of the village. The interior retains 2 stairways, one in its original configuration. There is evidence in the basement of a large central chimney where the central window is now.

In 2010, the owners presented preliminary renovation plans including an addition, and a Heritage Permit was issued in June 2011. That work was completed by Philip Carter Architect, a noted heritage architect and co-author of the THCD Plan.

Previous Reports/Authority

HP.2011.00.700 – see Attachment 5.

Analysis and Options

The owners propose to renovate parts of the existing building – previously enlarged and renovated in 2011 under the previous Heritage Permit. Part of the renovation includes the closing-in of a SW corner walk-out balcony and conversion to a bedroom suite: this is the only interior proposed alteration that affects the exterior of the existing building.

Aside from these alterations to the existing building, the owners are proposing the demolition of the existing garage at the rear (SE corner of the property) and the construction of an addition not connected to the main body of the house, that would also house a garage. This proposed ancillary dwelling addition will be a self-contained apartment with two bedrooms on the upper level, living quarters and a car port on the ground level, and a partial basement. The new addition requires the removal of 11

mature trees on the property plus 3 City-owned trees, as per the Arborist Report (see Attachment 4). The overall look of the site remains unchanged.

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 the THCD Plan.

2.7.2 Objectives for Heritage Buildings

- *To conserve heritage attributes and distinguishing qualities of heritage buildings and prevent the removal or alteration of any historic or distinctive architectural feature.*
- *To correct unsympathetic alterations to heritage buildings.*
- *To facilitate the restoration of heritage buildings based on a thorough examination of archival and pictorial evidence, physical evidence, and an understanding of the history of the local community.*
- *To promote retention and reuse of heritage buildings to prevent their demolition.*

The proposal does not alter the look, aesthetic, architectural composition, or massing of the existing heritage building; all proposed alterations are in keeping with the existing style and materials of the building as it exists today. Staff finds that the proposal adheres closely to the requirements of the THCD Plan.

4.2.2 Alterations and Additions to Heritage Buildings

- a) Conserve the heritage value and heritage attributes of a heritage resource when creating any new addition or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the heritage resource.*
- b) Ensure that any new addition, alteration, or related new construction will not have detrimental impact on the heritage resource if the new work is removed in future.*

The addition is proposed to follow the same architectural language and remains inferior in scale and massing to the main building, as per good heritage architecture design principles. Staff finds that the proposal adheres closely to the requirements of the THCD Plan.

4.3.1 Additions and Alterations

The majority of the properties in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District are non-heritage buildings. Many of these properties are good neighbours to the heritage buildings in scale, massing, and design. A prime example is found in the Cape Cod cottages and Victory houses, which were inspired by the same New England precedents that the United Empire Loyalists brought to Upper Canada. There are also newer buildings that have been consciously designed to complement the heritage buildings in the village, with varying degrees of success.

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*
 - *by 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 1-1/2 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.*

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 building is a **twice-altered Neo-Classical cottage**. From the road, the building has changed very little over the past century, with modest cosmetic alterations to the front entry assembly (door and surrounds), dormer (now 3 dormers replacing the original single unit), and addition of a glazed enclosure to the side carport. The proposed alterations at the rear of the property, and directly visible from the street, maintain and echo the architectural simplicity of style and materials, thus creating a composition that is at once timeless and of its own time. Staff finds that the proposal adheres closely to the requirements of the THCD Plan.

4.5.1 Landscape Treatment

Existing historical landscapes will be conserved. The introduction of complementary landscapes to the heritage environment will be encouraged.

The proposed design requires the removal of 11 mature trees on the property and 3 City-owned trees but offers compensation aligned with the guidelines; aside from this irreversible alteration, the site and existing landscape remain unaltered. Staff finds that the proposal adheres closely to the requirements of the THCD Plan.

9.3.1 Existing Heritage Buildings

Thornhill is fortunate in having numerous historic buildings, most of which are structurally sound, with original architectural details still largely intact. In many cases, details are in need of maintenance or repair or have been obscured or removed by previous renovations. This section aims to assist in the preservation of historic architecture, and the restoration of lost or concealed heritage character, through design that follows the original or is at least sympathetic to it, when new work is undertaken.

Guidelines:

- *The existing heritage structures are the most significant elements of the heritage character of Thornhill.*
- *Buildings that are listed in the Vaughan Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value are considered to be heritage properties for the purposes of this Plan. The properties listed as of this date are shown in the map to the left. Additional properties that may be included on this Register in the future, will then be considered heritage properties for the purpose of this Plan.*
- *Proper maintenance of heritage structures prevents deterioration and is the most cost-effective means of preserving heritage character.*
- *When heritage features are damaged or deteriorated, repair and restoration are preferable to replacement.*
- *New construction should not damage or conceal heritage features.*
- *New construction should include restoration of heritage features that have been lost or concealed by previous renovations.*

The proposed renovation and new rear addition are sensibly designed in very close adherence with the existing fabric of the site: the alterations to the existing heritage structure are mainly interior, with the one exception of the closing of the upper-level rear balcony – mainly masked within the existing tree canopy. The proposed new addition at the rear of the property reflects the cadence, massing, and format of the front elevation of the existing building; visually inferior to the main structure due to its physical separation to the rear of the lot, this new addition appears to almost be the continuation of the front elevation in the East-West sightline from the road. Staff finds that the proposal adheres closely to the requirements of the THCD Plan.

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.*
- *Use authentic detail.*
- *Research the architectural style of the original building.*
- *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.*

The proposed rear addition is directly in-keeping with the existing architectural style of the main building. Although not connected physically, the visual ties to the main building inspire the image of a coach house renovation at the rear rather than a new construction. Staff finds that the proposal adheres closely to the requirements of the THCD Plan.

9.4.1.1 Contemporary Alteration Approach

Ordinarily, a modern building should be altered in a way that respects and complements its original design. Interest in preservation of the modern architectural heritage is growing, and good modern design deserves the same respect as good design of the 19th century.

Guidelines:

- *Additions and alterations using the Contemporary Alteration approach should respect, and be consistent with, the original design of the building.*
- *Many modern buildings are old enough to have already undergone renovations, which may not be in character with either the original design, or historic precedent. In such cases, the design of further new work should restore the architectural consistency of the whole.*
- *In some cases, modern buildings predominantly feature materials that are out of keeping with the local vernacular heritage, such as tile or artificial stone veneer, and tile or simulated tile roofing. Replacement of these materials with more sympathetic ones, when renovations are being undertaken, is encouraged.*

Staff finds that the proposed rear addition only has the interior reflecting a contemporary style; whereas the exterior is a representation and visual extension of the original 1825 New-Classical style and form of the original building, albeit incorporating the tasteful alterations of the 2011 renovation, the proposed rear structure continues and thus complements the existing heritage structure, and blends seamlessly with it and into the site proper. Staff finds that the proposal adheres closely to the requirements of the THCD Plan.

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

All materials and composition incorporated into the assembly of the alteration and proposed rear addition comply and conform with the requirements of the THCD Plan.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Operational Impact

There are no operational impacts associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no broader regional impacts or considerations.

Conclusion

The Urban Design and Cultural Heritage Division of the Development Planning Department is satisfied with the proposed work which conforms to the policies and guidelines of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan. Accordingly, staff can support Council approval of the proposed renovations and construction of a rear addition to the Listed property at 15 Mill Street under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

For more information, please contact: Nick Borcescu, Senior Heritage Planner, ext. 8191.

Attachments

1. 15 Mill Street – Location Map
2. 15 Mill Street – CHIA Update
3. 15 Mill Street – Architectural Set
4. 15 Mill Street – Arborist Report
5. 15 Mill Street – Heritage Permit 2011
6. 15 Mill Street – Material Specifications

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