



REPORT TO GENERAL COMMITTEE

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Jim Baird, Commissioner of Development Services
Valerie Shuttleworth, Director, Planning & Urban Design

PREPARED BY: Regan Hutcheson, Manager, Heritage Planning

DATE OF MEETING: March 6, 2006

SUBJECT: Heritage District Newsletter Program

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report entitled "Heritage District Newsletter Program" dated March 6, 2006, be received;

That the Heritage District Newsletter Program be endorsed and funded through the Heritage Preservation Account (Reserve) (Account #087-2800-115) at a cost of \$1,200.00 per issue and not to exceed \$3,600.00 per year.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the report is to endorse the Heritage District Newsletter Program and to allocate funding from the Heritage Preservation Account (Reserve) for its production and distribution.

BACKGROUND:

Unionville Heritage Plan recommends public outreach programs

The Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan recommends that a number of actions be undertaken to better inform local property owners that they reside in a heritage district and to explain some of the concepts that the Town is trying to achieve in these areas. The Unionville Plan recommended the creation of a Heritage District Newsletter directed to those located in all three heritage districts (Unionville, Markham Village and Thornhill). Council endorsed this proposal in January 1998.

District newsletters were published in 1999 and 2000

The Heritage District Newsletter concept was initiated in 1999 as a pilot project. In 1999 and 2000, heritage district newsletters were distributed to property owners in the three heritage districts, and the Town received positive response from recipients. These newsletters were funded through the Heritage Preservation Account (Reserve).

There is a need for better communication with heritage district property owners.

Residents who reside in our heritage districts often inform staff that they are unaware of the district boundaries, the responsibilities associated with designation and of the objectives the Town wishes to achieve in these special areas of the community. This need has become further evident as staff receives feedback from the Thornhill Village Heritage Conservation District Plan

Review and through discussions with property owners on a regular basis. It is extremely important to keep in touch with these residents and to introduce vehicles to further enhance their recognition, understanding and appreciation of the heritage district concept.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:**An ongoing Heritage District Newsletter Program should be initiated**

To enhance communication with residents and owners in the heritage districts, a newsletter program has been developed. A Program Outline is attached as Appendix 'A'. Our plan is to release up to three newsletters each year coming out in the Winter, Spring and Fall. The first newsletter was released for Heritage Week (February 20-24th). A copy is attached.

Typical subject matter for "Heritage District News" will include an update of what is happening in the districts (i.e. studies, new developments, public works etc.), responsibilities of property owners (i.e. the use of Heritage Permits), and heritage related information (i.e. restoration advice, policies, financial assistance, etc.).

The newsletter will be produced in-house by Heritage Section staff.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

It is recommended that the newsletter program be funded through the Heritage Preservation Account (Reserve) (Account #087-2800-115). The funds in this account are comprised of monies collected from cashed Heritage Letters of Credit. Guidelines for the expenditures of these funds were approved by Council on February 26, 1991. The newsletter is an eligible project (as defined by the criteria for the Heritage Preservation Account which was formerly called the Heritage Reserve Fund) as it is a municipal initiative of a heritage communicative nature. The cost per issue of producing and mailing the newsletter is approximately \$1200.00.

ENGAGE 21ST CONSIDERATIONS:

This program aligns with the corporate goal of creating a 'Quality Community' through its contribution of recognizing, promoting and strengthening our heritage communities.


BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

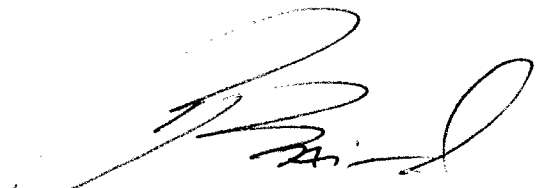
Corporate Communications would review the newsletter to ensure compliance with Town standards.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A' – Program Outline – Heritage District News

Appendix 'B' – Newsletter – Winter 2006 Issue



Valerie Shuttleworth, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Director of Planning & Urban Design

Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of Development Services

Program Outline - Heritage District News

Program:

A newsletter directed to residents and property owners in the Town's heritage conservation districts.

Purpose:

- To foster communication between the Town and those who live and work in heritage conservation districts
- To inform property owners in the district about district related news
- To remind readers of the special obligations that comes with being in a heritage district.

Name:

Heritage District News

Format:

Four pages, 11X17 folded into brochure.

Text and photos

Colour

Typical Content:

- Land use related news and developments in a district (i.e. a new building or façade improvement)
- Requirement for seeking approval of alterations (i.e. Heritage Permits, other approvals)
- Update on studies happening in the District (i.e. Yonge Street study, Heritage District studies)
- Examples of good restoration projects underway or completed
- Examples of good infill and new development
- Award winning projects in the Districts
- Restoration techniques and sources
- Information on financial assistance programs (Property tax program, façade and signage grant programs, Heritage loan program)
- Heritage Policy news and updates (changes to provincial policies, municipal policies)
- Public works happening in the District
- Information on related organization (SPOHT, historical societies, MVC)
- Heritage Markham and its members (local contacts)
- Explanation of Heritage Principles (preservation of original materials)

Content Preparation:

To be prepared in-house by the Heritage Section, Development Services Commission.

Content Review:

To be reviewed by Director of Planning and Urban Design and Corporate Communications

Distribution:

Property owners in the Town's heritage conservation districts

Method of Distribution:

Option A – Canada Post regular mail

or

Option B – Community Group delivery (exploring concept)

Funding:

Heritage Preservation Account (Reserve)

087 2800 115

Approval:

Heritage District Newsletter concept was approved by Council on January 27, 1998 as part of the Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan approval.

Heritage District Newsletter Pilot Program approved on January 26, 1999.



HERITAGE DISTRICT NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE TOWN OF MARKHAM

WINTER 2006 ISSUE

Welcome to Heritage District News

If you are receiving this publication, your property is located in one of the Town's three heritage conservation districts. This newsletter is designed to foster communication between the Town and those who live and work in Thornhill, Unionville and Markham Village. Our aim is to provide information that is both useful and interesting. We'd appreciate your comments, suggestions and questions regarding any of the topics in the newsletter. Contact us at: Heritage Section
Planning and Urban Design Department
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, ON L3R 9W3
Tel. 905-475-7529

Celebrate Heritage Day And Heritage Week

The third Monday in February is Heritage Day in Canada. In Markham, we are celebrating Heritage Week from February 19-25th.

Check out our display in the Civic Centre Great Hall and plan to attend the Heritage Markham Skating Party at the historic Cedarena outdoor rink on **Thursday, February 23 at 7:00 pm**. Entry and refreshments are free. Skate under the stars on natural ice among the trees.

Cedarena is located at 7373 Reesor Road (3km south of Hwy 7). Please confirm the status of the ice by calling 905-294-0038 on the day of the event.



Heritage Conservation Districts

Markham has three of the over 50 heritage conservation districts in the province—Thornhill, Unionville and Markham Village. These special areas were developed by earlier generations and are now protected through designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

The goal of heritage district protection is quite simple — to maintain and preserve those elements or characteristics of cultural heritage value and interest for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. The objectives are:

- **To preserve the heritage buildings.** These features are the heart of the district and are fragile gifts from past generations. They are not a renewable resource. Once lost, they are gone forever;
- **To ensure that original features on heritage buildings are preserved.** It is important to retain original or early building fabric such as windows, wall claddings, and architectural elements.
- **To ensure that new construction is complementary and respectful.** This may include an addition to a heritage building or a new building in the district.
- **To retain the historical characteristics and features in the public realm that make the area unique and special** These could be streetscapes, lot patterns, or vegetation for example.

To accomplish these objectives, each heritage areas has its own district plan with policies and design guidelines. Any alterations to properties in the district are to be reviewed by the Town prior to work being undertaken. To assist property owners, the Town has a municipal heritage advisory committee known as Heritage Markham and professional heritage staff in the Planning Department. Minor alterations require a heritage permit and are usually approved by staff while larger projects requiring a building permit or site plan approval are reviewed by Heritage Markham along with other Town departments.

Celebrate and respect your unique environment. Our cultural heritage helps us make sense of our rapidly changing world and tells us who we are, where we have come from and what we have accomplished.

We are all partners in preservation.

Heritage Permits Are Free

Property owners contemplating minor exterior changes to all structures within heritage conservation districts are required to obtain a Heritage Permit. A Heritage Permit is used where no other permits or planning agreements are required and only for alterations which affect the exterior appearance of a building.

There is no fee for a Heritage Permit. Applications that are in keeping with the guidelines of the Heritage District Plan can usually be approved on the same day they are submitted.

Heritage Permit application forms are available from the Development Services Counter at the Town or by e-mail. Please contact the Heritage Section.

Typical projects requiring a Heritage Permit include:

- structural repair that affects the external appearance
- new or different windows, doors, and cladding.

Financial Assistance

The Town of Markham offers a number of financial assistance programs for owners of heritage properties, including:

1. Heritage Property Tax Reduction Program
2. Heritage Loan Program
3. Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program
4. Commercial Signage Replacement Grant Program

Contact the Heritage Section for further information.

Most Often Asked Questions!

A heritage conservation district is a place of special character with buildings, streets and open spaces that have historical and architectural significance. The individual elements of a heritage district combine to distinguish the area from surrounding neighbourhoods.

People new to our heritage districts are sometimes unaware of the heritage designation of their property. The following are common questions when home or business owners ask about heritage district designation:

1. **Does heritage district designation lower my property value?** *This is one of the most commonly asked question. Scientific studies undertaken by the University of Waterloo in 1992 and 1998 showed that heritage designation maintained or enhanced property values. Heritage districts are places of special character that are desirable places to live and work guided by heritage policies. Property improvements increase the desirability of the area, increasing demand and therefore increasing property values and investment.*
2. **Does heritage district designation prohibit any changes to my home and property?** *The district plan guides change and provides for the*

preservation of heritage buildings and their important architectural features. The district plan contains guidelines to protect positive aspects of the area while allowing for change. This promotes good quality design to ensure that properties remain good neighbours.

3. **Does heritage district designation require me to restore the exterior of my home?** *Heritage district plans encourage good maintenance and provide guidelines for the restoration of heritage buildings and their architectural features, but they do not require that owners initiate restoration work. The district plan encourages the retention of heritage materials on significant buildings and discourages replacement of sound old material with new material.*



What's New In Thornhill

- Thornhill Yonge Street Study – this joint study with Vaughan will result in a streetscape master plan to enhance the physical quality and retail strength of the Yonge Street corridor within Historic Thornhill. The final report is being reviewed by Markham staff and a report to Development Services Committee is targeted for April 4th.
- Thornhill Village Heritage Conservation District Plan Review – Markham is updating the Plan's policies and guidelines to reflect current standards of practice and the feedback received from the local community. An issues identification report has been prepared and consultant is currently drafting new policies. Public consultation will continue in the spring.
- Prosecutions – staff has responded to a number of recent alterations to properties in the District which were undertaken without municipal approval by laying a charge under the Building Code Act and/or the Ontario Heritage Act.

What's New In Unionville

- Highway 7 and Main Street (South) Streetscape Study – The study of these two areas of the heritage district has resulted in comprehensive new streetscape designs and urban design guidelines sensitive to the heritage character of the area. The final report will be presented to Development Services Committee in the spring.

What's New In Markham Village

- Markham Village Building Classifications Revised – The Markham Village Plan (1991) examined existing buildings and classified each structure according to heritage value and compatibility with the heritage district character. These classifications assist staff and Heritage Markham in evaluating heritage permits and planning applications in the area. Four classes of buildings were identified in the district plan:

H Class Buildings – Properties individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act

A Class Buildings – Heritage buildings with historical, architectural and contextual value

B Class Buildings – Buildings compatible with the heritage character of the district

C Class Buildings – Buildings that do not contribute to the heritage character of the district.

The District Plan refers to the need to update building classifications as new information becomes available through further research. In January of this year, Council approved revised building classifications based on a two-year study by Heritage Section staff. Most buildings retained their 1991 classifications. 20% received revised classifications. Interested in finding out what your building classification is? Please contact the Heritage Section.

Enhanced Communications In All Districts

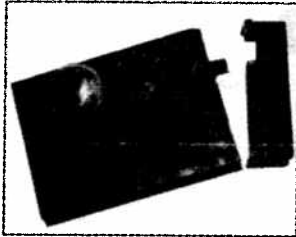
As part of the Town's strategy to further enhance communications with property owners in the heritage conservation districts, the following initiatives have been undertaken or are underway:

- Heritage District identification signage has been installed at key entry points of each district
- Heritage Street Name signage is unique and refers to the heritage district.
- The "Heritage District News" will be published regularly.
- The district designation by-law is being registered on title to each property in each district.
- The Heritage Conservation Section of the Town's website is being revamped and enhanced to be more user-friendly and useful.

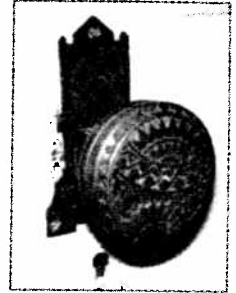
Markham Heritage Hardware

If you subscribe to the maxim of the late great 20th Century architect Mies van der Rohe that "God is in the Details", your heritage house isn't complete without the appropriate period hardware. If you're lucky, the original hardware is still in place quietly doing its job without anyone taking much notice. However, period hardware is definitely worth a second look, and worth replacing if it has gone missing.

The humble doorknob is hardware we use every day but rarely take time to appreciate. The locking mechanisms that have been used on Heritage homes of Markham evolved dramatically throughout the 19th century culminating in a golden age that ended around the First World War. Thumb latches, plate latches, Carpenter locks and rim locks are just a few of the devices you might find in a Heritage home in Markham. When one takes time to appreciate the innovative and exceptional craftsmanship of early hardware, it's easy to see why some enthusiasts refer to period hardware as jewellery for the home.



Period hardware adds to the character and value of a heritage home and modern manufacturers have responded to public demand by reproducing the more popular patterns of the past. However, reproductions rarely achieve the craftsmanship and diversity of design that is found in period examples. If you would like further information on heritage hardware and where you can find it, please contact us for a copy of our Heritage Hardware Information brochure.



Excellence in Heritage Conservation

Selected winners from Heritage Markham's 2005 Awards of Excellence

Markham Village restoration

This c.1894 Ontario Gothic house is located at 24 Peter Street in the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District. The owners recently completed exterior restoration of the original house and built a sympathetic new addition. Heritage features that were previously covered up or removed were restored and highlighted with a striking historical paint colour scheme. Christine Wood of Stouffville was the designer.



Edwardian elegance recreated in Unionville

The Gregory Design Group designed this new home at 8 Eckardt Avenue in old Unionville. This Edwardian style dwelling fits so comfortably into the streetscape that it is possible to mistake it for a building that has been standing for decades. The architecture is enhanced with a carefully selected brick finish, a wood shingled front gable and high quality wood windows.



**Congratulations to all the
2005 winners!**

Thornhill archivist and historian got an early start

Adam Birrell is the archivist for the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill's remarkable collection housed in the Thornhill Village Public Library. His interest in local history goes all the way back to his grade school days. Adam conducted his first walking tour of old Thornhill when he was in Grade 9, and continues to promote local history through his work in the Thornhill Archives, including a website that features exhibits on topics of local historical interest.

