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Town of Aurora

# General Committee Report

No. PDS21-128

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**Subject:** Heritage Permit Application File: HPA-2021-14  
15356 Yonge Street (Knowles-Readman House)

**Prepared by:** Brashanthe Manoharan, Planner/ Heritage Planning

**Department:** Planning and Development Services

**Date:** November 16, 2021

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## Recommendation

1. That Report No. PDS21-128 be received; and,
2. That Heritage Permit Application HPA-2021-14 be approved for the removal of the two-storey tail wing of the “Knowles-Readman House”.

## Executive Summary

This report seeks Council’s approval of Heritage Permit Application HPA-2021-14. The purpose of the application is to remove the tail wing on the rear elevation to the “Knowles-Readman House”, which is located at 15356 Yonge Street.

- The property is subject to a 2017 planning application for the development of a five (5) storey, 37 unit apartment building with below grade parking including the restoration of the Knowles-Readman House.
- Staff support the removal of the two-storey tail wing of the “Knowles-Readman House” as it will not adversely impact the heritage value of the dwelling.

## Background

### Property Description

The subject property is located on the west side of Yonge Street, north of Irwin Avenue and immediately south of the Hilary House (see Attachment 1). The subject property is adjacent to two properties designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* – Hillary

House (15372 Yonge Street) and Horton Hall (15342 Yonge Street), and across the street from Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church (15347 Yonge Street) which is also designated for heritage protection.

In 1906, James Knowles, an Aurora area builder and politician, acquired the vacant property. In 1907, Knowles constructed the existing house and lived in it until 1913. Eventually, in 1920, the property was sold to John Readman who moved to the House in 1924 after retiring from his Vaughan farm. His estate continued to own the House until 1951. It was acquired by the current owner in 1981. The Readman House is vacant and many of the interior finishes have been removed.

The property contains a 2 ½ storey solid brick house, constructed in an Edwardian Classicism architectural style. The House a rectangular layout, with a projection towards the rear of the north side that gives the house a slight 'L' shape. The House has a wood clad two storey tail wing.

The HIA prepared by the applicant lists the following heritage attributes of the Readman House (see Section 6.4 of Attachment 3):

- The 2 ½–storey house form building
- The scale, form, height and massing on a rectangular-shaped lot
- The rock-faced concrete blocks above the poured concrete foundation, the moulded concrete lintels above all openings and the moulded concrete lug window sills.
- The red brick walls on the front (east) and side (north and south) elevations
- Window openings on the ground and upper floors of the front and side elevations containing one over one window sashes
- The front and side entrances with their paneled wood doors and the upper floor east door opening
- The two storey porch with its gable roof; square, paneled wood porch posts on paneled concrete piers (ground floor) and wood piers (upper floor); balustrade with carved balusters and the rock-faced concrete block foundation
- The medium pitched, asphalt clad hip roof with projecting eaves, plain soffits and narrow wood frieze; the two smaller gable roofs with their wood shingle siding and decorative trim over the porch and on the north elevation; the latter gable includes a pair of small attic windows
- The dormer window on the south elevation
- The two red brick chimneys
- The placement of the house form building on the lot

- The front yard with its green space in front of the House and walkway to Yonge Street and the north and south side yards
- On the interior, the staircase and remaining door and window casings and baseboards

The two-storey tail wing proposed to be removed is not listed as a heritage attribute.

Although over the years, the Readman House has experienced a few exterior modifications, which are listed below, the structure, when viewed from the street, is largely as originally constructed. The exterior modifications undertaken over time include:

- loss of porch posts and piers – four on the front porch and one on the side porch;
- loss of the north, ground floor balustrade on the front and side porches;
- replacement of a door on the upper floor of the east elevation with a modern door;
- addition of the upper floor door on the north elevation;
- addition of the metal fire escape on the north elevation;
- enlargement of the tail wing including addition of an upper floor;
- alteration of the window opening on the west elevation of the brick part of the House;
- infilling of a window opening on the south elevation; and
- the possible addition of the dormer window on the roof.

### **Application History**

**The property is subject to a 2017 planning application for the development of a five (5) storey, 37 unit apartment building with below grade parking including the restoration of the Knowles-Readman House**

On September 2017, a Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan application was submitted for the restoration of the existing Knowles-Readman House and the development of a five (5) storey, 37 unit apartment building with below grade parking. The existing Knowles-Readman House was proposed to include one dwelling unit below grade.

In November 2017, the proposal was presented to Public Planning where concerns were raised over compatibility with neighbouring properties including the Hilary House. Since then, the applicants have worked closely with area residents, the Aurora Historical Society (AHS), as well as the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) to address these concerns.

In April 2021, the applicants submitted a revised proposal that integrates the Knowles-Readman House and proposes the retention and restoration of most of the House (except for tail wing) as well as the construction of a four (4) storey, 35 unit apartment building with below grade parking (see Attachment 2).

The new apartment building, including balconies and canopy, will be set back between 13.2 metres (43.4 feet) and 17.4 metres (57 feet) from the House above grade. The new building is contemporary in design but uses exterior materials that relate to the heritage buildings on and adjacent to the subject property. The design of the proposed building and site layout will be reviewed further by the Town as part of site plan control.

### **Heritage Designation**

In 2006, Town Council passed By-Law 4804-06.D to designate 15356 Yonge Street under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as part of the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District. Town 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, redevelopment and alteration of the properties and streetscapes located within the boundaries of the District.

### **Heritage Permit Application**

The applicant is proposing to retain in situ and integrate the Knowles-Readman House into a new development for a four-storey apartment building at 15356 Yonge Street. The heritage permit application is to remove the entire tail wing located at the rear of the House to permit the construction of underground parking, loading, and waste storage areas. Removal of the tail wing will enable the location of the underground parking to be close to the rear of the House.

The front and the majority of the south side yards adjacent to the House will be retained as green space as will some of the rear of the property. Vehicle access to the property will be from a northern expansion of the existing driveway at Yonge Street, which will service both the subject property and the Hillary House property.

The House will be treated as a separate building with one residential unit, with parking for the House provided in the underground parking garage of the proposed development. Two large trees in front of the house along Yonge Street (tree 1 - 55cm DBH and 2 - 45cm DBH) (see Attachment 1) are being preserved. Tree 34 to the south is dead and is proposed to be removed. Trees 3-6 to the north are also being removed in order to allow the driveway widening. Three of these trees are in poor or fair/poor condition. The removal of the trees are subject to a future tree removal application.

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Restoration works of the exterior includes the front and side porches, windows, doors, removal of the exterior fire escape, infilling any associated openings, repairs to masonry, roof, trim, and decorative details, removal of tail wing and associated infilling, and treatment of the west wall including the foundation. Restoration of the interior includes repairs to the staircase from ground to upper floor, use or replication of original materials for doors and window casings, baseboards, and flooring. The restoration works may be subject to a future heritage permit application.

The Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) holds a heritage easement agreement on the Hilary House property. As such, a heritage easement is proposed to preserve the home on the subject lands, making the OHT the final approval authority over the shared access to the Hilary House.

## **Analysis**

**Staff support the removal of the two-storey tail wing of the “Knowles-Readman House” as it will not adversely impact the heritage value of the dwelling.**

When the House was initially constructed, it had a one storey, gable roofed tail wing that extended across less than half of the rear of the House. Originally the tail wing was likely used as a pantry (ground floor) and storage (basement). It was enlarged by extending it across the entire rear of the House and adding a second floor. Other previous alterations to the tail wing included changing the cladding and a sliding glass door on the west wall. The removal of the tail wing will facilitate access, loading, and underground parking of the new four-storey apartment building that is proposed behind the House.

As per Section 9.1.1 of the District Plan, the Edwardian Classicism style is described as having elaborate brick work, low-slope hipped ‘cottage’ roof with asphalt shingles, non-symmetrical plan and façade, and wide double hung windows as features to name a few. The tail wing is not a necessary or essential component of the Edwardian Classicism architectural style and was not determined to be a heritage attribute in the Heritage Impact Assessment (see Section 6.4 of Attachment 3). Further, the tail wing has been substantially altered by enlargement, changes in both cladding and roof shape, and insertion of a sliding glass door. It is located at the back of the house, and is

generally not visible from Yonge Street. For these reasons, staff are of the opinion that the removal of the tail wing will not negatively impact the heritage character of the Knowles-Readman House.

## **Advisory Committee Review**

The Heritage Advisory Committee discussed the heritage permit application at its meeting on November 1, 2021. The Committee stated that they were pleased that the applicants will be establishing a heritage easement for the House as it represents the highest form of protection, and that the House is proposed to be restored to its former glory through the proposed redevelopment of the site.

The Heritage Advisory Committee had no objection to the approval of Heritage Permit Application HPA-2021-14.

## **Legal Considerations**

Under Section 42 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, any developments or alterations that would potentially impact the heritage attributes of a designated property 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. 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 2, 2022. Council may extend the review period of a heritage application in a heritage conservation district without any time limit under the Ontario Heritage Act provided it is agreed upon by the owner.

If Council refuses the application, the owner may appeal the refusal to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **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**

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### **Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

1. That Council approve the application with terms and conditions.
2. That Council refuse the Heritage Permit Application HPA-2021-14 with an explanation for the refusal.

### **Conclusions**

Staff have reviewed Heritage Permit Application HPA-2021-14 for 15356 Yonge Street and are satisfied that the removal of the tail wing will not impact the heritage integrity of the Knowles-Readman House.

### **Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Drawings

Attachment 3 – Heritage Impact Assessment

## **Previous Reports**

Heritage Memorandum - Heritage Permit Application File: HPA-2021-14 – November 1, 2021

## **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on October 28, 2021

## **Approvals**

Approved by David Waters, MCIP, RPP, PLE, Director, Planning and Development Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer