Downtown Oakville Heritage Conservation District: Study Update

A lot has happened since the previous newsletter was circulated in February 2012. Work concluded on the preliminary draft of the Heritage Assessment Report in April, and the report was released for public review and comment on April 4. Through their research and analysis, the consultant team concluded that there was merit in pursuing the designation of a Heritage Conservation District but within a smaller portion of the original study area, focused on Lakeshore Road East. A map of the proposed district boundary is attached to this newsletter.

A focus group meeting was held on April 18, bringing together all the previous stakeholders that participated in the focus group meetings held earlier in the year. The purpose of the focus group meeting was to present the preliminary draft of the Heritage Assessment Report and to obtain input from the focus group members about the study. A public meeting was also held on April 25 to present the study findings and gain additional feedback from the public.

The input received at the focus group meeting and the public meeting was used by town staff and the consultant team to aid in the development of the final draft of the Heritage Assessment Report. The final draft included additional revisions to the text and the boundaries of the district to help address some concerns that were heard from the public. The final draft report was presented to the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee on May 30 with the committee supporting the recommendations of the Heritage Assessment Report.

Following the Heritage Oakville meeting, town staff prepared a staff report that was presented on June 11 at the Planning and Development Council meeting. The staff report provided a summary of the study progress to date, as well as the major findings of the Heritage Assessment Report. The Staff Report also provided commentary on some of the main concerns raised by the public throughout the study process and how they had been addressed to date. Following the comments and questions session, Town Council unanimously endorsed the proposed boundary for a Heritage Conservation District and directed staff to proceed to the next phase of the project, which is the creation of a district plan and guidelines.

Council also endorsed a continuing commitment to communication and consultation with the business community and other stakeholders so that they are kept involved in the process. The next phase of the project (currently underway) involves the preparation of the Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines that will be used to guide future change within the proposed district.

What’s next and where do we go from here?

The consultants are proceeding with work on the Draft Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines, and additional public consultation is planned as the project continues to move forward. Focus group meetings are planned for the fall, as well as an additional public meeting prior to the plan being finalized. As with the Heritage Assessment Report, there will be a review period during which written submissions will be invited.

The Heritage Conservation District Plan that the consultants are working on will serve as the detailed guidance provided to property owners and
tenants who wish to make modifications to their properties. The document will establish those types of changes requiring a heritage permit and those that do not, as well as provide guidance for the various types of potential new development within the proposed district. A draft of this document is expected to be released by the end of September for review and comment.

The draft heritage district plan and guidelines will be presented at the focus group meetings in October and November, which will likely involve the participants from all four interest groups joining together as one large group; and second, to a public meeting shortly afterwards with the community at large. Comments from the public will also be collected throughout October and considered by staff and the consultant team for revisions to the plan and guidelines.

The revised draft of the plan and guidelines document will be released in mid-November. It is anticipated that the public meeting will occur in early December with finalization of the document for Council consideration occurring in the new year.

Information and updates regarding the Downtown Oakville Heritage District Study can be found on the town website here:

http://www.oakville.ca/business/downtown-oakville-heritage-conservation-district-study.html

For further information please contact:

Susan Schappert  
Heritage Planner, District West/East Planning Services  
Town of Oakville  
t: 905-845-6601, ext. 3870 | f: 905-338-4414  
www.oakville.ca