



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Heritage Markham Committee

**FROM:** Evan Manning, Heritage Planner

**DATE:** February 9, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Application  
288-300 John Street, Thornhill  
Proposed High-Density Mixed-Use Development and Conservation of On-Site  
Heritage Building  
John Welsh House/ Thornlea  
**File: 20 130784 PLAN**

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**Property/Building Description:** Two storey, brick structure, c.1858  
**Use:** Residential and Commercial (Mixed-Use)  
**Heritage Status:** The subject site contains a property designated under Part IV  
on the *Ontario Heritage Act* at 288 John Street (the John  
Welsh House/Thornlea).

### **Application/Proposal**

- The City has received concurrent Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for the property municipally-known as 288, 298 and 300 John Street (the “subject site” or the “property”) in October 2020 (the “initial submission”). Based on the comments received from City Staff on the initial submission, the applicant submitted a revised development concept in October 2021 (the “revised submission”) that includes an increase in the proposed gross floor area (GFA) from 57,082 m<sup>2</sup> to 69,393m<sup>2</sup>. Refinements to the scale and siting of the proposed buildings are also proposed;
- The subject site is bound by John Street to the south, the Thornhill Community Centre and Bayview Avenue to the west, Green Lane to the north, and a townhouse complex to the east.
- The proposed development replaces the existing commercial centre (the “Thornhill Square Shopping Centre”) which was constructed in the 1980s. With the exception of 288 John Street, Heritage Section staff do not consider any component of the Thornhill Square Shopping Centre to be a significant cultural heritage resource;
- The drawings appended to this report as Appendix C were submitted in support of the revised submission. The proposed site plan consists of four buildings ranging in height from 7 to 19 storeys as well as a new public park. The proposed park is located in the

southern portion of the subject site and extends from John Street northwards to 288 John Street (the “heritage building”).

- The heritage building is proposed to be retained as part of the phased development of the subject site (identified as Building ‘E’ on the appended site plan). Improved site porosity and pedestrian level connections are also contemplated. Proposed built form is contemporary in design.

## **Background**

### **On-Site Heritage Resources**

- The subject site is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It contains a former dwelling constructed in 1858 that has since been converted to commercial use.
- The on-site heritage building, located along the western edge of the subject property, was retained and incorporated into the Thornhill Square Shopping Centre at the time of its construction. A small landscaped area provides a buffer between the heritage building and a commercial office building to the east, surface parking lots to the south and north, and the low-rise Thornhill Community Centre to the east. Access to the heritage building is currently achieved via the surface parking lot as a dedicated and well-defined pedestrian circulation network is absent from the subject site.
- As part of its conversion to commercial use, a rear extension and side patio were added to the heritage building. The current tenant is Santorini Restaurant.

### **Adjacent Heritage Resources**

- There are no municipally-recognized heritage resources considered *adjacent* to the subject site as defined in the 2014 Official Plan.

## **Heritage Policy**

- The **Markham Official Plan (2014)** includes a series of robust cultural heritage policies on how significant cultural heritage resources are to be addressed in development applications including:
  - Protection and conservation of the resource using established guidelines and policies;
  - Imposing conditions of approval to ensure continued protection, including designation and heritage easements;
  - Utilizing planning controls and tools to ensure new development is designed and regulated to protect and mitigate harm and negative impact to the resource including considerations such as scale, massing, height, building orientation and location relative to the resource;
  - Retention and conserving a resource in its original location Ensuring continued use and restoration of the resource.

## **Staff Comments**

- The proposed redevelopment offers an opportunity to improve physical and visual connections to 288 John Street. As currently composed, the heritage building has poorly defined linkages to the public realm and appears as an isolated fragment within the subject site;

- The conceptual site plan includes a new public park adjacent to the south (primary) elevation of the heritage building that extends to John Street. The new park provides an opportunity to reconnect the heritage building to the public realm, and encourage pedestrian circulation through the subject site. This will improve both visibility and pedestrian access to the heritage building;
- A gradual density gradient is proposed in which the tallest buildings are located in the northern portion of the property, generally tapering in height as they approach the heritage building and public park in the southern portion of the subject site;
- The proposed design of the new buildings are contemporary in both form and materiality. While further details will be provided at the site plan control stage, Heritage Section staff have no objection to the notional design as seen in the appended drawings as it contrasts with and highlights the heritage building;
- Based on the above, Heritage Section staff have no objection to the OPA/ZBA applications from a heritage perspective. Further, Staff suggest that the Heritage Markham Committee may wish to delegate review of a future site plan application, or any other development applications in support of the proposal.

### **Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham**

THAT Heritage Markham has no objection from a heritage perspective to the proposed redevelopment of the subject site as outlined in the OPA/ZBA applications;

THAT final review of any forthcoming site plan control application, and any other development application required to approve the proposed development, be delegated to Heritage Section staff should the design be generally consistent with the conceptual drawings appended to this memo;

THAT heritage approval conditions associated with a future site plan control application include the entering into a Heritage Easement Agreement to ensure the long-term conservation of the heritage building, an interpretation component to make legible the history of the property, and a restoration plan to return the heritage building to a more historically-accurate condition;

AND THAT Heritage Section staff coordinate with Planning and Urban Design Staff as well as the Parks Department to ensure the prominence of the heritage building when designing and programming of the new public park.

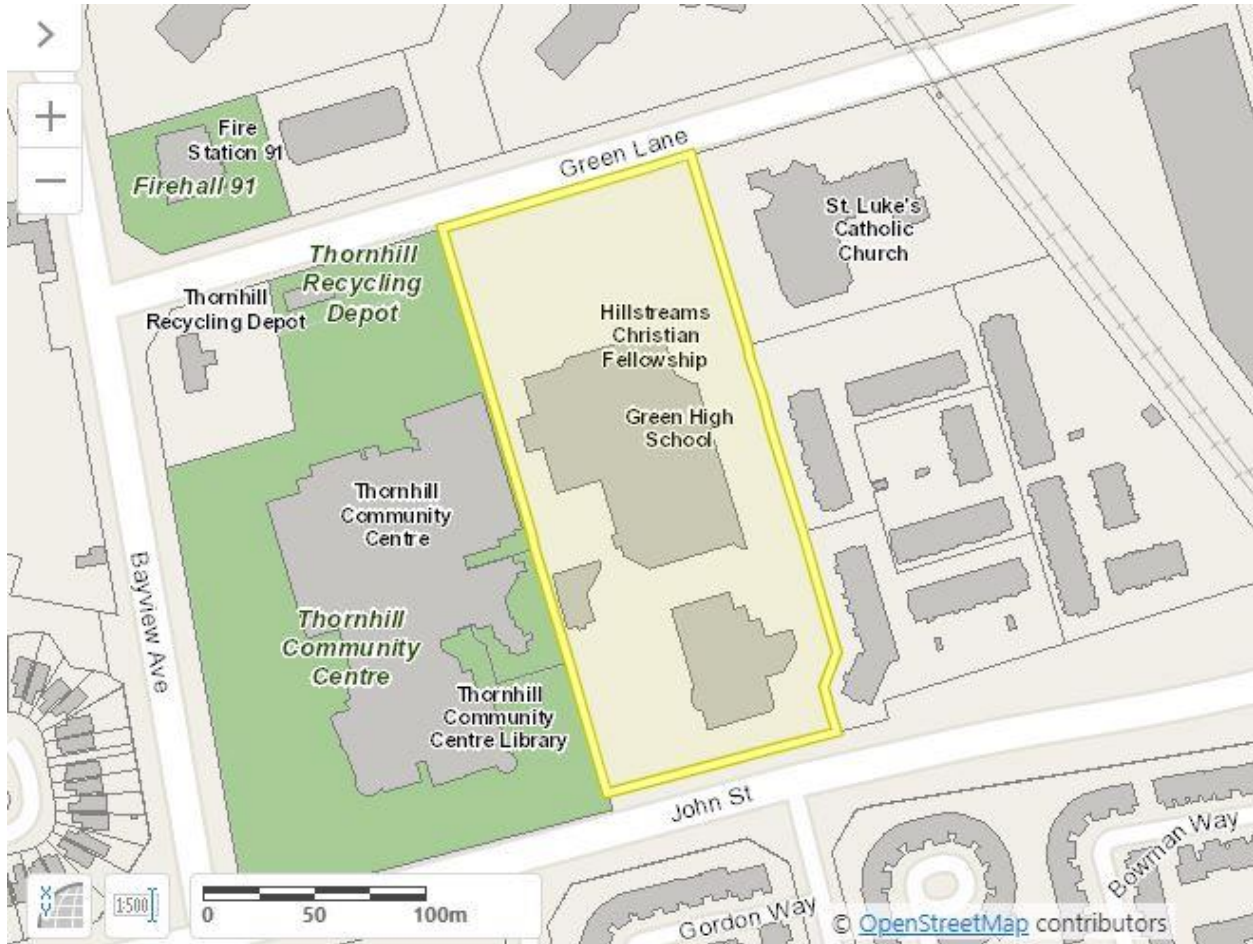
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#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix 'A'	Property Map and Photo of Subject Site
Appendix 'B'	Proposed Site Plan and Zoning Stats
Appendix 'C'	Massing Models and Drawings

## Appendix 'A'

288 John Street, Thornhill  
*Property Map*



*The subject site is outlined in yellow. The heritage building is the smallest of the outlined structures located along the western edge (left) of the above image (Source: City of Markham)*



288 John Street, Thornhill  
*Photos of Subject Property*



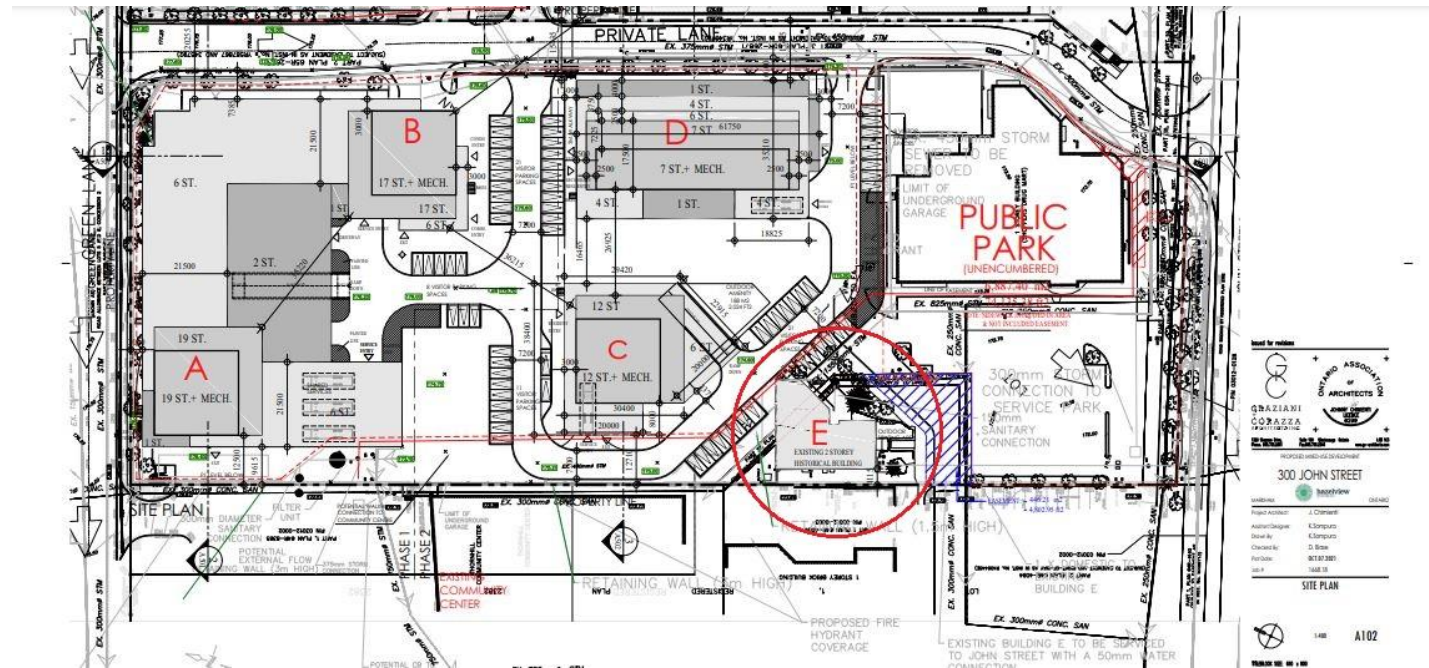
*Aerial image of the subject site with the heritage building circled in red (Source: Google)*



*The south (primary) elevation of the heritage building as seen from the surface parking lot fronting John Street (Source: Google)*

## Appendix 'B'

### 288 John Street, Thornhill Proposed Site Plan and Zoning Stats



TOTAL	
REQUIRED	PROVIDED
	BUILDING A+B 46,338 m <sup>2</sup> / 498,778 ft <sup>2</sup> BUILDING C 12,137 m <sup>2</sup> / 130,639 ft <sup>2</sup> BUILDING D 10,435 m <sup>2</sup> / 112,321 ft <sup>2</sup> HERITAGE BUILDING 483 m <sup>2</sup> / 5,200 ft <sup>2</sup> TOTAL GFA 69,393 m <sup>2</sup> / 746,938 ft <sup>2</sup>
	2.89 X (PARK + EASEMENT NOT INCLUDED) 2.21 X (PARK + EASEMENT INCLUDED)
INDOOR = 1,230 m <sup>2</sup> / 13,239 ft <sup>2</sup> OUTDOOR = 1,230 m <sup>2</sup> / 13,239 ft <sup>2</sup>	INDOOR = 1,793 m <sup>2</sup> / 19,300 ft <sup>2</sup> OUTDOOR = 1,487 m <sup>2</sup> / 16,005 ft <sup>2</sup>
TOTAL REQUIRED 2,332 m <sup>2</sup> / 25,500 ft <sup>2</sup>	TOTAL PROVIDED 3,280 m <sup>2</sup> / 35,305 ft <sup>2</sup>

Proposed site plan with the heritage building annotated as Building 'E' (circled in red) and proposed GFA per building (Source: Graziani & Corazza Architects Inc.)



## Appendix 'C'

### 288 John Street, Thornhill *Massing Models and Drawings*



*Massing models showing proposed built form. The heritage building is circled in red in the image above (Source: Graziani & Corazza Architects Inc.)*



*Massing model showing proposed built form (above) and a drawing of the west elevation of Building 'C' which is immediately to the north of the heritage building (below) (Source: Graziani & Corazza Architects Inc.)*