

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Wednesday, October 14, 2020

WARD(S): 2

TITLE: DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING AT 256 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE, AND CONSTRUCTION OF A SEVEN-STOREY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AT 248-260 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE, WOODBRIDGE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT VICINITY OF WOODBRIDGE AVENUE AND KIPLING AVENUE

FROM:

Nick Spensieri, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To forward a recommendation from the Heritage Vaughan Committee to demolish an existing non-contributing structure at 256 Woodbridge Avenue, and support the construction of a 7-storey residential building on the lands known municipally as 248-260 Woodbridge Avenue, a property located in the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District and designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Report Highlights

- The Owner is seeking approval to demolish an existing non-contributing building (sales office) and to construct a 7-storey residential building
- The proposed building's design is consistent with the relevant policies of the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District Plan
- Staff recommends additional revisions to the proposed 7-storey building to address Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District Plan guidelines
- Heritage Vaughan review and Council approval is required under the *Ontario Heritage Act*

Recommendations

The Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development, on behalf of Heritage Vaughan forwards the following recommendation from its meeting of September 16, 2020 (Item 5, Report No. 6), for consideration:

- 1) That a demolish permit shall not be issued for the property until a building permit has been issued for a new building, in accordance with the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District Plan.

A vote was taken and failed to carry on the following recommendation contained in the report of the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development, dated September 16, 2020:

Recommendation and Report of the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development, dated September 16, 2020:

THAT Heritage Vaughan Committee recommend Council approve the proposed demolition of the existing building at 256 Woodbridge Avenue and the construction of a 7-storey residential building located at 248-260 Woodbridge Avenue under Section 42 of *Ontario Heritage Act*, subject to the following conditions:

- a) That the podium level of the proposed building be revised to provide additional transparency and articulation and the screening for the at-grade parking area be enhanced.
- b) That any significant changes to the proposal by the Owner may require reconsideration by the Heritage Vaughan Committee, determined at the discretion of the Acting Deputy City Manager, Planning & Growth Management.
- c) 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.
- d) That the Owner submit at the Building Permit stage architectural drawings and building material specifications to the satisfaction of the Chief Building Official.

Background

The property at 248-260 Woodbridge Avenue is within the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District ('WHCD') Plan. The subject property is comprised of Lots 11 and 12 and Part of Lots 9 and 10, Registered Plan 385, City of Vaughan (Woodbridge). The property is adjacent to 268 Woodbridge Avenue, the Donald Grant House, and 69 William

Street, both being “contributing heritage properties” in the WHCD Plan. Lots 9-11 were sold to James S. Robinson in 1876. Lot 12 was sold to Alexander Locke in 1876. Over time, the original Lots 9 through 12 were reconfigured, with new north-south lot lines being created in the early 20th century. Lot lines were altered in 1915 and by 2005, Lots 9 through 12 were in the same ownership. and are under the same ownership.

The property was sold many times between 1900 and the present, culminating with the current owner’s [City Park (Woodbridge Gates North) Inc.] purchase in 2016. The subject property lies within *Character Area 2 “Woodbridge Avenue”* and is bounded on the north and east sides by *Character Area 3 “William and James Streets”* of the WHCD Plan.

Previous Reports/Authority

Not applicable.

Analysis and Options

All new development must respect the policies and guidelines within the Woodbridge Heritage Conservation District Plan (“WHCD”).

The following is an analysis of the proposed development in consideration of the WHCD guidelines.

5.1 Objectives

The WHCD Plan states, the purpose of the Heritage Conservation District is to:

- 1. Identify, document, maintain and restore the unique heritage village character of Woodbridge.*
- 2. Conserve contributing buildings, landscapes, monuments and streetscapes.*
- 3. Ensure new designs contribute to the Woodbridge heritage character.*
- 4. Manage any development or redevelopment proposed within the district, in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to all aspects necessary to ensure the protection and conservation of the heritage resources, in order to maintain the village character of the Woodbridge District.*
- 5. Ensure individual heritage structures and landscapes are maintained, and new development or redevelopment sensitively integrated, as part of a comprehensive district.*
- 6. Maintain Woodbridge as both a local neighbourhood and a destination for residents of Vaughan and beyond.*
- 7. Support a welcoming, interesting pedestrian environment by encouraging pedestrian amenities and by maintaining human-scaled development and connections to adjacent neighbourhoods.*

The WHCD Plan includes several guidelines regarding building design including:

5.3.2.4 SCALE AND HEIGHT

Buildings in Woodbridge are primarily of a two to three storey scale and height that is pedestrian friendly and allows ample sun penetration and open views. (OPA #240 allows for a concentration of increased height and scale of up to four storeys

maximum at the historic commercial nodes of Woodbridge and Kipling Avenue, within the Woodbridge Avenue commercial core. A consideration for additional height to six storeys maximum, having a four-storey podium is envisioned at this intersection in the Kipling Corridor Study and Official Plan Amendment. This height recommendation is also supported in this Plan.)

Buildings include doors and windows facing directly onto the street, creating an animated environment for pedestrians. There are no blank walls.

The subject property is located on the portion of Woodbridge Avenue between Kipling Avenue and the rail line where an existing 6/7-storey building. The subject property is constrained by the presence of a rail line to the east requiring a 20m setback on the site and the proposed building is setback 11m from the Donald Grant House to the west and approximately 33 metres from the contributing building at 69 William Street to the north. The proposed development features a 7-storey residential building with the main lobby set back from Woodbridge Avenue and access to the underground garage via lateral doors. The proposed 7-storey and approximately 24m high (measured from average grade) building exceeds the 6-storey and 20m building height permitted by the WHCD Plan. However, the proposed building is contained within the 45-degree angular planes as applied in the WHCD Plan to west and the north. The façade of the existing building on the southeast corner of Kipling Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue contains a 7-storey portion beyond and including the main entrance/lobby along Woodbridge Avenue. In addition, there are existing 7-storey buildings within the Woodbridge Core Area. The proposed building height and massing is considered to be complementary to the existing context in this portion of the Woodbridge Avenue.

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.*

The proposed 7-storey building is designed to front with an acceptable street setback onto Woodbridge Avenue, however, does not include pedestrian oriented retail at grade. Instead, the building setback area includes at-grade patios with direct access to the residential units. The podium of the building is located close to the street line (3.4m setback) with grade related residential units. The proposed building entrance design provides a sense of arrival for the building and integrates with the streetscape treatment along Woodbridge Avenue.

Staff support the proposed building setback and front yard/streetscape treatment along Woodbridge Avenue. However, it is recommended the Owner continue to work with staff to improve the level of transparency and better articulate the relationship of the ground floor and podium with Woodbridge Avenue.

6.1.1 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE

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-degree 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.*

The proposed 7-storey residential building exceeds the maximum permitted building height by one storey and includes a one-storey podium with a second storey masonry parapet stack to visually create a two-storey podium appearance to maintain the preferred human scale of the streetscape. The upper floors are setback between 7.1m along the Woodbridge Avenue frontage. The Owner has demonstrated the proposed building meets the 45-degree angular plane from the heritage dwellings to the west and north.

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 residential development presents a coherent “contemporary” architectural style and conforms to the requirements of the WHCD Plan. Staff supports the architectural style of the development as it is complementary to the heritage architecture of the immediately adjacent contributing buildings, and appropriately addresses the building materials of other contemporary development in the immediate surroundings.

6.3.3 ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

Material Palette

There is a very broad range of materials in today’s design palette, but materials proposed for new buildings in the district should include those drawn from ones historically in use in Woodbridge. This includes brick, stone, traditional stucco; wood siding and trim, glass windows and storefronts, and various metals. The use and placement of these materials in a contemporary composition and their incorporation with other modern materials is critical to the success of the fit of the proposed building in its context. The proportional use of materials, use of extrapolated construction lines (window head, or cornices for example) projected from the surrounding context, careful consideration of colour and texture all add to the success of a composition.

Proportions of Parts

Architectural composition has always had at its root the study of proportion. In various styles, rules of proportion have varied from the complex formulas of the classical orders to a more liberal study of key proportions in buildings of the modern movement. For new buildings in this heritage district, the design should take into account the proportions of buildings in the immediate context and consider a design with proportional relationships that will make a good fit.

An example of this might be windows. Nineteenth century buildings were arranged without fail using a vertical proportioning system, organizing windows singly or in groups. This proportioning system extends to the arrangement of panes within individual windows. In buildings of the Art Deco and Art Moderne period windows are often of a horizontal proportion. Although this horizontality is not universally the case, it is a character defining feature of these styles.

Solidity vs Transparency

It is a characteristic of historic buildings of the 19th century to have solid walls with punched windows. This relationship of solid to void makes these buildings less transparent in appearance. It was a characteristic that was based upon technology

(the ability to make large windows and to heat space came later, and changed building forms), societal standards for privacy, and architectural tradition. Buildings of many 20th century styles in contrast use large areas of glass and transparency as part of their design philosophy.

In this historic district the relationship of solidity to transparency is a characteristic of new buildings that should be carefully considered. The nature of the immediate context for the new building in each of the defined character areas should be studied. The level of transparency in the new work should be set at a level that provides a good fit on the street frontages.

In the Woodbridge Avenue Character Area, a Main Street approach can be taken, and a more transparent building permitted between the ratios of 20% solid to 70% solid.

In the other character areas this proportion should reflect a more traditional residential proportion of 40% solid to 80% solid.

Detailing

In past styles structure was often hidden behind a veneer of other surfaces. "Detailing" was largely provided by the use of coloured, shaped, patterned or carved masonry and /or added traditional ornament, moldings, finials, cresting and so on. In contemporary buildings every element of a building can potentially add to the artistic composition. Architectural, structural, mechanical and even electrical systems can contribute to the final design.

For new buildings in the Woodbridge Heritage District, the detailing of the work should again refer to the nature of the immediate context and the attributes of the Character Area in which it is to be placed.

In the Woodbridge Avenue Character Area, detailing can be more contemporary yet with a deference to scale, repetition, lines and levels, beam and column, solid and transparent that relates to the immediate context.

In the other character areas, the detailing of new buildings should tend toward a more traditional approach. Whereas a contemporary approach is permitted, the use of moldings, brackets, architraves, entablatures, cornices and other traditional detailing is encouraged, to help ensure a good fit with the immediate context.

The proposed building includes a materials palette similar and complimentary to the heritage buildings immediately adjacent to the property and the more contemporary developments in the immediate surroundings. By nature of the multi-storey design, the windows and all façade elements are presented in a strong vertical context.

The WHCD Plan calls for commercial use on the ground floor (typically presenting a visually permeable glazed surface). The proposed building design includes a heavy masonry base detached visually from the upper floors by a recessed main entry. The remaining architectural detailing of the façade repeats the balcony and cladding pattern on the west elevation. The east elevation includes a reduced transparency and an increased solidity in an inversely proportional pattern. Staff recommend the material / design used for the podium of the proposed building be articulated to provide a more defined and transparent podium along the street in order to strengthen the human-scale aspect of the building and streetscape along Woodbridge Avenue.

6.4.1.2 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE (CHARACTER AREA – CA)

Heritage Attributes

- 1. Follow a Main Street character, buildings with retail at grade are often built with zero (or minimum) setback.*
- 2. Contributing buildings display a variety of setbacks and side yard conditions.*
- 3. Contributing buildings are most often built with zero or limited side yards. This creates a continuous street wall and contributes to the main street character.*

Guidelines

(See Section 6.5: Transitions of New Buildings in Relation to Heritage Resources)

- 1. New buildings should be built directly to the front property or street line to establish a continuous street wall.*
- 2. The historic setbacks of contributing buildings should be maintained and contributing buildings should not be relocated to a new setback line. New buildings must be sympathetic to the setbacks of adjacent contributing buildings.*
- 3. 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.*
- 4. Where heritage contributing buildings are located on either side of a new development site and are set further back from the zero-setback line; the setback for the development site will be the average of the front yard setbacks of the two properties on either side.*
- 5. Where heritage contributing buildings are set further back from the recommended zero setback line, any new development adjacent to the heritage contributing buildings must be set back, at a minimum, to a line measured at 45 degrees from the front corner of the existing heritage contributing building.*
- 6. Existing contributing buildings should retain their historic setbacks and side yard conditions and create front landscaped courtyards that open onto Woodbridge Avenue to build on the “green” character of the street.*
- 7. New buildings should have no side yards fronting onto Woodbridge Avenue, and should create a continuous street wall.*

The proposed building site plan is not consistent with the WHCD Plan guidelines for heritage front setback of new buildings along Woodbridge Avenue, when directly adjacent to contributing buildings. Locating the building with a similar front-yard setback as the Donald Grant House is not feasible in consideration of the depth of the subject property. The upper floors of the proposed building are setback from the street podium level by a distance less than the 45-degree angular plane guideline. However, in consideration of the context of the site (west of the rail line at the edge of the core area) and of the building on the southeast corner of Kipling and Woodbridge Avenue (which also does not include a 45-degree angular plane), the proposed step back of the upper floors is considered appropriate in its immediate surrounding context.

6.4.2.2 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE (CHARACTER AREA - CA)

Heritage Attributes

- 1. Woodbridge Avenue has a Main Street character, which includes heritage buildings that are 2 and 3 floors tall.*
- 2. More recent construction includes buildings that are 4 and 6 floors tall, facing Woodbridge Avenue.*

Guidelines

- 1. New buildings must have a building podium, lining the street, of 2 floors minimum and 4 floors maximum.*
- 2. Additional building height to a maximum of 6 floors (20m), may be considered only when there is no undue impact to the public realm and/or adjacent properties including an impact on sunlight penetration and views. Additional building height must step-back along a 45° angular plane from:*
 - the street, starting 13 metres, when facing a street, and*
 - starting at 9.5 metres, when facing another property; and*
 - the height of any contributing building, (see Section 6.5).*

The proposed 7-storey and 24m high building exceeds the maximum allowable storeys (6 storeys) and building height (20m) taken from the average grade. However, the proposed street-level one-storey podium design with a balcony feature perimeter on the second storey and with the remaining 5 storeys above set back from Woodbridge Avenue would establish a good relationship with Woodbridge Avenue complementary to the surrounding existing mixed-use development. As noted above, there are existing 7-storey buildings in the Woodbridge Core area.

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.

Guidelines

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.*
- *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 mean height between the eaves and highest point of a gable, hip, or a gambrel roof.*

5. Front Yard Setback Guidelines

- *The historic setbacks of contributing buildings should be maintained and contributing buildings should not be relocated to a new setback line. New buildings must be sympathetic to the setbacks of adjacent contributing buildings.*
- *When new buildings are 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.*
- *Where heritage contributing buildings are located on either side of a new development site and are set further back from either a zero-building setback line along Woodbridge Avenue, the setback for the development site will be the average of the front yard setbacks of the two properties on either side. The majority of the existing heritage buildings along Woodbridge Avenue already reflect a zero-setback condition.*
- *Where heritage contributing buildings are set further back from either a zero building setback line along Woodbridge Avenue, or a 3.0m minimum building*

setback line along Kipling Avenue, any new development adjacent to the heritage contributing building must be set back, at a minimum, to a line measured at 45 degrees from the front corner of the existing heritage contributing building.

As discussed above, the proposed building setback and design is considered appropriate and will complement the existing surrounding development in this area of Woodbridge Avenue and meets the 45-degree angular plane requirement to the existing heritage resources to the west and north.

6.7.1 ROADS, CURBS, SIDEWALKS AND STREETScape

Several of the roads within Woodbridge are significant in defining the heritage character of Woodbridge and contribute in terms of function and layout. These streets are defined by the majority of the heritage fabric that characterizes Woodbridge and are used as a neighbourhood walking trail.

Heritage Attributes

- 2. Woodbridge Avenue is the “commercial main street” of Woodbridge and is defined by a 20-metre right-of-way, with on-street parking at the commercial core, and zero building setbacks with the exception of several heritage buildings with deeper setbacks. The commercial core is defined by special street paving along the sidewalks and the street crossings, and where there are pedestrian linkages to the river valley.*

Guidelines

2. Woodbridge Avenue:

- Should continue to function as a mixed-use commercial street and promenade with commercial animation at grade.*
- Should reflect a more formal landscape treatment and tree planting design that responds to at-grade retail amenities such as building shade canopies, café furnishings and ease of pedestrian movement. The sidewalks should have special paving to enhance the identity of the commercial core, and gateway treatments at the Kipling Avenue and Woodbridge intersection.*
- Sidewalks should be primarily hard surfaced to accommodate pedestrian traffic and there should be continuous sidewalk on both sides of the street.*
- Should have a continuous enhanced paving treatment and palette of furnishings such as special lighting standards and benches that demarcate it as a “special street” and enhances the identity of the Woodbridge Core.*
- Should accommodate on street parking where possible.*

6. Topography

Maintain the alignment and hilled character of Meeting House Road, William Street, and Woodbridge Avenue in order to maintain the visual and physical experience of the rolling topography and the valley lands.

The proposed development does not include on-street lay-by parking. In addition, the plans submitted in support of the proposal should be revised to better identify the treatment, pattern, and materials to be used for sidewalk paving on the property to maintain a continuity of streetscape materials and treatments along Woodbridge Avenue. Staff recommend the drawings submitted in support of the streetscape elements for the development be updated to clearly reference the WHCD Plan requirements.

6.7.6 PARKING

- *On street parking is allowed along the main commercial and mixed-use streets: Kipling Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue.*
- *Where the right-of-way permits, on street parking should be accommodated on one side of residential streets: Wallace Avenue, Clarence Street.*
- *As intensification occurs, publicly accessible structured parking along Woodbridge Avenue should be considered.*
- *On-site parking, including structured parking should not be visible from the street or from public spaces. Parking areas should be concealed and buffered with buildings with active uses.*

The proposed site plan includes at-grade parking within the 20m CPR setback and offers a lateral entrance/exit to the underground parking not directly visible from the street. The at-grade parking along the east limit of the property is in view and accessed from the street. This grade parking area is not concealed by any structures and is proposed to be delineated from the public realm by a shallow planter and a tree. Staff recommends the proposed at-grade parking spaces be better screened through landscape buffering in consideration of the requirements of the WHCD Plan.

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 of the opinion the proposal is consistent with the general intent and vision of the policies and guidelines within the WHCD. The proposed development will complement the existing mid-rise development in the

surrounding area and provide appropriate transitions to the adjacent heritage resources (e.g. 45-degree angular plane) to the west and north.

Accordingly, staff supports Heritage Vaughan Committee recommendation to Committee of the Whole for approval of the proposed demolition of the non-conforming existing building at 256 Woodbridge Avenue under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, however, recommend additional revisions to the podium of the proposed 7-storey building and the screening of the parking area at 248-260 Woodbridge Avenue to adequately address the WHCD Plan guidelines as outlined in this report.

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

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – 248-260 Woodbridge_Location Map
- Attachment 2 – 248-260 Woodbridge_CHIA
- Attachment 3 – 248-260 Woodbridge_Site Plan
- Attachment 4 – 248-260 Woodbridge_Landscape Plan
- Attachment 5 – 248-260 Woodbridge_Colour Renderings
- Attachment 6 – 248-260 Woodbridge_Elevations

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