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Town of Aurora

## General Committee Report

No. PDS20-062

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**Subject:** Heritage Permit Application for 31 Catherine Avenue

**Prepared by:** Carlson Tsang, Planner/Heritage Planning

**Department:** Planning and Development Services

**Date:** October 20, 2020

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### Recommendation

1. That Report No. PDS20-062 be received; and,
2. That Heritage Permit Application HPA-2020-10 to permit the demolition of an existing detached garage and construction of a new addition at 31 Catherine Avenue be approved, subject to the elimination of the one-storey extension at the rear of the proposed addition.

### Executive Summary

This report provides the General Committee with the necessary information to consider Heritage Permit Application HPA-2020-10. The permit proposes the removal of an existing detached garage, and the construction of a rear addition to the Reynolds House at 31 Catherine Avenue. The subject property is designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and is located within the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District.

- The Reynolds House has been the subject of Previous Heritage Permit Applications
- Staff have no concern with the applicant's proposal to demolish the existing detached garage in the rear yard because the structure does not contribute to the heritage value of the property.
- The proposed addition is not anticipated to generate any adverse impact on the character of the streetscape. The proposed architectural style, roof design and sidings of the new addition are considered compatible with the Reynolds House.

- The rear extension of the proposed addition exceeds the maximum depth suggested by the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District Plan. Staff recommend the rear extension be removed to achieve a building footprint that is more in keeping with the character of the host neighborhood.

## **Background**

31 Catherine Avenue is located north of Wellington Street East and east of Yonge Street, and within the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District (see Attachment 1). There is an existing residential dwelling on the property constructed circa 1886, known as “the Reynolds House”. Parking is provided in a detached garage located in the rear yard. Mature vegetation exists on the property including several large trees in the rear yard.

The Reynolds House can be described as a 1-½ storey structure with a front gable roof. The building is finished with brick cladding. The building features double-hung windows, including a 3-bay window on the front and east elevations. A pale-green wood corner verandah leads up to the front entrance, comprised of six wood columns and wood railings. The building is adorned in decorative trim under the gable roof, also colored in pale-green. Overall, the building appears to be an excellent example of Gothic Revival architecture and is considered a contributing building within the Heritage Conservation District.

## **Heritage Designation**

In 2006, Town Council passed By-Law 4809-06.D to designate 31 Catherine Avenue under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as part of the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District. Council also passed By-Law 4809-06.D to adopt the “Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District Plan” as the document to guide the preservation and restoration of properties and streetscapes located within the boundaries of the District. 31 Catherine Avenue has been identified as a contributing property to the Heritage Conservation District.

## **The Reynolds House has been the subject of Previous Heritage Permit Applications**

On September 16, 2016, the Town approved Heritage Permit application NE-HCD-HPA-16-07 to allow the installation of a new double hung window on the west elevation of the structure, near the north-west corner of the building.

On February 16, 2017, the Town approved Heritage Permit application NE-HCD-HPA-17-03 to allow the removal of existing vents underneath the front gable and side gable roofline on the front and west elevation, to be replaced with windows. The second component of the heritage permit was the installation of a new sunroof on the east facing roof.

On June 15, 2017, the Town approved Heritage Permit application NE-HCD-HPA-17-07 to allow the installation of a new wood front door, removal of transom and replacement of the box window on the west elevation of the building.

### **Proposed Alteration**

The owner is proposing to demolish the existing detached garage in the rear yard and construct a two-storey addition at the south east corner of the dwelling which includes a double-car tandem garage on the ground floor and a new bedroom on the second floor. The exterior wall will be finished with vertical board and batten siding. The addition will feature a gable roof that is similar in style to the main building. The new garage door will be made out of wood with horizontal panels.

The proposed addition will be subject to a zoning review to confirm compliance with the zoning by-law prior to the issuance of a building permit.

### **Analysis**

**Staff have no concern with the applicant's proposal to demolish the existing detached garage in the rear yard because the structure does not contribute to the heritage value of the property.**

Based on historical aerial photos, the existing detached garage in the rear yard was constructed as early as the 1950's. The garage does not exhibit any significant architectural value and is clearly distinguishable from the Reynolds House. There is no evidence to suggest that the garage contributes to the heritage value of the property. Staff do not anticipate that the proposed demolition of the detached garage will adversely affect the heritage integrity of the building. Also, given the detached garage

has always been located in the rear yard away from the street, there will be minimal impact on the historic character of the streetscape.

**The proposed addition is not anticipated to generate any adverse impact on the character of the streetscape. The proposed architectural style, roof design and sidings of the new addition are considered compatible with the Reynolds House.**

Section 9.1.2.5 of the District Plan states that additions should be located to the rear or an inconspicuous side where they are not visible from the street. The proposed addition is located at the south-east corner of the main building, which is approximately 20 m (65.61 ft) from the street to help mitigate its visual impact from public view. Further, the existing mature trees at the front and along the east property line will provide screening to further reduce the addition's presence on Catherine Street.

Section 9.1.3 of the District Plan states that additions and alterations to an existing heritage building should be consistent with the style of the original buildings. Staff consider the proposed gable roof of the new addition to be compatible with the architectural character of the existing home. The roofline from the front is designed with a steep slope to help reduce its vertical massing to ensure it will not dominate the streetscape. The proposed wooden panel garage door, board and batten siding, and asphalt shingles are considered appropriate materials to be used in the neighborhood as per Section 9.8.1 of the District Plan.

**The rear extension of the proposed addition exceeds the maximum depth suggested by the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District Plan. Staff recommend the rear extension be removed to achieve a building footprint that is more in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.**

Section 4.2 of the District Plan suggests that additions to existing buildings should be limited to a maximum depth of 16.8 m (55.11 ft) to ensure the protection of the historic building patterns in the neighborhood. An additional 2.1 m (6.88 ft) will be allowed for one-storey extension that is less than half the width of the house.

The proposed addition will increase the total depth of the building to approximately 22.43 m (73.6 ft), where approximately 5.9 m (19.35 ft) is attributed to the one-storey extension at the rear for the second tandem parking space in the garage. Staff are concerned that the additional depth is not consistent with the established building pattern of the host neighborhood. Staff requested the applicant eliminate the one-storey extension, to be more in line with the guidelines of the District Plan. However, the applicant would like to proceed with the application as submitted.

## **Advisory Committee Review**

The Heritage Advisory Committee reviewed the application on September 14, 2020. Staff provided an overview of the report highlighting the details of the proposed additions noting the overall footprint will exceed the requirements highlighted in the Heritage Conservation District plan and a minor variance application will be required for the minimum side yard setback for Committee of Adjustment's consideration. The Committee inquired about the permitted lot coverage with respect to the zoning of the property, the finish of the board and batten and the materials to be utilized for the addition, and the applicant and staff provided clarification.

The Committee discussed about the proposed attached garage addition, the permitted limits and expressed concerns about the additional building depth. The Committee acknowledged that the proposed addition is considered compatible with the original one-storey building and matches the architectural appearance of the building from the front elevation mitigating the visual impact to the surrounding streetscape. However, it was noted that the additional building depth may result in a built form that is not in keeping with the surrounding homes.

## **Legal Considerations**

Under Section 42 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, any developments or alterations that would potentially impact the heritage character of a property located within a Heritage Conservation District requires Council's consent. This legislative requirement is implemented in the Town of Aurora through the process of a Heritage Permit Application, which is subject to Council's approval in consultation with the Heritage Advisory Committee. Council must make a decision on a heritage permit application within 90 days after the notice of receipt is served on the applicant, otherwise Council shall be deemed to have consented to the application. The 90-day deadline for this permit application is January 5, 2021. Council may extend the review period of a heritage application without any time limit under the *Ontario Heritage Act* provided it is agreed upon by the owner.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications from this report as all applicable fees and charges owing to date have been collected.

## Communications Considerations

The Town will use 'Inform' as the level of engagement for this application. There are five different levels of community engagement to consider, with each level providing the community more involvement in the decision-making process. These levels are: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. Examples of each can be found in the Community Engagement Policy. These options are based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and assist in establishing guidelines for clearly communicating with our public and managing community engagement. In order to inform the public, this report will be posted to the Town's website.

## Link to Strategic Plan

The conservation of heritage resources supports the Strategic Plan goal of ***Supporting an Exceptional Quality of Life for All*** through its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in objective ***Celebrating and Promoting our Culture***.

## Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. That Council provide direction.

## Conclusions

While the applicant has incorporated various measures in the design of the proposed addition to reduce the impact on the Reynolds House and the streetscape character, staff are concerned that the proposed building depth is excessive within the context of the host neighborhood. It is recommended that the proposal be amended to eliminate the one-storey extension at the rear in order to achieve a footprint that is more in scale with the historic building pattern of the Heritage District.

## Attachments

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Drawings

## **Previous Reports**

None.

## **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on October 1, 2020

## **Approvals**

**Approved by David Waters, Director, Planning and Development Services**

**Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer**