

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - FEBRUARY 10, 2009

**REVISED HERITAGE PERMIT APPLICATION HP.2008.015.01
THORNHILL SENIORS RETIREMENT CONDOMINIUM
APPLICANT: THORNHILL VILLAGE PLAZA INC. AND M4 DEVELOPMENTS INC.
7584, 7586, 7588, 7592, 7596, 7598, 7600, 7602, 7610 and 7616 YONGE STREET,
14 ARNOLD STREET – WARD 5**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture and the Legal Department, recommends approval of the following recommendation by Heritage Vaughan Committee:

1. That the revised Heritage Permit Application HP 2008.015.01, accompanying Development Application DA.08.024 (Thornhill Seniors Retirement Condominium) dated 22 December 2008, BE REFUSED as it does not comply with the following legislative/policy provisions:
 - 1) The Provincial Policy Statement as it relates to the preservation of significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes (PPS Policies 2.6.1 & 2.6.3);
 - 2) Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as the proposal does not comply with the Thornhill HCD Plan and Design Guidelines as it relates to:
 - I. the preservation of the Thornhill village character
 - II. the significance of the property and new buildings as an important part of the general gateway to the Thornhill Village area
 - III. a massing and scale that is in keeping with the historical streetscape
 - IV. the preservation of views to and from the Robert Cox House and the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District
 - V. appropriate building design that is acceptable in this part of the historical streetscape of Yonge Street in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District
2. That Council require the following of the applicant:
 - a) A Letter of Credit to ensure the preservation of the Robert Cox House within the proposed Development Application using the total floor space of the building to be preserved as a guide for the calculation of the amount as per Cultural Services' requirements and procedures on this matter.
 - b) Add perspective views to accurately show the impact and appearance of the proposal and its effect on the historical Yonge Street streetscape within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District.
 - c) The applicant continue to work with Cultural Services and other City staff to ensure that the new development becomes more sympathetic to the existing streetscape context in terms of scale, massing, materials and the general character of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District.
3. That the appropriate City staff and external consultants be directed to attend the OMB in opposition to the Heritage Permit application HP.2008.015.01

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact associated with the approval of this item.

Communications Plan

A public notice with regard to Council's decision regarding this item will be published in the local newspaper as required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The property owners/agent will also be communicated any outcome resolution made by Council as a result of the review of this matter.

Purpose

The subject property is within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District and designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The purpose of this report is to allow Council to consider the revised Heritage Permit application HP 2008.015.01 as required under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Background - Analysis and Options

The subject property is located within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District as designated in 1988 under Section 42 of Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act (City of Vaughan By-law 306-88). This designation not only includes heritage buildings, but also contemporary buildings found within the district boundaries.

Any change to buildings or property within a heritage conservation district must be reviewed by Cultural Services staff and be forwarded to Heritage Vaughan for consideration and recommendations to Council. An approved Heritage Permit must be obtained by property owners for changes to their designated property prior to or in conjunction with obtaining all other City permits or approvals such as a Building Permit or a Site Plan application approval.

7616 Yonge Street (also known as the Robert Cox House) is within the subject property and, as such, included in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. A 1.5-storey, brick building built c.1884 in Victorian Gothic style, the Robert Cox House at 7616 Yonge Street is included in the City of Vaughan's Register of properties of cultural heritage value or interest (approved by Council in 2005) pursuant to Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Previous Heritage Permit Applications

The proponent has made previous proposals in earlier applications for Planning approvals relating to Development Application DA.08.024 and for Heritage approval through the relate Heritage Permit Application HP.2008.015. Vaughan Council refused a previous Heritage Permit application at its meeting on July 14, 2008. This refusal was a result of a number of deficiencies and lack of completeness identified by staff as it related to the Heritage Permit application. The proponent for the subject property has filed an appeal of the Heritage Permit application refusal to the Ontario Municipal Board in addition to an appeal of OPA 669 and the site specific OPA, Zoning Bylaw and Site Plan applications. The Hearing is scheduled to commence on March 4, 2009.

The 21 August 2008 submittal of Development Application DA.08.024 proposed a 12-storey seniors retirement condominium, 2-storey townhouses and 3-storey live/work units. The proposal also incorporated and restored the Robert Cox House at 7616 Yonge Street into the overall scheme. Cultural Services staff reviewed the 21 August 2008 application containing the site plan and elevation drawings for the proposed "Thornhill Seniors Retirement Condominium" prepared by Hariri Pontarini Architects (hereafter referred to as HPA) and provided commentary to the Development Planning Department.

The owner of the subject lands (Thornhill Village Plaza Inc. and M4 Developments Inc.) has submitted further revisions to Site Development Application DA.08.024 to the Development Planning Department illustrated by a set of plans which were circulated to Cultural Services for comment on 22 December 2008. The revised submission has been considered by Cultural Services and Heritage Vaughan as Revised Heritage Permit HP.208.015.01.

Analysis of the Revised Submission

Cultural Services staff has reviewed the 22 December 2008 revised submission for Development Application DA.08.024 containing site plan and elevation drawings for the proposed "Thornhill Seniors Retirement Condominium" prepared by Hariri Pontarini Architects (hereafter referred to as HPA) dated 15 Dec 2008 and the Cultural Heritage Resource Impact Assessment Report prepared by E.R.A. Architects Inc. dated 23 December 2008.

The 22 December 2008 revised submittal of Development Application DA.08.024 continues to propose a 12-storey seniors retirement condominium (referred to hereafter as the main building) and 3-storey live/work units to be built behind the Robert Cox House to be retained and restored at 7616 Yonge Street. A major change from the previous submission is that only a 2-storey single family dwelling is proposed to be built on the portion of the subject lands at 14 Arnold Street.

The revised scheme of the development proposal still does not comply with the Thornhill HCD Plan and Design Guidelines as it relates to:

- I. the preservation of the Thornhill village character
- II. the significance of the property and new buildings as an important part of the general gateway to the Thornhill Village area
- III. a massing and scale that is in keeping with the historical streetscape
- IV. the preservation of views to and from the Robert Cox House and the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District
- V. appropriate building design that is acceptable in this part of the historical streetscape of Yonge Street in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

Preservation of the Thornhill Village Character

The proposed development, and in particular the main building, is not in keeping with the heritage character of the former village of Thornhill. The proposal is neither sympathetic to the heritage streetscape of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District nor specifically to the scale of the Robert Cox House, the Thornhill Public School or the west side of the historical Yonge Street streetscape.

In general terms, the proposal does seek to preserve heritage attributes of the Robert Cox House but does not serve to protect the general integrity of the historical streetscape of Yonge Street. The Robert Cox House is only one individual element of the subject lands within the southern portion of the Thornhill HCD streetscape. The proposal does not conform to the goals and objectives of the Thornhill HCD Plan in that most of the new construction it presents (specifically the main building) is far too large to be considered as an appropriate neighbouring building to the Robert Cox House or to be considered "compatible with the human scale of the village" described in the Thornhill HCD Plan.

Section 3.2 Goals and Objectives of the Plan

In a general sense the overall goal of the District Plan will be to effect the protection and conservation of the heritage attributes of Thornhill.

1. To sensitively manage that portion of the former Village of Thornhill that remains as an identifiable entity on Yonge Street through the preservation of the existing historic buildings and the unique environmental features which give the Village its special character.

[...]

4. To recommend improvements to Yonge Street which will make the section of Yonge Street passing through Thornhill more compatible with the human scale of the Village.

Gateway to the Thornhill Village Area

The subject properties are located on the west side of Yonge Street just north of Arnold Avenue and are among the first series of buildings that appear as you enter the historic village core of Thornhill. The Thornhill Public School building at 7554 Yonge Street is actually the gateway building and as such is a significant landmark to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. The mass and scale of the Thornhill Public School façade is an important benchmark for any proposed construction to the north of Arnold Avenue.

Section 3.3 of the Thornhill HCD Design Guidelines (Recommendations for Commercial Areas) states that :

The school should be retained as the natural gateway to the District from the south as well as for its architectural significance.

Although the subject property of this proposal is not located at the corner of Arnold Avenue and Yonge Street, the proposed size, height and massing of its main building sets an inappropriate precedent for any new construction that may be proposed in the future for the corner properties.

Cultural Services feels that any building of more than three storeys (on the subject or at the corner) will not contribute in a positive manner to the existing and historical south gateway to the village of Thornhill. In fact, such development would have a negative impact as it would create a perceived wall or visual impediment that would serve to break the appropriate building height rhythm of the historical streetscape and to overpower any elements of historical or human scale at the street level.

The subject properties should not be allowed to exceed a building height which is appropriate for maintaining the historical and current Yonge Street streetscape scale that, at the south entry to the Thornhill village core, has become a character-defining element. Cultural Services recommends that the new building heights on Yonge Street be limited so that those elements which define its historic character and context are preserved.

It would, therefore, be advisable to preserve the way in which the Thornhill Public School building presents itself as the first marker of the District boundary. The overall effect of the proposed development would be that of adding the first of what would very likely become a large "wall" of tall structures at the northwest corner of Yonge Street at Arnold Avenue at the southern gateway the Thornhill village core. The proposed development does not serve to provide a proper transition from the existing historical streetscape setting to the higher density of an urban area to the south.

Massing and Scale

In order for the proposal to be considered appropriate, the scheme must also be consistent with the Design Guidelines of the Thornhill HCD Plan (By-law 306-88) especially in regard to the recommended building height limit of 2-3 storeys in By-law 306-88 and 5-storeys in the revised Thornhill HCD Plan approved by Council in 2007 (pending OMB approval). Cultural Services is of the opinion that it is essentially impossible to design a 12-storey building in such a way that successfully incorporates qualities of mid-19th Century structures found in villages in southern Ontario. There is no historical precedent from this era of Thornhill's (or Ontario's) architectural history that has a height and bulk anywhere near to the size and scale of the proposed main building of this particular development application.

The relative size and scale of the new construction should not only be compatible with its neighbouring buildings – not only those which abut the property but all of those buildings of heritage value or interest within this area of the District.

Cultural Services recommends that the proponent become more familiar with the following excerpts of the Thornhill HCD Study and Plan which deal with general goals as well as building scale and massing:

Section 3.4.1 Design Guidelines for Commercial Properties

Goals

The intent of the design guidelines in the commercial areas of Yonge Street is to:

- 1. Preserve 19th and early 20th century buildings and to assist in their preservation so that they can be maintained and form a viable part of the commercial area.*
- 2. Ensure that renovations and additions within the district are consistent with the architectural style of the existing structure that changes are compatible with the character of the village.*

Section 3.4.6 Building Design Guidelines

New buildings should be distinct but compatible in scale and bulk with neighbouring buildings. Additions shall be compatible with the existing structures. Matching the consistency of materials, scale and detail, is considered especially important in cases of older buildings and buildings of historical significance or architectural merit.

[...]

ii) Mass and Bulk

The mass and bulk of buildings shall be compatible with existing structures or neighbouring buildings. In general, two and three storey buildings are the most common heights depending on roof configuration.

Buildings should be seen in relation to the scale of the area and in particular, neighbouring buildings. Designs should be considered that relate cornice lines and roof forms to neighbouring buildings.

Views and Vistas

It is Culture staff's opinion that the size of the proposed main building with 12 storeys in height would have a huge negative impact on the skyline and streetscape view of the Thornhill HCD seen when approaching the area on Yonge Street and on Arnold Avenue. The preservation of the historical streetscape (free from new construction with over-sized building height and mass) has been identified in the Thornhill HCD Design Guidelines as an integral objective described in the Thornhill HCD (Section 3.2) as such:

To encourage the development of vacant lands and other redevelopment sites in a way which will enhance the character of Thornhill as established in the Heritage Conservation District Study.

The Canadian Federal Government, through Parks Canada, have long adhered to the “*Standards and Guidelines for the Preservation of Historic Places in Canada*”. These Standards and Guidelines are based on universally recognized architectural conservation principles inspired by international heritage conservation charters such as the Venice Charter, the Appleton Charter and the Washington Charter.

Of the Parks Canada general standards that are seen as the norm for the conservation of all types of heritage resources, the following are most applicable in the case of the proposed Thornhill Seniors Retirement Condominiums development:

[1] “ Conserve the heritage value of a historic place. Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter its intact or repairable character defining elements.”

[11] “ Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to a historic place or any related new construction. Make new work physically visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.”

In reference to the general standards above, the proposed new development does not fit in the context or character of a 19th century village core that the Thornhill HCD Plan and Design Guidelines aim to protect and enhance. Its scale or design has no precedent in Thornhill's village core and is not suitable to preserve the context of the historic Yonge Street streetscape.

The shallow front setback for the proposed main building as well as the placement of the main building so close to the Robert Cox House both contribute to the way in which the new construction blocks all view of the Robert Cox House when approaching from the south on Yonge Street. This view would be reduced even further when the tree plantings are in full leaf. Cultural Services feel that the front facade of the main building should be pulled back to preserve the historical front yard setback established by the heritage buildings to the north of the subject property.

Provincial Policy Statement 2005 of the Ontario Planning Act

The provisions of the Ontario Planning Act (Section 2 (d) and Section 3 (1) and (5a) require that municipalities shall have regard to matters of provincial interest (including the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest) and that municipal decisions shall be consistent with policy statements that have been approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on matters relating of provincial interest.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2005 of the Ontario Planning Act identifies two statements that provide municipalities with direction on land use planning matters and heritage properties:

PPS 2.6.1. states that “*significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.*” In the case of the proposed development, the scale and massing and architectural design of the proposal does not conserve the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. The Robert Cox House is far too overpowered by the proposed main building proposed for the site and the mid-19th to early 20th century village core of Thornhill identified as a significant aspect of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District will not be conserved.

Architectural Detailing - Analysis of the Plans and Elevations

1. The revised submittal continues to propose a 12-storey seniors retirement condominium (referred to hereafter as the main building) which has been designed with current contemporary styling with flat roofs and contemporary materials. The exterior walls finished predominantly in glass and brick. No attempt has been made to emulate appropriate building height according to the Thornhill HCD Plan nor has there been any attempt to emulate any elements of established heritage style precedents seen in the Thornhill HCD. As has already been stated, no precedent for this size of building exists in the Georgian, Regency, Victorian or Edwardian periods of architecture in Ontario.
2. The same current contemporary styling and materials (flat roof and exterior walls finished predominantly in glass and brick) of the main building is also used in the 3-storey live/work units to be built behind the Robert Cox House at 7616 Yonge Street. Even though this building is of a size and scale that could reflect area heritage styles and materials, no attempt has been made to emulate any established heritage style precedent seen in the Thornhill HCD.

3. Even though the live/work units are well within the height limitations of the Thornhill HCD, the flat roof design does not emulate any elements of established heritage style precedents seen in the Thornhill HCD.
4. A major change from the previous submission is that only a 2-storey single family dwelling would be built on the portion of the subject lands at 14 Arnold Street. This portion of the subject lands lies outside but adjacent to the Thornhill HCD. The proposed dwelling does have an appropriate size, height and scale for new construction that is adjacent to the Thornhill HCD but the building does need to have a more consistent approach in massing and style in such a way that emulates more accurately the established heritage style precedents seen in the Thornhill HCD.
5. The proposal incorporates and restores the Robert Cox House at 7616 Yonge Street into the overall scheme. It is assumed by Cultural Services (but not described by the applicant in the proposal) that the Robert Cox House will be re-located temporarily to allow for the excavation and construction of the underground parking area. Cultural Services is of the opinion that it is difficult to justify this re-location for underground parking as it poses major risks to the structural integrity of the Robert Cox House and the move would also involve the destruction of the original stone building foundation (a heritage attribute).
6. HPA elevations now show a 3-storey live/work unit building proposed behind the Robert Cox House at 7616 Yonge Street. The 3-storey building has not been designed in a way that is consistent with the Design Guidelines of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan.

iii) Building Character

The intent of new buildings, additions to older buildings, or renovations is that they are compatible with the scale and character of the village. It is not the intent of these guidelines to dictate architectural style. Architectural integrity and original architecture specifically designed for the site shall be encouraged. Traditional styles and materials are considered to be appropriate.

7. HPA site plan shows the Cox House with a similar front yard setback as that of the heritage buildings to the north creating a consistent street frontage rhythm which is broken by the front of the new construction. The relocation to align the Robert Cox House with the adjacent property to the north is unnecessary as the Cox House is already well situated in relation to the setbacks of the historical streetscape being preserved in the district.
8. HPA should provide a front setback for the new construction that is consistent with the existing historical streetscape and the current (original) location of the Cox House.
9. Thornhill HCD Design Guidelines identify a maximum 5-storey height with the front podium three storeys and top 2-storeys stepped back with 45 degree angular plane and therefore the proposed development does not conform to this requirement.
10. HPA front elevation at ground floor showed a continuous architectural language over most of the front ground floor - this should be changed to have a cumulative effect with more variation to suggest multiple building fronts as seen in many early 20th Century streetscapes. Emphasis should be placed on creating actual store entrances (or at least the appearance of which) within the Yonge Street streetscape.

Demolition of Non-Heritage Buildings within the Proposed Development

Development Application DA.08.024 does not allow for the retention of the existing buildings within the property with the following addresses: 7584, 7586, 7588, 7592, 7596, 7598, 7600, 7602, 7610 Yonge Street and 14 Arnold Avenue. The application also proposes to demolish the existing west portion of the Robert Cox House at 7616 Yonge Street. The owner is required to go through the Heritage Review process with Cultural Services and obtain from Heritage Vaughan an approved *Heritage Permit for Demolition* for all buildings on the subject property that are within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. The proposed demolition of 14 Arnold Avenue, just west of the Thornhill HCD border, would only require a *Heritage Clearance Approval* from Cultural Services staff.

Partial Demolition and Re-Location of the Robert Cox House

The application proposes to demolish the existing west portion of the Robert Cox House at 7616 Yonge Street and to temporarily re-locate the Cox House from its current location in order to allow the excavation and construction of the proposed underground parking. The owner is required to provide a Conservation Plan that will describe in detail all proposed alterations to the Cox House. The owner must also go through the Heritage Review process with Cultural Services and obtain from Heritage Vaughan an approved *Heritage Permit for Demolition* for the proposed partial demolition of the Cox House and also obtain from Heritage Vaughan an approved *Heritage Permit* for the proposed re-location of the Cox House.

Further Requirements

Furthermore, Cultural Services recommend that the following be required of the applicant:

- A Letter of Credit to ensure the preservation of the Robert Cox House within the proposed Development Application using the total floor space of the building to be preserved as a guide for the calculation of the amount as per Cultural Services' requirements and procedures on this matter.
- Revised site plan and elevations and add perspective views to accurately show the impact and appearance of the proposal and its effect on the Robert Cox House and the historical streetscape within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District.
- Continue to work with Cultural Services and other City staff to ensure that the new development becomes more sympathetic to the existing streetscape context in terms of scale, massing, materials and the general character of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District.

Review of Cultural Heritage Resource Impact Assessment (December 2008)

In response to the conclusion made in the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared for the applicant by E.R.A. Architects Inc. (dated 23 December 2008 and received by Cultural Services 14 January 2009), Cultural Services makes the following comments.

- 1) While the proposed redevelopment is an opportunity to retain and rehabilitate the Robert Cox House this should not be done in such a way that the balance of the proposal compromises either the heritage attributes of the Cox House or the Thornhill HCD in general. ERA Architects do not list the original stone foundation as a heritage attribute and Cultural Services feels that this feature should be included as such and the plan should seek to preserve it. There is not sufficient justification given in the report stating the reasons for relocating the house. Moving the house would result in the loss of its original foundation which should be listed as a heritage attribute. The relatively small change in location does not justify the loss of a heritage attribute.

- 2) The existing front yard setback of the Cox House is the original and does not need to be re-aligned with the historical buildings to the north. In fact, that difference in setback is appropriate to keep and protect as an intrinsic historic characteristic of the Thornhill village character.
- 3) The development proposes to promote “positive, quality commercial, retail, and residential development” and in doing so, contributing to the commerce and vitality of the area but at the expense of the physical integrity of the Heritage Conservation District. The jarring introduction of a twelve-storey structure in plain view from Yonge Street and Arnold Avenue would throw up a wall which can only serve to divide the established skyline and profile of the historical streetscape.
- 4) Although the only front façade wall height that would be appreciated from street level would be the 5-storey podium, the balance of the design from any other vantage point presents a towering mass that dominates not only the immediate area but the entire south portion of the district. There is no precedent for buildings of this height in a Heritage District within the City of Vaughan.
- 5) The fact that the podium steps down from 5 to 3-storeys next to the Cox House does not successfully mitigate or erase the imposing impact of the 12-storey structure to the existing and historical streetscape massing and scale of this portion of Yonge Street and the entire length of Yonge Street within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. For this reason it is not clear how the HIA can claim that “the highest building elements remain compatible and appropriate” in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. (HIA, page 50)
- 6) Cultural Services does not support the concept of increasing building height in lock-step with the widening of the Yonge Street right-of-way in that it would become increasingly less compatible with the human scale of the Village concept.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture.

This report does not recommend a change from the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated

Regional Implications

None

Conclusion

The revised Heritage Permit is recommended to be refused as it does not comply with the policy provisions under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and in its relation to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan and Design Guidelines. The proposal contradicts the Provincial Policy Statement 2005 of the Ontario Planning Act as it relates to the preservation of significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes (PPS Policies 2.6.1 & 2.6.3) and architectural preservation standards nationally instituted by Parks Canada. Lastly, it is

recommended that the massing, form, scale, and architectural design of the new building be redesigned to reflect a contributing and historically appropriate precedent within the Heritage Conservation District's village core and a building mass and scale for the new building that is more compatible with the historic Robert Cox House and a 19th century village core.

Attachments

1. Elevation Drawings and Site Plan, Heritage Impact Assessment.

Report Prepared By

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Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services

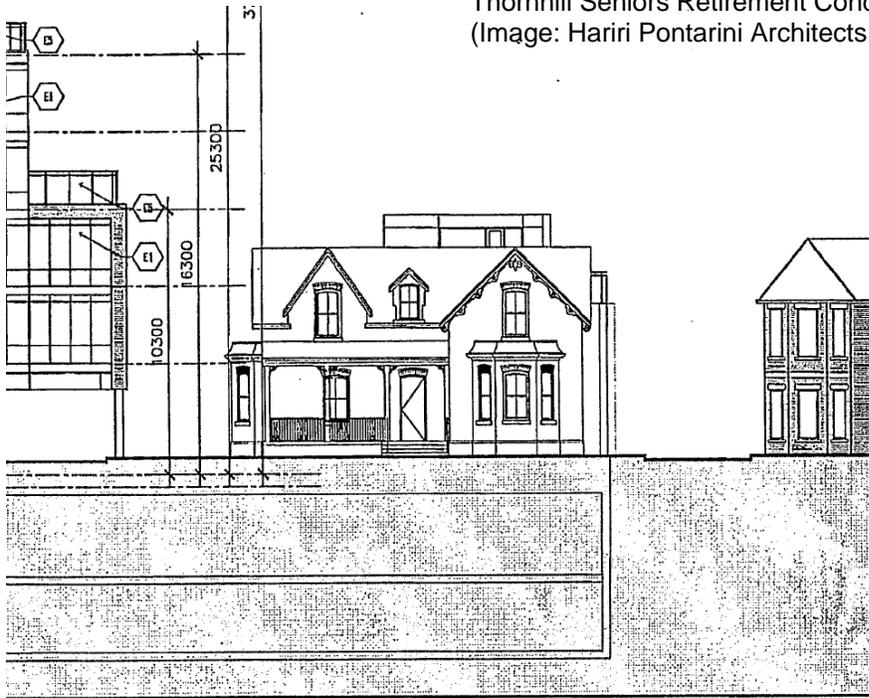
ATTACHMENT 1



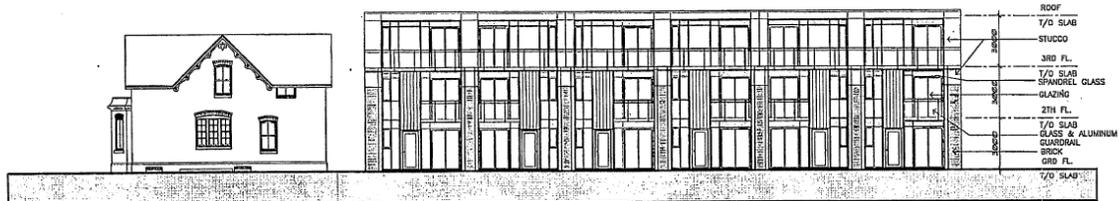
View of subject property (Robert Cox House) from Yonge Street



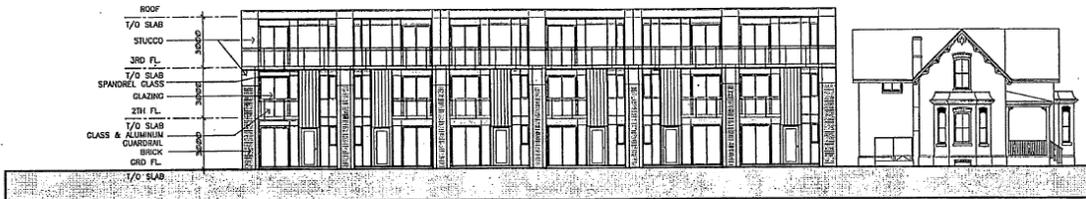
Proposed Elevations of Robert Cox House and Live/Work Units for Thornhill Seniors Retirement Condominium
(Image: Hariri Pontarini Architects Inc.)



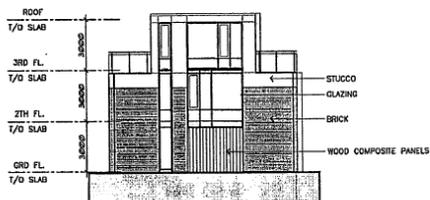
2 EAST ELEVATION
A12 SCALE 1:200



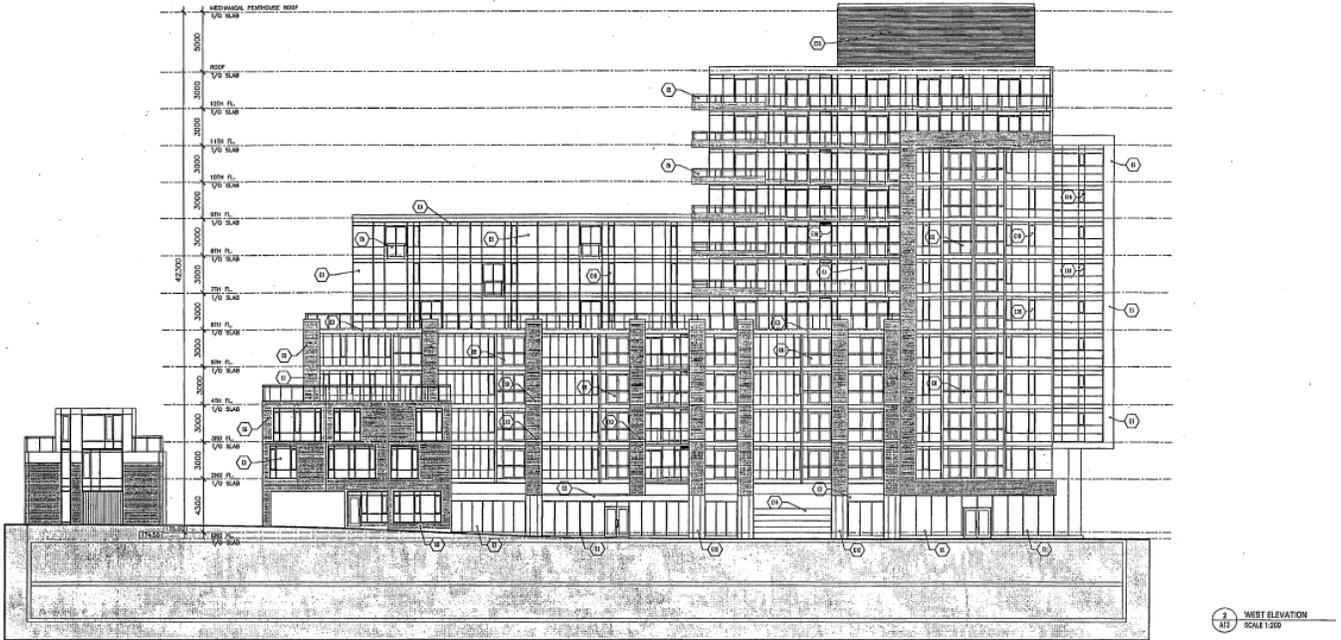
2 LIVE-WORK NORTH ELEVATION
A13A SCALE 1:200



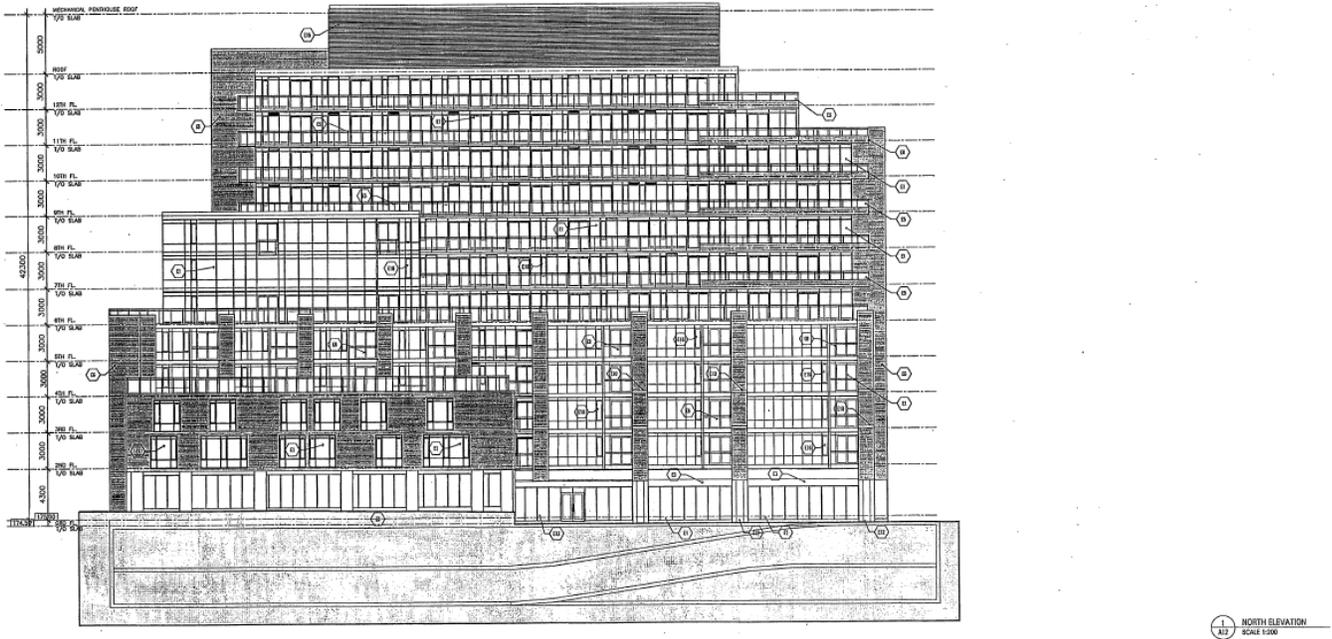
1 LIVE-WORK SOUTH ELEVATION
A13A SCALE 1:200



3 LIVE-WORK SOUTH ELEVATION
A13A SCALE 1:200



Proposed Rear (West) Elevation for Thornhill Seniors Retirement Condominium
 (Image: Hariri Pontarini Architects Inc.)



Proposed North Elevation of Main Building for Thornhill Seniors Retirement Condominium
 (Image: Hariri Pontarini Architects Inc.)

7616 YONGE STREET
CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
DECEMBER 23rd 2008



R O B E R T C O X H O U S E

PREPARED FOR:

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Cultural Heritage Resource Impact Assessment (CHRIA) is to provide information on the heritage resources that may be affected by the proposed Thornhill Seniors Retirement Residence and rehabilitation project for the property at 7600-7616 Yonge Street and to establish an overall approach to the conservation of the property's heritage attributes.

This CHRIA is being submitted as part of the Site Plan Application (SPA) for 7600-7616 Yonge Street and should be read in respect to drawings by Hariri Pontarini Architects dated August 2008.

Currently, the property contains a 1.5 storey Gothic Revival house built in 1884. The Robert Cox House, located along Yonge Street within the Thornhill-Vaughan Heritage Conservation District, and designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The building is also listed in the City of Vaughan's inventory of heritage properties and within the area of the Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District By-law 306-88

The applicant for this project is appealing the proposed Thornhill-Vaughan Heritage Conservation District Plan 2007. The application for 7600-7616 Yonge Street proposes the construction of a retirement condominium with ground floor retail next to the listed heritage building. The application also proposes 6 live-work units to the rear of the heritage building. This report confirms that the proposed development respects the existing heritage attributes and conserves the cultural significance of this and neighboring heritage properties.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Thornhill Village Plaza Inc. and M4 Developments Inc. has retained Hariri Pontarini Architects as the Architect and ERA Architects Inc. as the Heritage Consultant for the proposed Thornhill Seniors Retirement Residence development at 7600-7616 Yonge Street.

ERA Architects Inc. has prepared this CHRIAR with respect to: the City of Vaughan's *Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Resource Impact Assessment Reports* (see appendices); the Vaughan Official Plan; the Province of Ontario's *2005 Provincial Policy Statement* for the regulation of development and use of land; and Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

2.1 PROPERTY LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

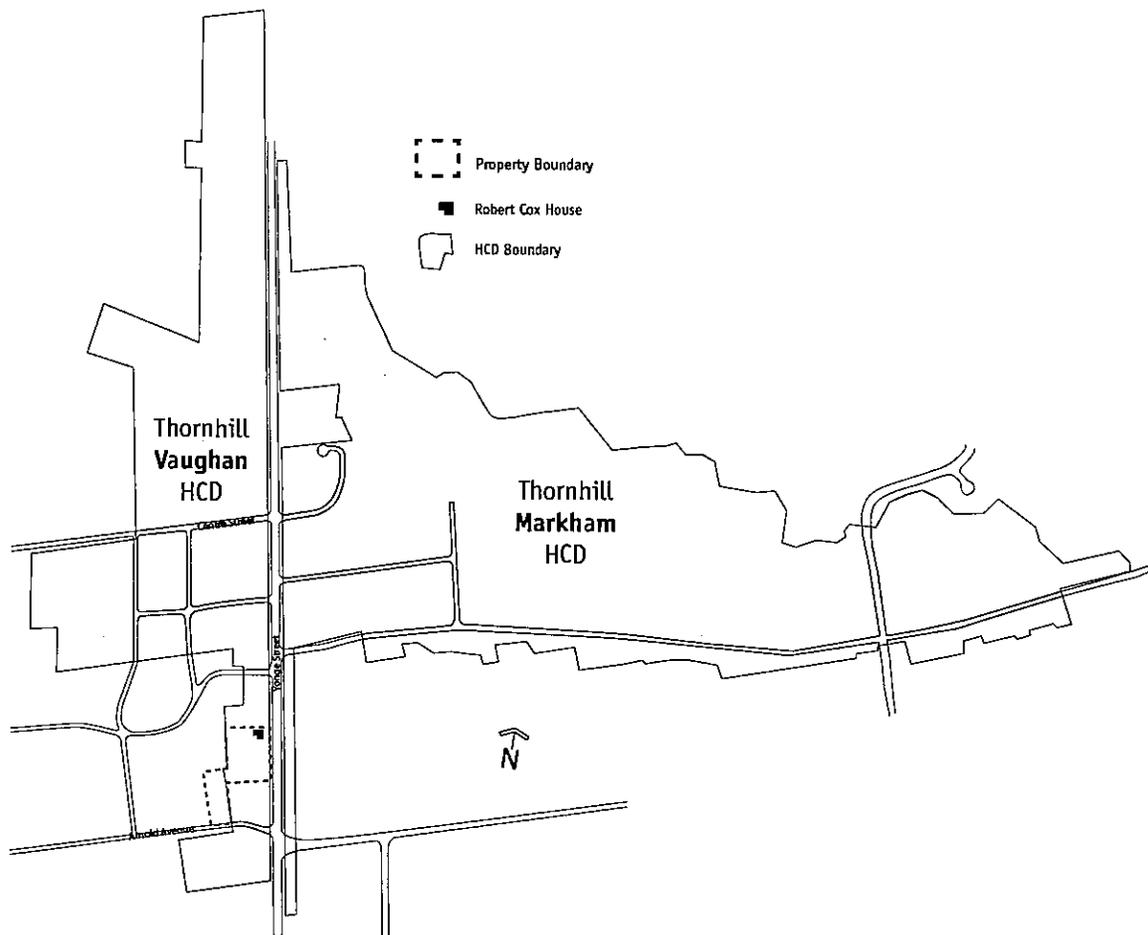


Diagram of Thornhill showing location of property in relation to Heritage Conservation Districts.

The property is located on Yonge Street in part of the City of Vaughan known as Thornhill. The nearest major intersection is at Yonge Street and Centre Street. The property contains a 1.5-storey heritage building known as the Robert Cox House with a single storey addition to the rear. In addition the property contains a single storey commercial building behind the Cox House to the west, and a single storey commercial mall along the Yonge Street edge of the site. The site includes a residential lot with a 1-storey bungalow on Arnold Avenue.

2.1.1 PHYSICAL CHARACTER

The 1984 Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation Study identifies factors which serve to define the character of the study area thereof being the presence of pre-20th Century buildings, mixed-use nature of the study area and a varied pattern of development in terms of architectural style, building setbacks, fences, sidewalk locations and planting. It goes on to specifically identify the streetscape as important, specifically the unimproved nature of many of the streets (lack of drainage ditches, curbs and paving). There is a long and substantial discussion of the importance of landscape elements to the character of the village. Having identified these elements generally in terms of character, the study has this to say about Yonge Street:

The development of Yonge Street has not been kind to the general character of the village. Yonge Street has been continuously improved since it was laid out by John Graves Simcoe. Modern Traffic planning by the Minister of Transportation and Communications (MTC) has designed the road as a major provincial highway. This has led to a road design that includes a wide pavement with lay-by lanes, acceleration and deceleration lanes, and no parking, thereby promoting high speed traffic. The role of Yonge Street as the "Main Street" of the village, has been seriously eroded, and the pedestrian scale of such a main street has been replaced by a highway commercial aspect which is often characteristic of newer suburban neighborhoods (section 2.5).

In section 2.9 the study notes, in relation to Yonge Street that, "The street appearance is characterized by large expanses of asphalt and concrete, a lack of mature trees, and overhead power lines".

Interestingly, notwithstanding the above and the importance attached by the study to the streetscape, the study concludes that "...Thornhill is still a recognizable entity with a unique village character within the boundaries of this study area".

2.2 PRESENT OWNER CONTACT

Thornhill Village Plaza Inc. & M4 Developments Inc.
7610 Yonge Street,
Thornhill ON L4J 1V9

2.3 EXISTING HERITAGE RECOGNITION

The Cox House holds the following heritage recognitions:

- Listed on the City of Vaughan's inventory of heritage properties,
- Within an area designated under the Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District By-law 306-88.

2.3.1 HERITAGE LISTING

The following description was prepared by Cultural Services at the City of Vaughan in reference to this property's heritage listing.

7616 Yonge Street is a good example of the vernacular Gothic style typical of a single family home in the mid to late Victorian era (roughly 1860-1900). This dwelling was built circa 1884. It has retained almost all of its original exterior features and appears to be in reasonably sound structural condition.

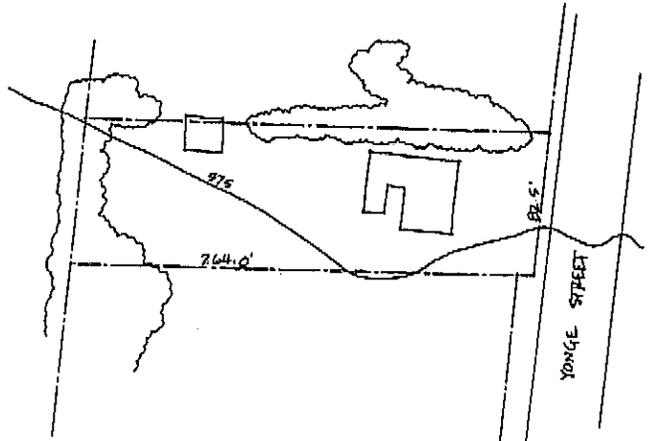
The Robert Cox House was built in the vernacular Gothic style popular after 1870. This detached, 1.5 storey residence has a steep pitch side gable main roof with a projecting gable on the front giving the building footprint an L [sic]* plan. The main roof and porch roof are now clad in asphalt shingles. The front and side gables still have the decorative gingerbread bargeboards with hanging quatrefoils and an inverted fleur-de-lis at the peak. The house is brick construction which has been painted. The main entrance door is at the front centre. A single storey, flat mansard roof bay window is at front right and on the south gable wall. Both bay window roofs are bellcast and are clad in metal. All windows visible from the street have had the sashes replaced with modern units. The 2-storey front porch is now enclosed and has a shed roof that was attached to the ridge of the main gable roof.

*The building is inaccurately described. Upon further investigation, the Cox House is actually a T-shaped plan with an enclosed porch. The building's footprint show below includes the porch area.

LOCATION	NO. 7616 YONGE STREET	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	ONTARIO GOTHIC (MODERN)
DESCRIPTION		CONSTRUCTION DATE	BUILT 1884
No. of Floors	TWO	REMARKS	OTHER DESIGNATION
Roof Type	GABLE - WITH LARGE BORMER		PARKING IN FRONT
Exterior Cladding	BRICK (PAINTED)		PRESENTLY USED FOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICES



A modified Ontario Gothic brick house c 1884 with decorated barge board remaining. It was built in 1884 by Robert Cox, a retired farmer from German Mills. Recorded by the Ontario Inventory of Historic Buildings. Former home of Ellen Neil, co-founder of Black Creek Pioneer Village and Doris Fitzgerald, writer and historian.



7616 YONGE STREET

Robert Cox House, extract from the 1984 TVHCD. (Source: Philip H. Carter)

2.3.2 THORNHILL VAUGHAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY 1984

The property of 7616 Yonge Street is located within Thornhill Vaughan area and within an area designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act by By-Law 306-88. The intent of the 1984 Study and Plan as set out therein was to guide the Town of Vaughan and property owners in the District in the preservation of important historical, architectural, and landscape elements of Old Thornhill.

The Study describes the settlement of the Village of Thornhill. This began with the construction of Yonge Street and the presence of the Don River, which established the economic basis for a new community at the end of the 18th century. It continued to thrive as an agricultural hamlet north of Toronto throughout the 19th century. The Study identifies the role economic, government and policy changes had in the development of the village. These changes include the introduction of the Toronto Radial Railway in 1896 introducing Thornhill to Toronto's commuter shed and the post-war suburban growth of the 20th century.

2.3.2.1 PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE STUDY AREA

The Study indicates the following factors that contribute to a coherent ambience which distinguishes the study area from surrounding suburban developments:

- the presence of pre-20th century buildings and their sense of history;
- the mixed-use nature of the area;
- rustic streetscapes (no sidewalks, ditches and gravel);
- broad range of architectural styles;
- a complete community (retail, commercial, residential, institutional, public); and,
- the varied pattern of development in terms of architectural style, siting, setbacks, fences, sidewalk locations, and planting.

The Study describes the broad range of architectural styles, additions and alterations to buildings as adding to the maturity and richness of the area and its landscape. It also indicates that the area's streetscape is as important a heritage artifact as the heritage buildings themselves, contributing to a landscape that is unique to the village.

2.3.2.2 CHARACTER OF YONGE STREET

Notwithstanding the above description of a coherent ambience for the area, the Study's description of the character of Yonge Street provides a different picture. The clearest description outlined in Section 2.9, "The street appearance is characterized by large expanses of asphalt and concrete, a lack of mature trees, overhead power lines".

Yonge Street is described by the Study as the Village's "Main Street" providing for the day-to-day retail and commercial needs of local residents. The Study notes that the continuous improvement of Yonge since the time it was laid has not been kind to the character of the Village. It indicates modern traffic planning including the designation of the road as



Yonge Street Looking South from the Thornhill Golf and Country Club



Looking south-east across Yonge Street

a major provincial highway has replaced the pedestrian scale of the main street for suburban commercial type development and activity. The character of Yonge Street differs significantly from other parts of the study area.

The Study further describes the character of Yonge Street as distinctly commercial and institutionally oriented with several vacant lots or large lots with small buildings. There are some residences still fronting on Yonge Street, mostly concentrated north of Centre Street.

Two images of Yonge Street are provided in Section 2.5 *General Physical Character* and 2.7 *Inventory of Public Buildings, Open Spaces and Natural Features* of the Study give some indication of its current appearance.

2.3.2.3 DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

As part of this Study a Heritage Conservation District Plan was prepared. It is worth noting that this was long before the amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act which provide a specific legal status for heritage conservation district plans. This plan included design guidelines and policies from the City's perspective but does not have any legislative underpinning to provide for its implementation.

The Plan provides recommendations (section 3.3) for four different commercial areas within the District. For example, *Commercial Area 1* had been characterized as a "village shopping area" and intended to "re-establish its position as the centre of the Village of Thornhill".

With respect to most southern *Commercial Area 3*, which includes the Cox House, the Plan states:

This area presently has a mixture of commercial activities. Many of the older residential structures are now used for commercial professional office purposes. There is also a small strip mall, an automobile dealership, a service station and the Thornhill Public School.

The Plan offered specific site recommendations for a number of key commercial developments (section 3.4.3) but did not include the Cox House and the "strip mall" beyond a description of the present commercial activities.

In this respect, new development and infill is encouraged to meet the goals of section 3.4.1 *Design Guidelines for Commercial Properties* in the areas along Yonge Street. These guidelines are brief and somewhat ambiguous as described in this section "New buildings

should be distinct but compatible in scale and bulk with neighboring buildings” without addressing either the described condition of Yonge Street or the inappropriate space and bulk condition between the existing building and the highway.



2.3.3 THORNHILL VAUGHAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PLAN 2007

In 2007 a review of the original 1984 Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District (1984 TVHCD) was undertaken.

The Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District Plan 2007, was adapted by Vaughan Council but has been appealed by Thornhill Village Plaza Inc. and M4 Development Inc.

2.3.3.1 CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT

The Plan references back to discussion of the area's heritage character and attributes provided in the 1984 District Study. Accordingly, this previous discussion on character continues to apply. The 2007 Plan includes an inventory of heritage buildings and new district policies and guidelines that respond to the area's changing policy context including policies such as the 2005 Thornhill Yonge Street Study and the amended Ontario Heritage Act. It is to be read in conjunction with the District Plan Building Inventory and the original 1984 Study document.

The following description of the Cox House was included in the 2007 District Plan Building Inventory:

Location:	7616 Yonge Street, Thornhill
Year Built:	1884
Style:	Ontario Gothic Vernacular, altered
Classification:	Inventoried (Vaughan)
Cladding:	Brick (painted)
Roof:	Ell [sic]* gable with large dormer
Windows:	Mixed, mostly replacements

*The building is inaccurately described. Upon further investigation, the Cox House is actually a T-shaped plan with an enclosed porch.

Originally a substantial archetypal Ontario Gothic House. Front gable element on the right. One-storey angled bay windows at gable ends at front and right side. Gables have distinctive decorative bargeboard with intermittent roundels with dogwood blossom piercings, and pendant fleur-de-lis at the gable tops. A verandah with an enclosed sun-porch dormer above, apparently dating from the early 20th century, filled the ell. The lower verandah level has since been enclosed and fitted with angle bay windows on the front façade. Trimmed evergreen shrubs at front foundation. Large modern addition at rear. Paved parking areas to the front, left and rear. An ell-shaped one storey office building has been constructed fairly recently at the right rear of the very deep lot.

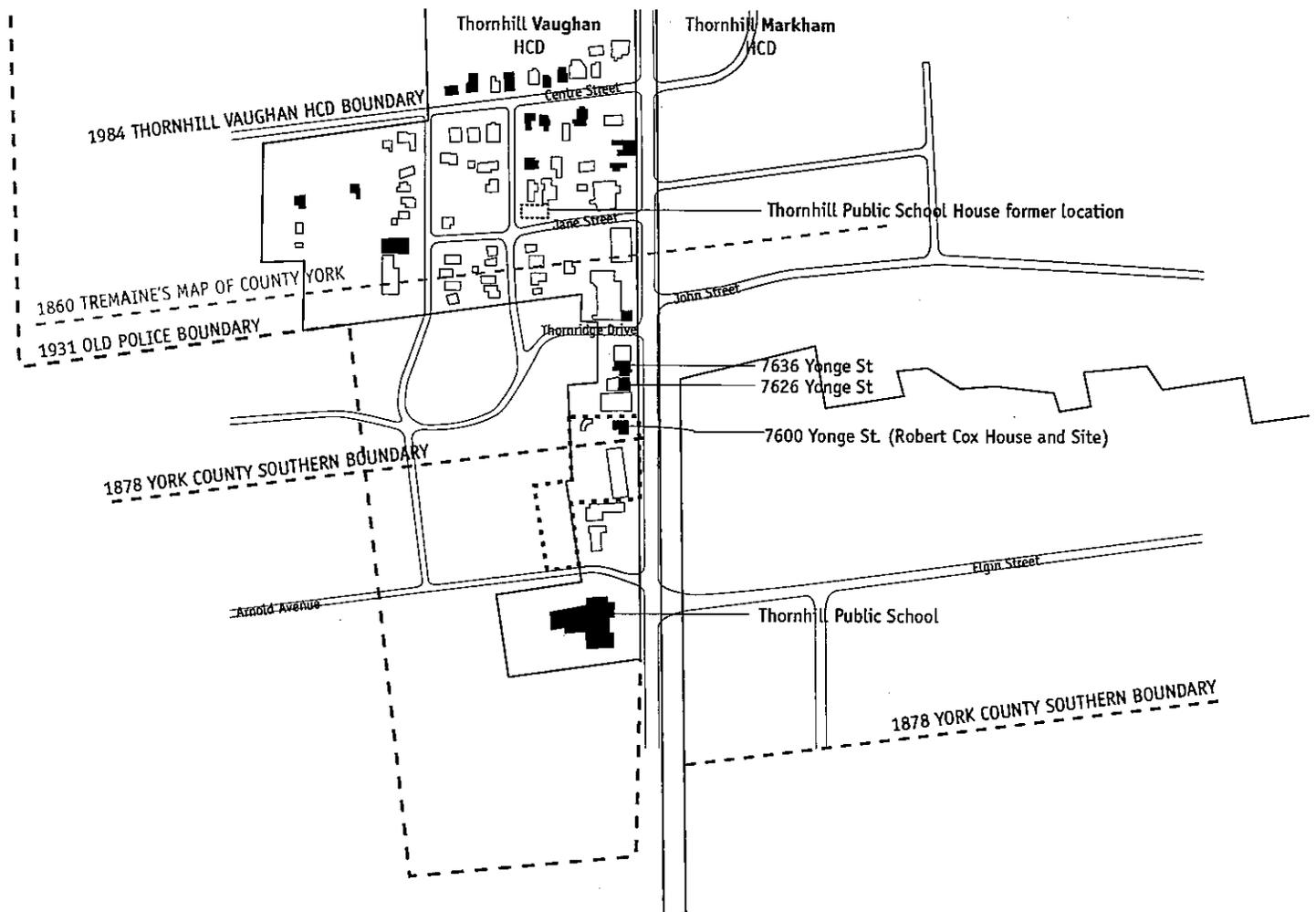
tion, and improve the overall definition of the corridor as a defined urban space.

It is noteworthy that, on the question of height, having set out this prescription and rationale the Thornhill Yonge Street Study specifically provides for Yonge Street buildings of 7 and 8 storeys, and provides for the possibility of up to two additional floors by way of bonus. These provisions are not carried through into OPA 669, which maintains a five storey limit.

A review of some of the more detailed design directions indicates that the Thornhill Yonge Street Study contemplates the use of setbacks above a street wall to deploy the overall height.

2.4 ADJACENT HERITAGE PROPERTIES

Opposite the Thornhill Vaughan HCD, on the east side of Yonge Street lays the Thornhill Markham HCD. It had also been established in 1984 and updated in 2007.



The boundaries established in the 1984 Thornhill Vaughan and Markham HCD have little reference to historic boundaries previously established by the village including: Tremain's Map of County York from 1860, Village of Thornhill from 1878 (from the York County Atlas Map) and the Old Police Boundary from 1931.

The specific character of both districts along Yonge Street south of Thornridge Drive (on the Thornhill Vaughan HCD) and John Street (on the Thornhill Markham HCD) substantially differ from the quality of the historic commercial streetscapes defined by the 19th century Village of Thornhill.



Original Thornhill Public Schoolhouse, Weaver Collection



"The Old Schoolhouse, Thornhill" Greeting Card

Within the Thornhill Vaughan HCD, the 4 listed heritage properties south of Thornridge Drive have been altered or modified. These include 2 former residences built by Archibald Gallanough at 7626 Yonge Street (relocated and refaced with new brick in 1988 from original site at 7620 Yonge Street) and 7636 Yonge Street (significantly modified and refaced with vinyl siding part in 1988); the Robert Cox House; and the second Thornhill Public School.

Built in 1923, the current Thornhill Public School is the most southern building within the *Thornhill Vaughan HCD*. This building is not the original pre-20th century village school house. The original Thornhill Public School was built in 1847 and located within the residential community portion of the village at the corner of Elizabeth Street (just west of Yonge) between Centre and Jane Street.

Unlike the Thornhill Vaughan HCD and Thornhill Markham HCD boundaries north of Thornridge Drive and John Street, the boundary south of these streets exclude residential communities east and west of Yonge Street. In the case of the Thornhill Markham HCD, the boundary is limited to a narrow band along the Yonge Street frontage.

2.5 RELATED PLANNING POLICIES

2.5.1 THORNHILL YONGE STREET STUDY, 2005

The Thornhill Yonge Street Study was commissioned as a joint initiative by the City of Vaughan and the Town of Markham. This document indicates that it is to be used by Markham and Vaughan, the Region of York, and the business and residential communities as a tool to help develop, guide and implement future development projects and public realm improvements for properties with direct frontage onto Yonge Street within the boundaries of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plans for the City of Vaughan and the Town of Markham.

The Study aimed to “establish a coherent urban design framework to guide the physical renewal and evolution of the Thornhill Yonge Street Corridor from a post-war highway-oriented commercial corridor to a more mixed use, pedestrian supportive main street within the historic community of Thornhill”.

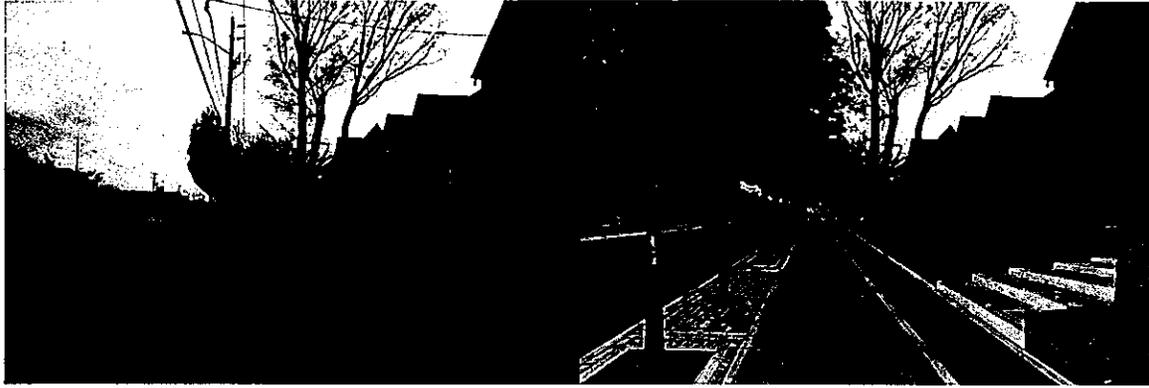
The Study defines the existing character of Yonge Street:

...the corridor looks and functions like a commercial highway arterial. There are significant gaps or holes in the main street; the pedestrian environment is largely separated from the built form environment by front yard parking; and, there are extensive areas where active commercial or retail uses are simply not present.

...There are some good quality urban buildings - particularly the mix of new and historic buildings on the Vaughan side of the street just south of Thornridge Drive... but the overall character of the corridor is largely suburban in nature, lacking the distinction and quality of adjacent neighborhoods.

With respect to heritage policy, we note that the 2005 Yonge Street Study contemplated an amendment to update the 1984 Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation Plan as part of its implementation.

Following the 2005 Yonge Street Study, the 2007 Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation Plan incorporated many of the guidelines for new development related to heritage buildings in the Yonge Street Study, in particular that new development would not exceed 5 floors. However, the 2005 Yonge Street Study provides for higher heights in some circumstances with appropriate design including references to cornice heights and stepping down to neighboring buildings.



Thornhill Yonge Street Strategy 2005, before and after streetscape concept, Vaughan side of Yonge Street south of Thornridge Drive. (Source: Urban Strategies)

2.5.2 THORNHILL / YONGE STREET CORRIDOR PLAN AREA (OPA 669)

The City of Vaughan adopted OPA 669 to provide a land use plan and detailed policies to guide the regulation of land use, development and redevelopment of the Yonge Street Corridor in accordance with the recommendations of the Thornhill Yonge Street Study. OPA 669 amended the Vaughan-Thornhill Community Plan OPA 210-1997.

3.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following section provides a statement of significance as defined by the Ministry of Culture Heritage Tool Kit, which includes a property description, statement of heritage value and description of the heritage attributes of the Robert Cox House based on existing heritage descriptions of the property, site investigations and additional research and analysis on the property and its context.

3.1 PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The property at 7616 Yonge Street is located within the City of Vaughan. The subject property includes the 1.5 storey, former farmhouse, known as the Robert Cox House, with a single storey addition to the rear currently being used for commercial purposes. Behind it to the west is a single storey building containing offices. The adjacent property to the south contains a single storey commercial mall to the south along the Yonge Street.

3.2 STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The following statements outline the heritage value of Cox House based on research undertaken by ERA Architects Inc.

3.2.1 DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE

Although altered by some later additions, Cox House remains representative of the vernacular Gothic style typical of single dwelling homes in the mid to late Victorian era and retains many of its original features. Its current 2 storey porch is a 20th century addition.

Its fanciful decorative ornamentation, cut from wood by the newly perfected scroll saw, is an indication of technological developments of the time and a dominant feature in most Gothic Revival houses; the windows, roof-wall junctions, porches and doors are the principal sites for such decoration.

Most Gothic Revival houses have at least one gable with Gothic detailing; commonly full height bay windows on the first floor level occur under these most prominent gables. The Cox House features two such gables with bay windows.

3.2.2 HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

The house was built by Robert Cox, a retired farmer from German Mills, circa 1884. It is the former home of Elisa Neil, co-founder of Black Creek Pioneer Village, and Doris Fitzgerald, writer and historian. The building was converted to commercial use more than 20 years ago.

3.2.3 CONTEXTUAL VALUE

The former dwelling at 7616 Yonge Street contributes to Yonge Street in that the building's retention and rehabilitation assists as a reminder of the layered evolution of Yonge Street within the area.

Since its widening, Yonge Street is a modern context as opposed to an historic context. Furthermore, the immediate context of this portion of Yonge Street is not representative of the heritage character that is present in other parts of the district.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

Based on the above statement of cultural heritage value, the following features are considered to be the heritage attributes of Cox House:

- Quoining and decorative brickwork (currently painted), decorative bargeboards, intermittent roundels with quatre-foil piercings and pendant fleur-de-lis at the gable tops;
- Asymmetrical T-plan with bellcast first floor bay windows and gabled roof;
- Principal east facing facade Yonge Street;
- Later addition to front porch with enclosed 2nd floor above.

4.0 RESEARCH

Following section provides additional material related to the contextual, architectural and historical values of 7616 Yonge Street for the purposes of evaluating the impact of the proposed development at 7600-7616 Yonge Street.

4.1 CONTEXTUAL VALUE

4.1.1 YONGE STREET

The Yonge Street Plaque prepared by the Ontario Heritage Trust reads:

Yonge Street Plaque - 1796

The shortest route between the upper and lower Great Lakes lies between here and Georgian Bay. For John Graves Simcoe, Upper Canada's first lieutenant-governor, this protected inland passage had strategic military and commercial potential. He founded York (Toronto) in 1793, then ordered a road built to replace native trails which led north to Lake Simcoe and its water links with lake Huron. Completed on February 16, 1796, it was named after British Secretary for War Sir George Yonge, an expert on Roman roads. Yonge Street developed from a muddy, stump-riddle forest into the main street of Toronto and the first part of Highway 11, which now extends 1,896 kilometers to Rainy River (Ontario Heritage Trust).

With the founding of the Town of York in 1793, one of Lieutenant Governor Simcoe's primary mandates was to improve the military presence in Toronto. One of the ways this was reinforced was in the construction of a military road from the Town of York to British troops posted in and around the Upper Great Lakes.

By February 1794 the Deputy Surveyor, Augustus Jones (1758-1837), began laying out the street with the Queen's Rangers. Starting at Queen Street, the Rangers set out a path 20 feet wide. By August they were in Thornhill. At that time the Rangers were relocated to the Niagara border to address mounting tensions with the Americans. The Rangers were replaced by a group of workers directed by William von Berczy who continued the construction from Thornhill to Langstaff. The Rangers and Augustus Jones returned in January 1796 and 43 days later they completed the road at Lake Simcoe.

Simcoe named the road Yonge Street after his friend Sir George Yonge (1731-1812). Yonge, who lived in England, had been the Secretary of War in 1791 and had designated

the Queen's Rangers regiment to protect this new province.

Whether for military communications or land appreciation it was recognized that settlers were essential for the completion and upkeep of Yonge Street. Settlers on Yonge Street were required to clear the road along the quarter-mile frontage of their lots to the halfway mark of its sixty-six feet width allowance and to provide the means of transport.

The first people to settle and farm the lands along Yonge Street were those that received lands grants or patents from the Crown. Berczy became the founder of the Township of Markham and established a early settlement of German pioneers there.

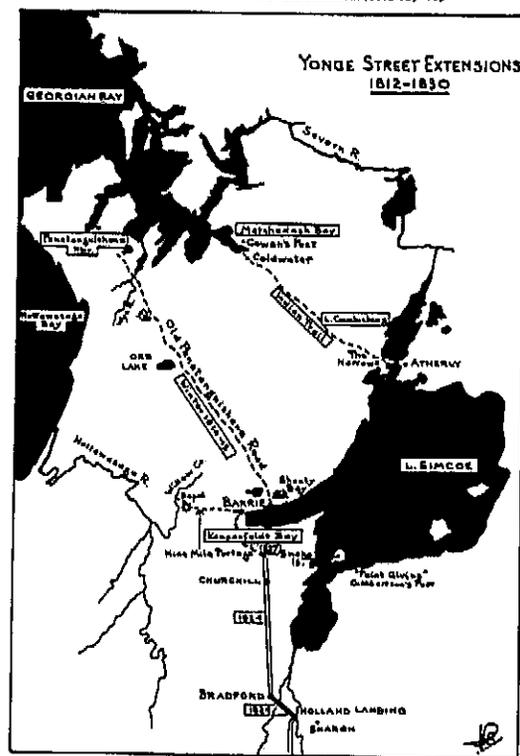
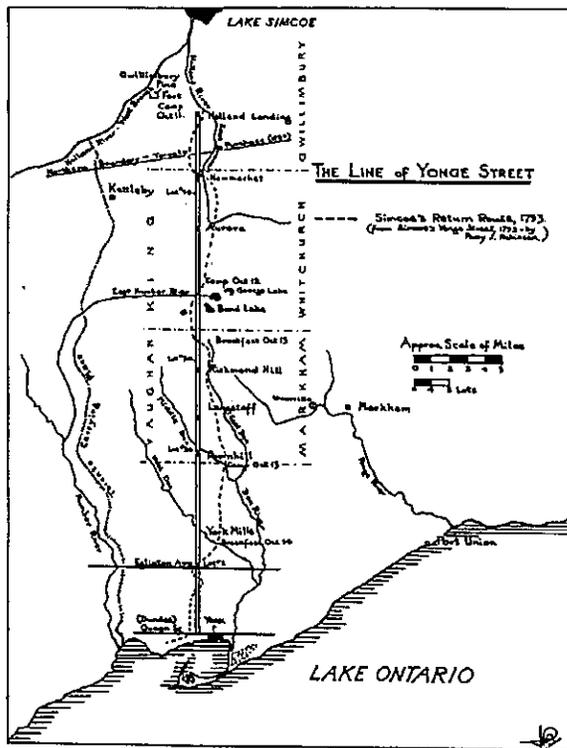


Sir George Yonge (1731-1812)
(Source: canadianheritage.org)

Loyalists Captain Richard Lippincott and Captain Daniel Cozens of New Jersey received 3,000 acres a piece in the mid-Yonge, Markham-Vaughan area. They raised money by selling a good portion of these grants to Pennsylvanian settlers in the region.

Settlers along Yonge were a mixed bag of American Loyalists, including German speaking Pennsylvania Dutch artisans and peasant farmers, political and religious refugees and some moderately well off individuals.

Settlements concentrated at points along Yonge where mills, mail stations, and trading posts were established. Towns and villages were established over the entire length of Yonge Street including the settlements of York Mills, Thornhill, Langstaff, Richmond Hill, Aurora, New Market and Holland Landing, the Townships of Vaughan, Markham, King, Whitchurch and Gwillimbury.



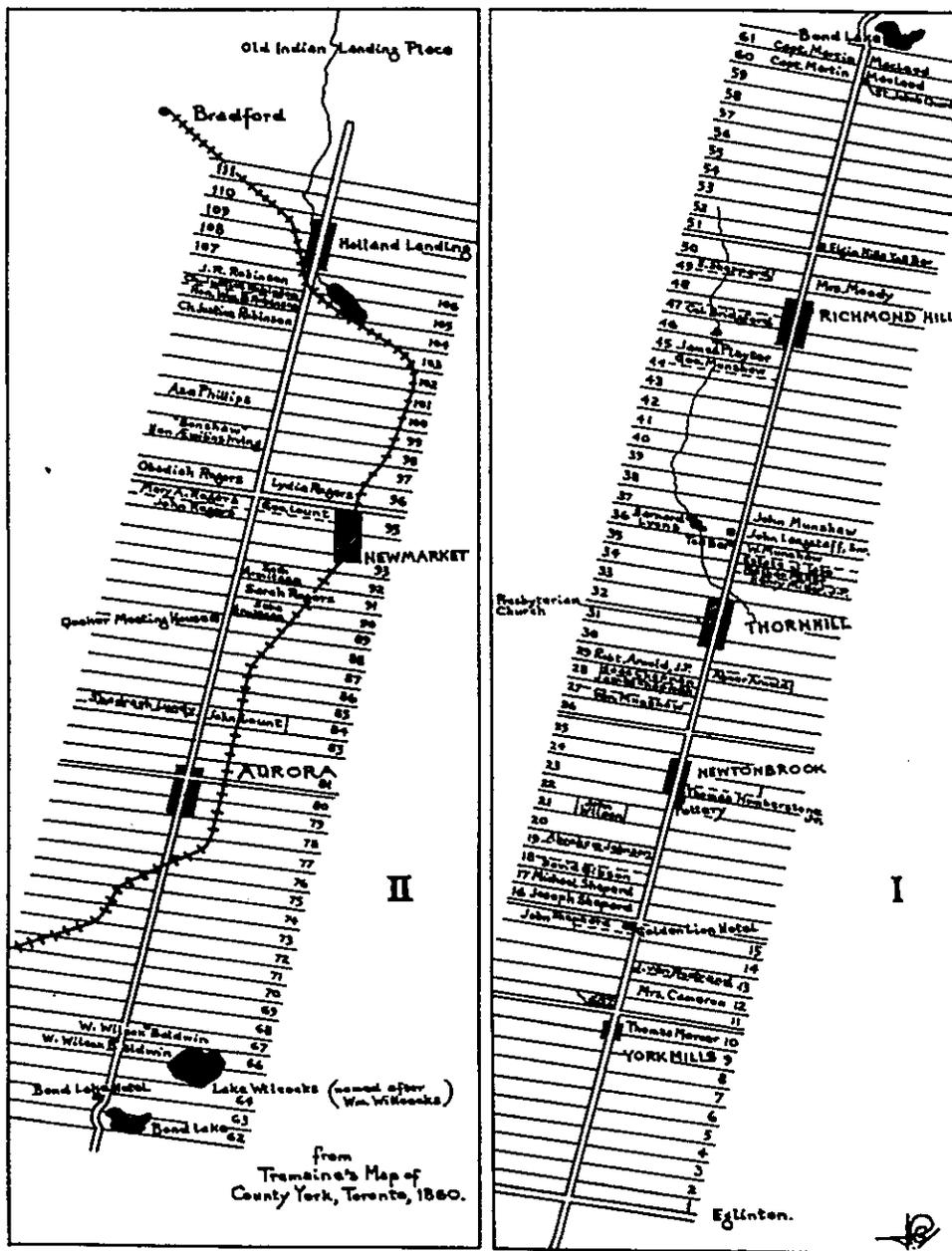
Maps showing the development of Yonge Street. (Source: The Yonge Street Story 1793-1860)

4.1.2 VILLAGE OF THORNHILL

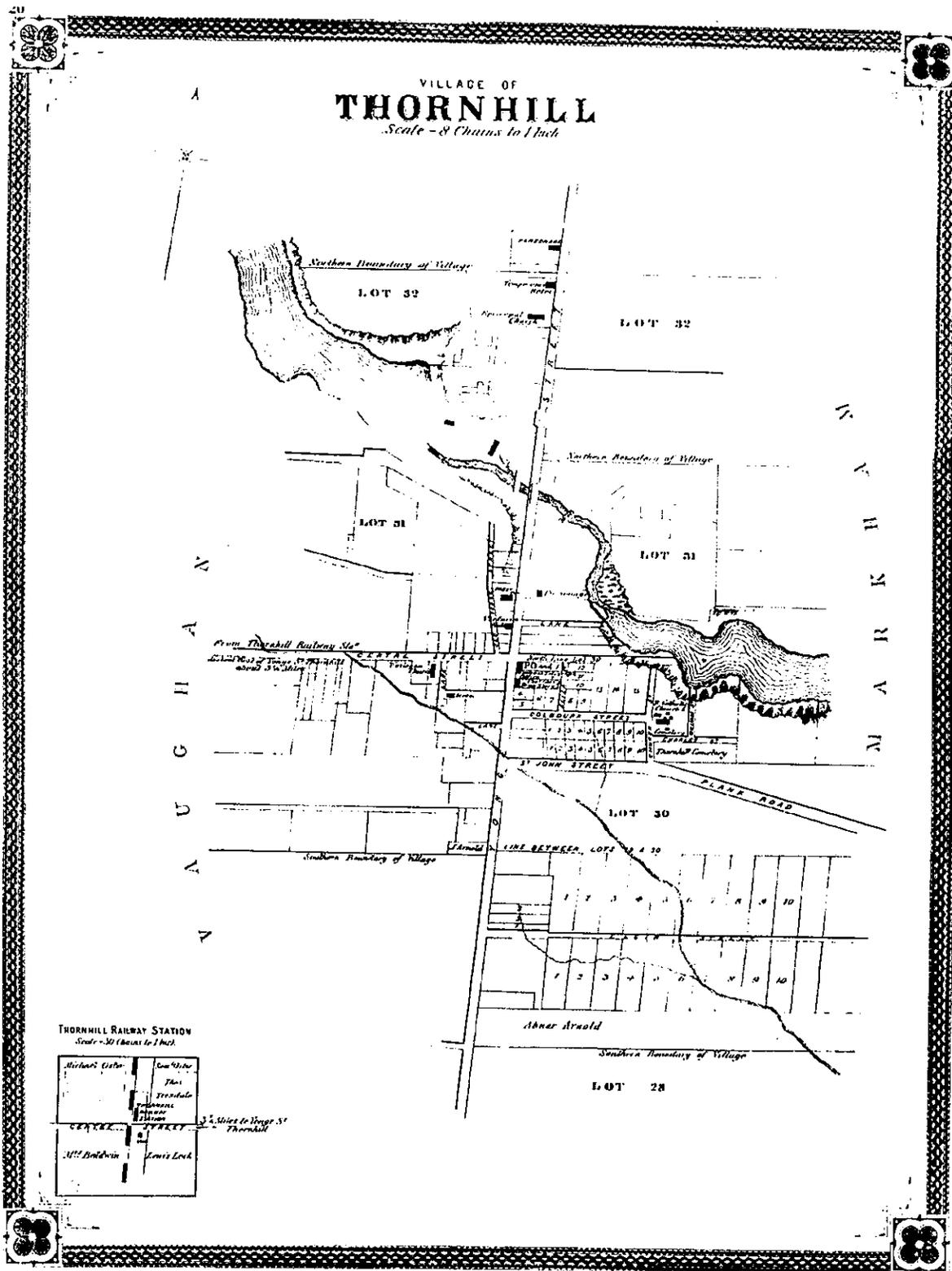
The village of Thornhill was one of the earliest settlements that developed along Governor Simcoe's Yonge Street. Established as a farming community by United Empire Loyalist and Americans seeking cheap land in the late 18th century, Thornhill flourished in the first half of the 19th century. It benefited for the growing importance of Yonge Street as a primary route between Holland Landing at Lake Simcoe and York (Toronto). Its strategic location along the Don River allowed it become a low order centre for rural industries, including a gristmill, sawmill and tannery. In 1898 Thornhill was connected to Toronto by the electric street railway and commuting to Toronto became possible. The popularity of the automobile secured the importance of Yonge Street and engendered changes to the village. Since the 1960s and 70s Thornhill has become largely considered as an upscale suburban community. Today, Thornhill straddles two municipalities, Vaughan to the west and Markham to the east.

4.2 HISTORICAL OCCUPANCY

See section 3.2.2.



Tremain's Map of County of York, Toronto, 1860.

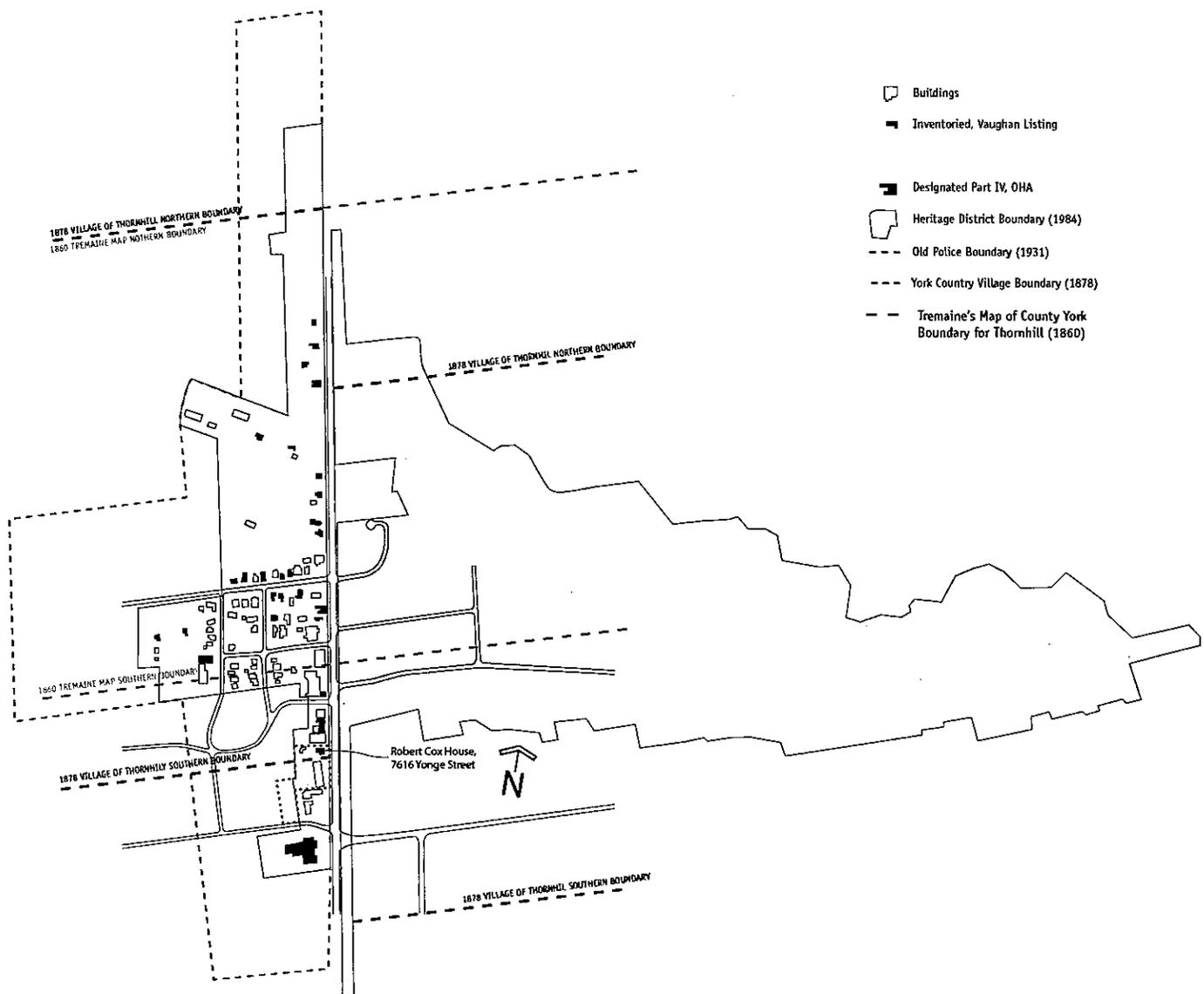


Village of Thornhill, York County Atlas Map, 1878.

4.1.3 THORNHILL VAUGHAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT DESIGNATION

The Robert Cox House represents one of 23 inventoried heritage buildings and one of 15 located along on Yonge Street within the current Thornhill-Vaughan Heritage Conservation District established in 1984.

The majority of the remaining heritage buildings in the Village of Thornhill are concentrated in the residential neighbourhood that developed to the east and west of the intersection of Yonge and Centre streets.



Buildings within Thornhill Vaughan. Information taken from the Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District Plan 2007 & Thornhill Markham Conservation District Plan. (Source: ERA)



Aerial photograph, 1957. (Source: Archives of Ontario)

4.3 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND SITING



1960s photograph of 7616 Yonge Street. (Source: Archives of Ontario)

4.3.1 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

A subtype of the Gothic Revival, the Robert Cox House features an asymmetrical T-shaped plan with steeply pitched cross gabled roof. Typically gable dormers are added to the wings and although these have been removed to make space for the extension on the east façade, evidence still exists in the second floor wing bedroom to identify their original location.

Most Gothic Revival houses have at least one gable with Gothic detailing; commonly full-scale bay windows on the first floor level occur on these most prominent gables. The Cox House features two such gables with bay windows.

The house is of brick construction, which has been painted. Archive photos show a light brick color with ornate red brick quoining.

Decorated vergeboards with hanging quatrefoils and an inverted fleur-de-lis at the peak are a distinctive feature on the prominent gables. These ornate features demonstrate technological developments of the time, namely the perfection of the scroll saw which enabled the manufacture of such intricate designs.

At the roof junction the wall surface extends into the gable without a break and terminates at an open eave with enclosed rafters and purlins.

It is typical of Gothic Revival houses to feature a one-storey porch supported by flattened Gothic arches. This has been removed on Cox House and replaced with a two storey addition, the first floor of which was originally open to the elements but has since been enclosed.

4.3.2 SITING ON YONGE STREET

To understand the existing context of building setbacks within the Yonge Street streetscape, ERA Architects has made a study of the properties adjacent to Cox House. There are 3 other heritage buildings and 2 infill properties in the immediate vicinity with matching setbacks that define the streetscape. Cox House is set back further from Yonge Street and a view of the building is masked by neighboring properties when viewed from the north down the street.

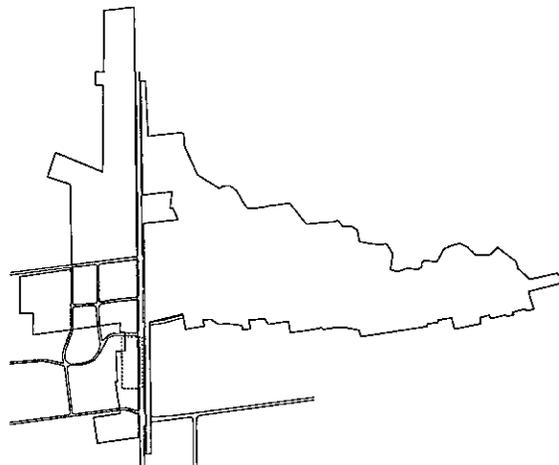


Diagram showing location of study along Yonge Street.

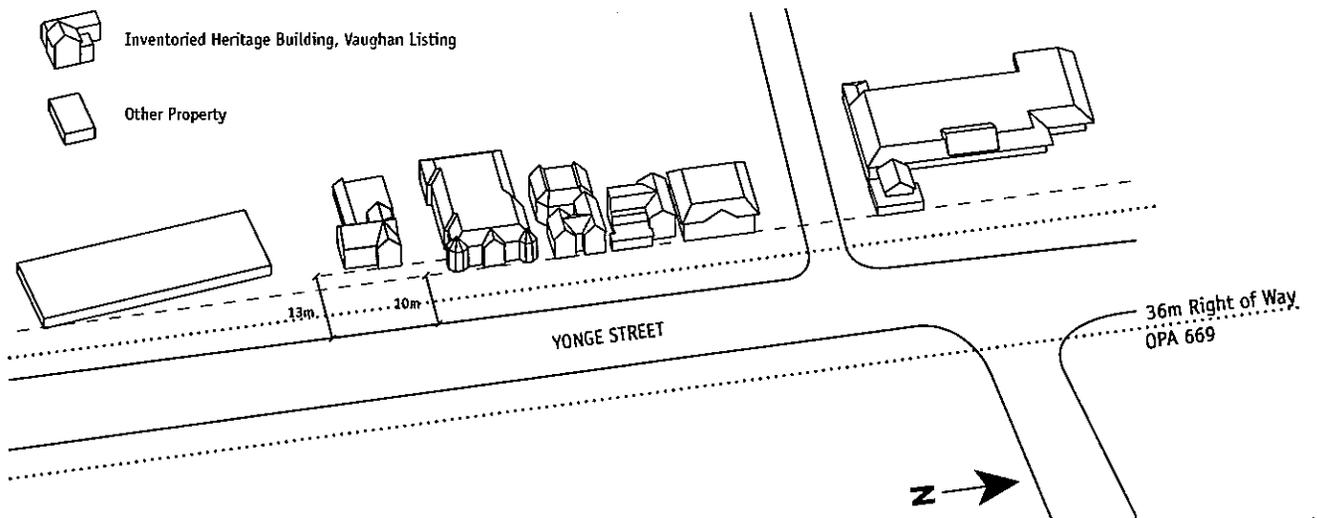


Diagram showing setbacks of neighboring heritage buildings on Yonge St., Cox House highlighted.



View South down Yonge Street on West side showing setbacks of neighboring buildings



Aerial image showing setback of Cox House (far left) in relation to neighboring buildings

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITION

The following description of the current condition of the Cox house was recorded as part of visual survey completed on 8th July 2008. This assessment was not exhaustive and did not investigate elements such as the building's envelope, structure, sub-structure, or interior elements.

5.1 CONTEXT

Cox House currently sits in the parking lot of a strip mall. Although its primary elevation still addresses Yonge Street it currently has little physical or visual connection with the village streetscape to the north.

5.2 ELEVATIONS

The north elevation is largely untouched. All the original windows have been replaced and a doorway blocked. The basement windows have also been blocked up and the entrance to the basement consists of a damaged plywood housing. A metal fire escape leading down from the roof of the single story addition to the west obscures the façade.

The east elevation is the primary façade addressing Yonge Street. It features a large gable with decorative vergeboards, single second floor opening and first floor bay window. The original porch has been dismantled and was replaced some time in the mid 20th century by a two story addition that runs the length of the east eave wall. This addition was originally an open porch with enclosed space above, but has subsequently been fully enclosed. As a result the original entrance has been widened, internalized and the first floor window filled in. However there is evidence to suggest this opening still exists behind the drywall. On the second floor there is evidence of a dormer window in the existing south office and a second opening in the hallway that has subsequently been converted to a doorway for access to the extension.

The south elevation also features a gable end with decorative vergeboards, a single second floor opening and large first floor bay window. The eave wall has been integrated into a single story addition to the west.

The building has also been extended to the west by a single story commercial addition. The west elevation of the heritage building has been largely disfigured by this addition. A doorway has been knocked through from a second floor bathroom to form a means of egress onto the roof of the single story addition. The chimneystack on the west gable has been truncated at the rake, the chimneystack on the eave wall has been extended. The rest of the elevation is hidden by the addition.



East elevation



South elevation



West elevation and addition



North elevation and fire stair



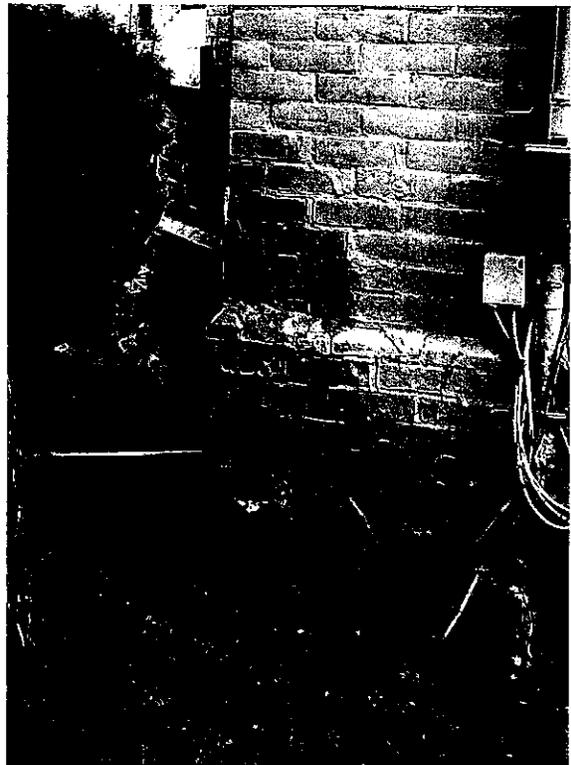
Base of bay window, south elevation



Hatch to basement, north elevation



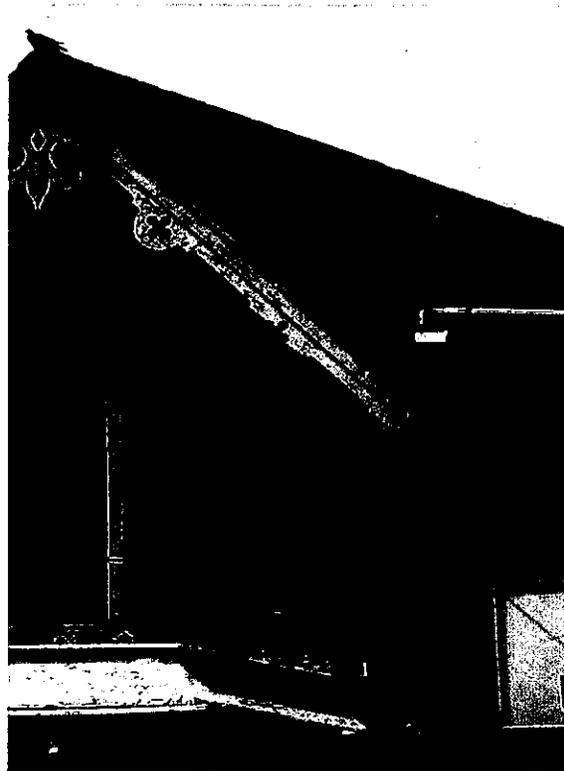
Blocked window, north elevation



Damaged brick, north elevation



Cracking, north elevation



Roof junction, south elevation

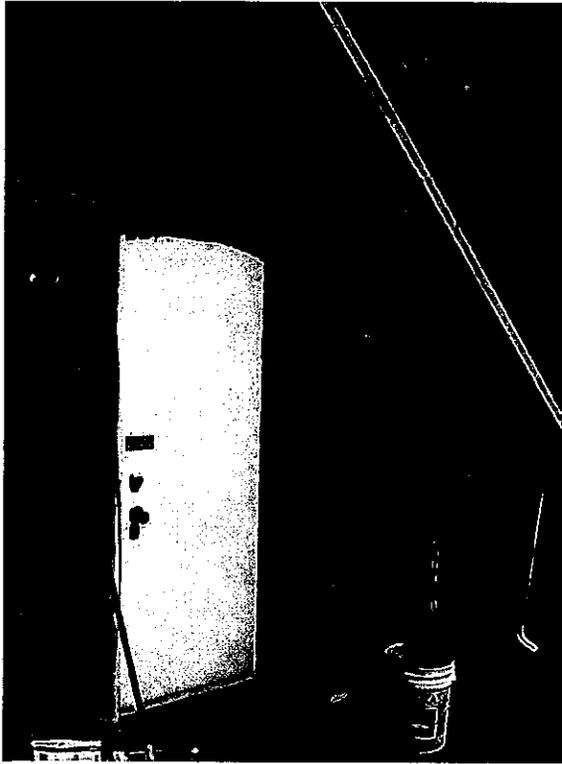


Eavestrough, south elevation



Doorway, north elevation





Doorway, west elevation



Vergeboard, east elevation

6.0 CONSERVATION APPROACH

In order to protect the heritage resources of Cox House at 7616 Yonge Street, the following conservation approach has been prepared, specifically addressing the heritage attributes outlined in the *Statement of Significance*.

6.1 PROPOSED SITE DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development consists of three new built elements and the rehabilitation of Cox House:

6.1.1 SENIORS RETIREMENT CONDOMINIUM

The main building on the site is a seniors retirement condominium that stretches along the southern edge and Yonge Street portion of the site. At a full height of 42.3m at the top of the mechanical penthouse, the 12-storey building steps up from a 8 storey terrace from a 5-storey brick podium along Yonge Street. At the northern edge, a 2-storey brick podium supported on columns over grade level driveway up to a height of 3-storeys on the north elevation, respecting Cox House. The east and west elevations are fully glazed above podium level and the building contains ground level retail units along its north and east perimeter.

6.1.2 LIVE/WORK UNITS

Situated in the northwest corner of the site behind Cox House are 6 live/work units of 3-storeys with ground level retail. The building is glazed on its north and south elevations and brick pillars separate its individual units; these draw their datum level from the eaves of the heritage building. The units are 9m in height and to respect Cox House are stepped back at the third storey to reduce its appearance in scale from ground level. The middle two units are stepped forward in plan to break up the façade and assist in creating a pedestrian boulevard between Cox House and the retirement condominium to the south.

6.1.3 SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING

In keeping with the building typology along Arnold Avenue, a single family dwelling is proposed on the southern portion of the site. It will provide an appropriately scaled building to the street.

6.1.4 ROBERT COX HOUSE

The building is to be moved approximately 4 metres to the north to maximize develop-

ment space on the site whilst maintaining and respecting the building's existing orientation and relationship to Yonge Street. It will also be moved approximately 2.8 metres east towards Yonge Street to create a consistent setback with the neighboring inventoried heritage buildings to the north.

The Cox House will remain independent of the proposed development, its contemporary additions removed and the heritage building rehabilitated. Since information of the original porch does not exist, it is difficult to suggest restoration to a 19th century appearance. It is appropriate to return the current porch to the available documentary evidence shown in the 1960's archival photograph which shows an open ground floor to the porch. This later porch illustrates the evolution of the house over time. New landscaping designed in compliance with the Thornhill HCD will complement and integrate the building into the new development; the space between Cox House and the Seniors Retirement Condominium will form a new pedestrian entrance into the development. The Cox House will remain a commercial use and a barrier-free access ramp will be added to the west of the building.

6.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

This Conservation Strategy evaluates the proposed alterations and additions resulting from the proposed development in respect to the following objectives defined by the 1984 and 2007 Thornhill-Vaughan Heritage Conservation District Plans, to ensure the preservation of the property's cultural heritage value.

6.2.1 OBJECTIVES: THORNHILL-VAUGHAN HCD 1984

The 1984 Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District Study presented the following objectives for the conservation of the Old Village of Thornhill:

- *To sensitively manage that portion of the former Village of Thornhill that remains as an identifiable entity on Yonge Street through the preservation of the existing historic buildings and the unique environmental features which give the Village its special character.*
- *To preserve architecturally and historically significant buildings by encouraging their rehabilitation and restoration.*
- *To encourage the development of vacant lands and other redevelopment sites in a way which will enhance the character of Thornhill as established in the Heritage Conservation District Study.*
- *To recommend improvements to Yonge Street which will make the section of Yonge Street passing through Thornhill more compatible with the human scale of the Village.*
- *To suggest improvements to Centre Street which will improve the streetscape while maintaining the existing two lane rural character of the street.*
- *To encourage the development of the shopping area within the village in order to create a viable and healthy commercial area serving local needs.*
- *To preserve and enhance the non-built environment in a way which compliments the existing character of the area, i.e. landscape, streetscape, signage, etc.*
- *To reduce the visual impact of the automobile within the area.*
- *To develop guidelines for redevelopment , renovations, alteration, additions, and restoration within both the residential and commercial areas to reinforce the village character*

-
- and encourage quality development.*
 - To suggest changes to the Official Plan and to zoning by-laws to ensure that they are compatible with the Village concept.*
 - To establish for the residents of Thornhill-Vaughan a historical focus for the expanding community by emphasizing the significance of the Old Village.*

6.2.2 OBJECTIVES: THORNHILL-VAUGHAN HCD 2007

This District Plan is under appeal by the applicant of this project. This section is provided for information only, as it is our opinion that the Plan should not be considered as a source of policy objectives when it is under appeal.

The 2007 Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District provides the following general objectives (as opposed to the specific design guidelines) for the District, relating to Heritage Buildings, Landscape, and New Developments:

HERITAGE BUILDINGS

- To retain and conserve the heritage buildings as identified in the City of Vaughan Listing of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Value.*
- To conserve heritage attributes and distinguishing qualities of heritage buildings, and prevent the removal or alteration of any historic or distinctive architectural feature.*
- To correct unsympathetic alterations to heritage buildings.*
- To facilitate the restoration of heritage buildings based on a thorough examination of archival and pictorial evidence, physical evidence, and an understanding of the history of the local community.*

LANDSCAPE/STREETScape

- To facilitate the introduction of, as well as conservation of, historic landscape treatments in both the public and private realm.*
- To preserve trees and mature vegetation, and encourage the planting of species characteristic of the District.*
- To preserve historic fences and introduce new fences that respect historic patterns and*

styles while meeting contemporary needs.

- *To preserve the existing street pattern and rural cross-sections and refrain from widening existing pavement and road allowances.*
- *To introduce landscape, streetscape, and infrastructure improvements that will enhance the heritage character of the district.*

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- *To ensure compatible infill construction that will enhance the District's heritage character and complement the area's village-like, human scale of development.*
- *To guide the design of new development to be sympathetic and compatible with the heritage resources and character of the District while providing for contemporary needs.*

In our opinion we note that the implementation thereof as set out in the design guidelines does not represent an appropriate approach to this particular site. Specifically, these general objectives ignore the characteristics of Yonge Street described in the 1984 Study and appear to assume that Yonge Street has the same "village-like" characteristics as other parts of the area.

6.3.1 IMPACT: THORNHILL-VAUGHAN HCD 1984

The following section responds to the conservation objectives described in section 6.2.1 (*the quoted objectives are italicized*). The 1984 TVHCD study describes the factors that contribute to the physical character of the Old Village of Thornhill (see section 2.3.2). The following measures will be taken to conserve these characteristics:

To sensitively manage that portion of the former Village of Thornhill that remains as an identifiable entity on Yonge Street through the preservation of the existing historic buildings and the unique environmental features which give the Village its special character.

- Although this was generally a statement from the plan we do not feel this portion of Yonge Street is an identifiable entity with unique environmental features;
- The proposed development will maintain and conserve the presence of the Robert Cox House and its history through its rehabilitation;
- The mixed-use nature of the area will be reinforced through the addition of ground level retail along Yonge Street and associated residential units;
- The heritage features of the streetscape, (setbacks, street furniture, landscaping) will be rehabilitated, the existing condition will be substantially improved by the development along Yonge Street and a more pedestrian friendly streetscape installed;
- The design of the new development will complement the range of architectural styles already maintained along Yonge Street;
- The development will provide new retail and residential units for the community.

To preserve architecturally and historically significant buildings by encouraging their rehabilitation and restoration.

- See above.

To encourage the development of vacant lands and other redevelopment sites in a way which will enhance the character of Thornhill as established in the TVHCD.

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- As indicated previously, the character of Yonge Street differs from other parts of the study area. Whereas as key focus for parts of the area is preservation of form and landscape, the TVHCD identifies this as an area that should be developed; and
 - The 1984 TVHCD identifies this property as an area in which redevelopment for “local retail, commercial, office commercial or other compatible commercial uses” should be encouraged and states that existing dwellings on the site should be incorporated into the scheme. The proposed development satisfies this objective.

To recommend improvements to Yonge Street which will make the section of Yonge Street passing through Thornhill more compatible with the human scale of the Village.

- The pedestrian route proposed within the new development encourages pedestrian thoroughfare from Yonge Street; and
- The proposed landscaping will enhance the streetscape and promote a more pedestrian environment within the proposed public spaces.

To suggest improvements to Centre Street which will improve the streetscape while maintaining the existing two lane rural character of the street.

- Not applicable to this development.

To encourage the development of the shopping area within the village in order to create a viable and healthy commercial area serving local needs.

- See above.

To preserve and enhance the non-built environment in a way which complements the existing character of the area, i.e. landscape, streetscape, signage, etc.

- The existing character of this area is not similar to that found in the residential area of the village;
- The composed streetscape would be generally consistent with that for Yonge Street throughout Thornhill.

To reduce the visual impact of the automobile within the area.

- The current at grade parking is replaced by below grade and rear parking; and
- In this Thornhill stretch of Yonge Street the size of the buildings is dwarfed by the width of the road. However this site has the capacity to support larger developments. By providing a height scaled to the street the proportional relationship between the automobile and the built environment would be less in favour of the automobile.

To develop guidelines for redevelopment , renovations, alteration, additions, and restoration within both the residential and commercial areas to reinforce the village character and encourage quality development.

- The character of Yonge Street itself is not that of other parts of the area. The design of this proposal is compatible to the surrounding context.

To suggest changes to the Official Plan and to zoning by-laws to ensure that they are compatible with the Village concept.

- No comment.

To establish for the residents of Thornhill-Vaughan a historical focus for the expanding community by emphasizing the significance of the Old Village.

- This site does not have the characteristics of the Old Village, however as part of the proposed development, an interpretation plaque will be erected to describe and emphasize the historical characteristics of the site.

6.3.2 IMPACT: THORNHILL-VAUGHAN HCD 2007

The following section responds to the objectives described in section 6.2.2 (*the quoted objectives are italicized*):

HERITAGE BUILDING

To retain and conserve the heritage buildings as identified in the City of Vaughan Listing of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Value.

- The heritage portion of the property at 7616 Yonge Street will be retained, conserved and rehabilitated in respect to the heritage attributes identified in the statement of significance.

To conserve heritage attributes and distinguishing qualities of heritage buildings, and prevent the removal or alteration of any historic or distinctive architectural feature.

- The heritage attributes and distinguishing qualities, such as the decorated bargeboards and bay windows, will be conserved and rehabilitated. All distinctive heritage features will remain.

To correct unsympathetic alterations to heritage buildings.

- The single storey addition on the west elevation is to be removed and repairs made to the façade. The porch on the Yonge Street elevation is to be conserved as it is the only authentic porch known for the building.

To facilitate the restoration of heritage buildings based on a thorough examination of archival and pictorial evidence, physical evidence, and an understanding of the history of the local community.

- All work to be carried out will be based upon thorough historical and archival research and site investigations in accordance with best conservation practices. A thorough understanding of Cox House, its historical context and relationship to Thornhill has been developed through the investigation undertaken as part of this Heritage Impact Statement.

LANDSCAPE/STREETScape

As no heritage landscaping exists, new landscaping is proposed to be generally in

accordance with the guidelines set out by the Thornhill HCD 2007:

Facilitate the introduction of, as well as conservation of, historic landscape treatments in both the public and private realm.

- The proposal provides a landscape forecourt and opportunities for landscape treatment.

Preserve trees and mature vegetation, and encourage the planting of species characteristic of the District.

- New plant material is to be indigenous or historically appropriate. (5.7a)
- New trees are to be hardy, long living, and suitable for environment in conformance with HCD 2007 Section 9.7.1. (4.5.2b)

Preserve historic fences and introduce new fences that respect historic patterns and styles while meeting contemporary needs.

- All new loose streetscape furnishings, fixed streetscape furniture and lighting should be reflective of and complementary to the heritage character of the area. (6.1.1f)

Preserve the existing street pattern and rural cross-sections and refrain from widening existing pavement and road allowances.

- There are no rural cross-section similar to that which exists in the residential areas;
- Boulevards should remain grassed. (5.3d)

Introduce landscape, streetscape, and infrastructure improvements that will enhance the heritage character of the district.

- The Robert Cox House will be relocated 2.7m east and 4.4m north to reinforce an established setback consistent with the buildings to the north; and,
- New planting should not obscure buildings with heritage value or interest but can be used to frame and accentuate heritage buildings or screen less attractive sites. (4.5.2c, 5.7e/f)

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

To ensure compatible infill construction that will enhance the District's heritage character and complement the area's village-like, human scale of development.

- A village-like quality does not exist along Yonge Street as it does within the residential areas;
- The heritage character of Thornhill will be enhanced through the rehabilitation of the heritage property as part of the proposed development;
- The design of the proposed development, including the separation of the heritage building from the adjacent new buildings, will establish an appropriate relationship to these buildings to the north; and,
- Pedestrian orientated landscaping will enhance the streetscape.

To guide the design of new development to be sympathetic and compatible with the heritage resources and character of the District while providing for contemporary needs.

- Strong masonry elements and the rhythm of piers provided reference to the historic palette without inappropriate mimicry;
- Development reasserts Yonge Street frontage; its consistent setback and mid-rise streetwall reinforces the sense of continuity and the areas character;
- Provides street wall with ground level retail to encourage pedestrian activity. This satisfies the HCD goal to *"create a viable and healthy commercial area serving local needs"*; and,
- Maintains Yonge Street's *"distinctly commercial and institutional orientation"* as described in the HCD and provides a diverse range of uses.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The redevelopment at 7600-7616 Yonge which includes the Robert Cox House, represents an opportunity to rehabilitate an heritage asset and its attributes within the Village of Thornhill. Its proposed integration within the development promises to enrich Thornhill's Yonge Street corridor.

The proposed development appropriately acknowledges the importance of Yonge Street in the history of Thornhill by promoting positive, quality commercial, retail and residential development. Pedestrian activity along Yonge Street is stimulated by at grade retail, enhanced streetscape and landscape elements with an east-west pedestrian route to connect while maintaining the village character of Thornhill.

The scale of proposed 5-storey podium to the Yonge Street corridor is in keeping with the recommendations of 1984 and 2007 Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District Plan and the 2005 Thornhill Yonge Street Study. As well, the podium steps down to 3-storeys at its northern edge to respect the scale of the Robert Cox House the highest building elements remain compatible and appropriate.

The integration of the Robert Cox House proposes the subtle relocation (north and east) to reinforce a consistent setback throughout the parade of heritage and non-heritage buildings to the north of the proposed development. The house will maintain its current orientation with its principle façade facing Yonge Street. The conservation strategy recommends that the house and porch be restored to its 1960s state as it demonstrates the least conjecture and avoids historical pastiche.

APPENDICES

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