


Thornhill Conservation District Ratepayers Association


Thornhill Ontario
L3T 1Y3

February 23, 2023

Development Services Committee
City of Markham
Attn: City Clerk
Markham Civic Centre
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, Ontario, L3R 9W3

Re: Meeting Date: February 28th, 2023
Item 9.3: Minor Heritage Permit Application – Front Yard Landscape Alterations
145 John Street, Thornhill Heritage Conservation District (Ward 1)

Dear Committee Members

My name is David Jordon, I am the President of the Thornhill Conservation District Ratepayers Association. (TCDRA). TCDRA represents our members that are all located within the boundary of the Thornhill Conservation District. From time to time issues arise that pit a member against Heritage Staff and Heritage Committee over a purported infraction.

Currently we have a matter at 145 John Street. The owner/applicant made an improvement to their front yard by using interlock pavers on their driveway and areas beyond the driveway. Prior to the installation they had contacted the City and were told they did not need a permit but needed to retain 40% softscaping. The applicant did retain the 40% by softscaping along the north and west side and a portion of the east side of their front yard. This measure also provided a natural soft area for the existing mature trees on the property. Regardless of their efforts to comply with the City Bylaws and their efforts to advise Heritage Markham of their intentions the applicant found themselves in trouble with Heritage Markham as the District document does not support this kind of “hard” landscaping in the front yard. They applied for a Heritage Permit and were denied by Committee on February 8th. Committee has supported the Staff recommendation to remove the hardscaping and replace it with sod.

We as a community through TCDRA do NOT agree with the Heritage Committee and support the applicant and their home improvement for the following reasons;

1. Safety

John Street now carries 15000 cars a day. With the coming high density projects this will only get worse. Many homeowners have adjusted their landscaping to provide what is called a

hammerhead to turn their car around so they can exit their property driving forward, not in reverse. Others have installed circular driveways. In this case the applicant is in one of the worst locations on John Street and MUST, for safety reasons have this option. Heritage Staff has agreed with this. Heritage Committee has advised that this would likely be approved, but as it stands now the recommendation from Heritage Staff is to remove the hardscaping in areas other than the driveway and restore it with sod. If the hammerhead is approved the remaining hardscaped area will be negligible and it would serve little purpose to remove it and install sod that would not likely survive. (See site plan in package)

Car theft has also been prevalent on John Street. Gates have been approved for this exact reason and to prevent trespassers. In this case there is a well documented concern about the neighbour across the street at 146 John Street, (this home has a model city and model trains running the entire expanse of the yard which for some reason has not been opposed by Heritage Markham). There have also been car thefts literally across the street from the applicants home at 166 John Street

2. Precedent

Some of the complainants have mentioned that this would set a precedent. This is not the case as there are many existing properties including Class A heritage homes that have significant hardscaping. I have enclosed a few pictures so you can visualize what I am saying. The applicants application does NOT set a precedent. It actually is very similar to many other properties with the exception that in the applicants case they have adhered to the City Bylaw and provided the required softscaped areas to protect the existing mature trees that exist on their property. For some reason Heritage Staff and Committee seem to selectively oppose some installations and not oppose others.

3. Incomplete Heritage Staff Report

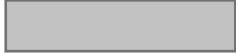
The Thornhill Heritage District is a hybrid district. The area was expanded in the mid 1980's and captured many homes that are now classified as Class C, (no heritage value). In fact the majority of the homes in the Thornhill Heritage District are Class C homes and as such our association believes that Heritage Staff must apply the district guidelines with this in mind. For the most part the Thornhill District Guidelines are intended to protect and preserve our Class A Heritage homes and to protect the "heritage flavour" of the defined district. Our association supports that wholeheartedly. Heritage Committee is made up of nine volunteers and three Councillors. None of the current volunteers live in the Thornhill Conservation District and they would, as such, depend heavily on the Heritage Staff Report. The one thing that was omitted from the Heritage Staff report was a simple picture of the applicants home from directly across the street. I have included it and you will see that in this case there is absolutely zero effect on the heritage area due to the hard scape application because it is not visible.

Our Ward Councillor, Keith Irish supports the applicant. We intend to speak at the Development Service Committee meeting on the 28th of February in support of the applicant and in

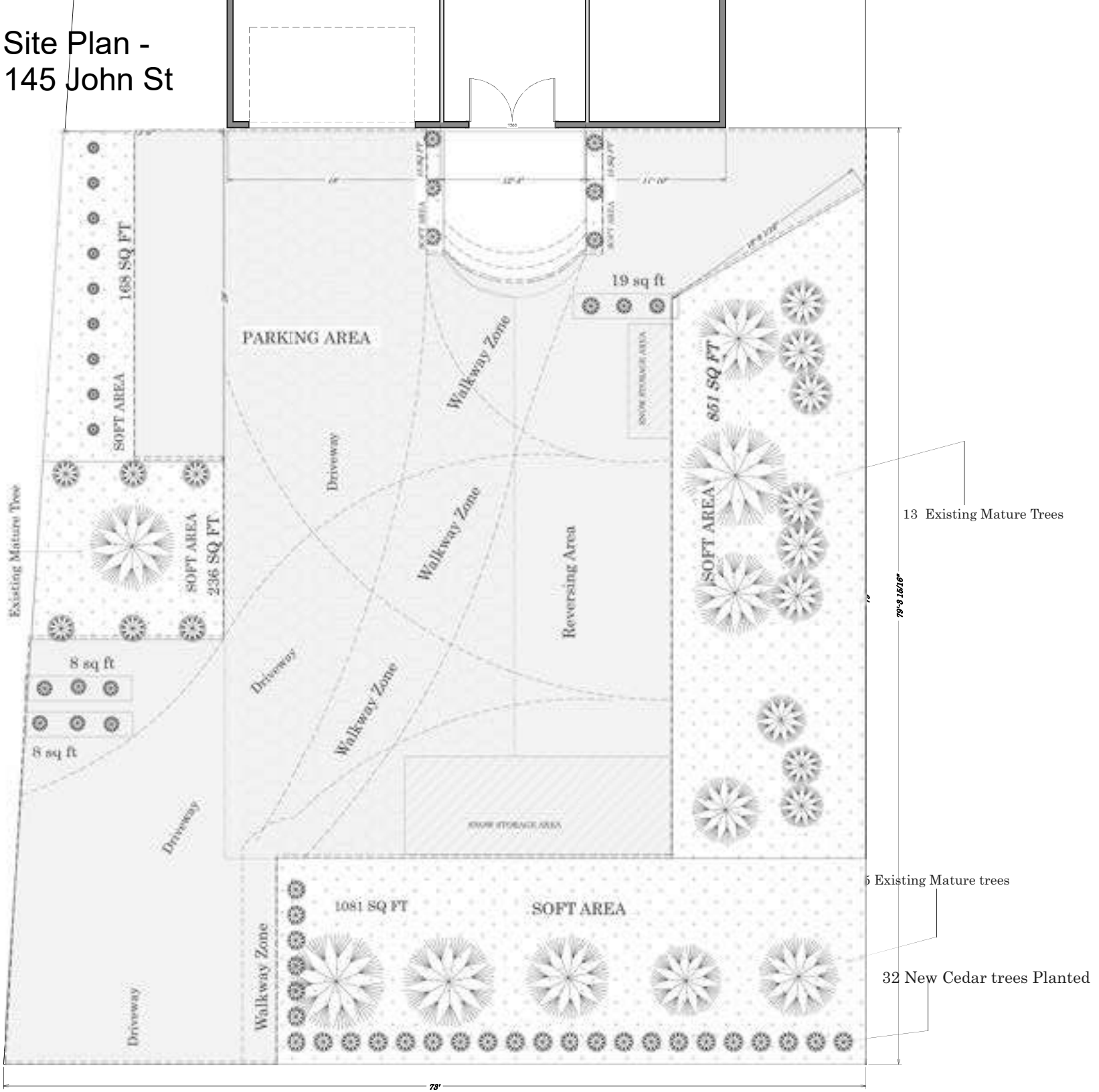
opposition to the Heritage Staff position and the decision made by Heritage Committee on February 8th.

Regards,

David Jordon
President
Thornhill Conservation District Ratepayers Association.



Site Plan - 145 John St





145 John St- Street view



148 John St class A



107 John St



49 John St