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Town of Aurora

# General Committee Report

No. PDS21-105

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**Subject:** Heritage Permit Application File: HPA-2020-04 - 74 Centre Street

**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. PDS21-105 be received; and,
2. That Heritage Permit Application HPA-2020-04 be approved to permit the construction of a two-storey triplex dwelling at 74 Centre Street.

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Council approval of Heritage Permit Application HPA-2020-04 for 74 Centre Street.

The revised heritage permit application is a requirement before the Town can issue a building permit for the development of a two-storey triplex dwelling at 74 Centre Street, which is located in the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District Plan.

- Staff support the two-storey triplex dwelling as it represents a Homestead architectural style and maintains the historical streetscape of Centre Street..
- Staff are of the opinion that the revised design is in keeping with the guidelines of the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District Plan.
- Staff are satisfied that the proposed rear yard parking space maintains adequate rear yard amenity space

## **Background**

### **Property Description**

The subject property is located within the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District on the north side of Centre Street between Spruce Street and Walton Drive. There is an existing 1½ storey Arts and Crafts bungalow on the property that was constructed around 1873. The building has been subject to a number of renovations over the years including a front addition and siding. The original elements of the style may have been either removed or covered as a result of the alterations. There is a mature tree located at the front of the existing dwelling that is considered significant as part of the historical streetscape.

### **Application History**

On November 26, 2020, the current owner submitted a Heritage Permit Application (HPA-2020-04) to permit the construction of two-storey double duplex building with four parking spaces at the rear. The proposal was presented to the HAC on April 5, 2021, whereby concerns regarding building depth, number of windows on the front elevation, and lack of landscape in the rear yard were expressed. Staff worked with the owner to address the concerns, and revised plans were presented to General Committee on July 6, 2021 for consideration.

At the time of the July 6, 2021 General Committee meeting, neighbouring property owners expressed concern regarding the scale of the development and its inconsistency with the historical character of the area, impacts of proposed rear parking, and noted their willingness to work with the owner to address their concerns. The application was deferred to a future General Committee meeting.

On August 6, 2021, the owner submitted a revised proposal to permit the construction of a two-storey triplex dwelling with a total of four (4) parking spaces in the front yard [three (3) new spaces west of the dwelling and one (1) parking space (existing) east of the dwelling), and a cedar tree hedge along the rear property line.

This proposal was presented at the September 13, 2021 Heritage Advisory Committee meeting, whereby comments regarding parking across the front of the house, unit parking distribution and control, front porch depth and proximity/view to parking, potential basement units, and traffic were expressed. The Committee further recommended that the applicant engage an experienced heritage architect to assist

with designing a more compatible with the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District.

On October 4, 2021, the application was reviewed by the Town's Design Review Panel (DRP) where comments relating to site design, parking, amenity space, landscaping, design of verandah, and entrances were discussed. The comments were provided to the owner, who has considered them in the revised proposal.

### **Revised Application**

Following consultations with area residents, HAC members, and DRP, the owner submitted a revised proposal on October 19, 2021 to permit the construction of a two-storey triplex dwelling with a total of four (4) parking spaces [three (3) spaces in the rear yard which will be accessed by a driveway located along the west side yard, and one (1) parking space (existing) in the front yard, east of the dwelling], and a cedar tree hedge along the rear property line (see Attachment 2 – Proposed Drawings). No other vegetation on the property is proposed to be removed.

The proposed building continues the Homestead architectural style of a square shaped building designed with a gable roof. The front façade features a covered verandah that stretches across the entire front elevation and is supported by six columns. The siding will consist of light grey horizontal vinyl. All the windows will be an arts and crafts style. The proposed building has a total of four glazed entrances, two at the front, and one on each side elevation. The large mature tree in the front yard is to remain. The proposed building also features a first and second storey balcony at the rear of the building for amenity space, as well as a basement walk-up entrance on the north (rear) elevation.

### **Heritage Designation**

In 2006, Town Council passed By-Law 4809-06.D to designate 74 Centre Street 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, redevelopment of properties and streetscapes located within the boundaries of the District.

## Analysis

**The Homestead architectural design style is common on Centre Street and is considered compatible with the character of the neighbourhood**

As per the District Plan, 74 Centre Street is described as a “renovated Cape Cod Cottage, perhaps a DVA House”, characterized by its horizontal siding, gable roof, and plain trims around the windows. The proposed triplex dwelling replicates some of the original attributes while maintaining a homestead architectural style, which is characterized by a gable roof, simple details, sash windows, and clapboard finishes. This architectural style is common on Centre Street and is considered compatible with the character of the neighbourhood.

**Staff are of the opinion that the revised design is in keeping with the guidelines of the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District Plan**

As per Section 4.5.1 of the District Plan, new residential buildings should complement the immediate physical context and streetscape by being generally the same scale, orientation, having similar setbacks, and being of like materials and colours. The initial proposal was for a two-storey double duplex building resulting in area residents expressing concern regarding the scale of the development and its inconsistencies with the historical character of the neighbourhood.

In consulting with neighbouring properties, the owner revised the proposal to a triplex dwelling, which is permitted as of right in the R7 zone provided it meets applicable zoning standards including a maximum lot coverage of 35%. The proposal has a coverage of 216.64 square metres (30.3%), which is well under the maximum 35% lot coverage but will require relief from the lot coverage and lot area standards of the R7 zone. Staff are of the opinion that the proposed triplex dwelling is compatible with the scale and massing of the neighbourhood.

Section 9.1.2.4 of the District Plan states that new construction should respect the overall setback pattern of the streetscape on which it is situated in. The proposed triplex has a setback of 7.50 m (24.60 ft), excluding the verandah which has a setback of 5.30 m (17.38m). The main dwelling is setback further than the adjacent dwellings, to facilitate the front verandah that brings the proposed dwelling forward and allows sufficient space for landscaping treatment in the front yard. This will decrease any potential visual dominance issues and are not anticipated to create adverse affects to the streetscape.

Further, Section 4.2 of the District Plan states that new dwelling should be limited to a maximum depth of 16.8 m (55.11 ft), excluding an open porch projection to be consistent with the other existing homes in the neighborhood. The proposed triplex has a total building depth of 15.76 m (51.70 ft). Staff are satisfied that the revised proposal reflects a built form that is in keeping with the design objectives of the Heritage District Plan.

**Staff are satisfied that the proposed verandah is consistent with the porch styles that are currently within the Heritage Conservation District**

On April 5, 2021, HAC suggested the extension of the front verandah across the whole front elevation. As such, the owner has revised the proposal with a verandah that is similar to a Victorian Gothic style open porch with decorative trims under the porch eaves, as described in Section 9.2.8 of the District Plan. The proposed verandah further articulates the front elevation while providing leisure space in the front yard. As such, staff are satisfied that the proposed verandah is consistent with the open/closed porch styles that are currently within the Heritage Conservation District.

**Staff are satisfied that the proposed rear yard parking space maintains adequate rear yard amenity space**

The previous design proposed a total of four (4) parking spaces at the front [three (3) new spaces west of the dwelling and one (1) parking space (existing) east of the dwelling]. On September 13, 2021, HAC expressed their concerns with parking across the front of the house and its visual impacts to the streetscape. Following comments received at the October 4, 2021 DRP meeting, the plan has been revised to provide four (4) parking spaces: three (3) spaces in the rear which will be access by a driveway located along the west side yard, and one (1) parking space (existing) east of the dwelling.

The parking area has been adjusted to accommodate a landscape buffer with pyramidal cedars along the rear property line to help lessen the visual impact on the adjacent property to the north. The existing vegetation along the east property line will further mitigate potential impacts of the parking spaces on the abutting property to the east. Further, although the rear yard will be predominately hardscaped due to the proposed rear yard parking, the rear elevation features a two-storey balcony, which provides a private outdoor amenity area for the units.

The proposal is subject to site plan control. Comments relating, but not limited to, the physical layout of the development, parking, and tree preservation will be addressed in further detail through the site plan and the site plan agreement. As such, staff are

satisfied that the proposed rear yard parking provides adequate rear-yard amenity space.

### **Potential Additional Units in Basement**

Secondary units are not permitted in triplex buildings as per the Town's Zoning By-law. In the event that one is proposed, it will require Town Planning Approval (i.e., Minor Variance or Zoning By-law Amendment). Prior to the issuance of the building permit, the applicant is required to sign an undertaking stating that the basement will not be converted into an apartment. As a precautionary measure, staff will include a clause in the Site Plan Agreement that will be registered on title to advise future owners that a secondary dwelling unit is not permitted.

### **Advisory Committee Review**

The Heritage Advisory Committee discussed Heritage Permit Application HPA-2020-04 at its meeting on September 13, 2021. The Committee expressed their concerns relating to the extent of the owner's community consultation, parking across the front of the house, unit parking distribution and control, front porch depth and proximity/view to parking, potential basement units, and traffic. The Committee expressed concern about setting a precedent with the addition of a multi-unit dwelling in the heritage conservation district and questioned the need for intensification within the District.

The Committee recommended that the applicant engage an experienced heritage architect to assist with a design that is more compatible with the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District.

### **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.

In June 2021, the owner consented to an additional 90-day extension, which expires on October 14, 2021. On August 27, 2021, the owner consented to another 60-day extension which expires on December 13, 2021. 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 direct financial implications arising from this report. Development Charges will be owing at the appropriate time in the process prior to the issuance of a building permit.

## 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 refuse the Heritage Permit Application HPA-2020-04 with an explanation for the refusal.
2. Approval of the application with terms and conditions.

## **Conclusions**

Staff are satisfied that the revised proposal reflects a built form that is in keeping with the design objectives of the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation Heritage District Plan. Staff recommend to Council that Heritage Permit Application HPA-2020-04 for 74 Centre Street be approved.

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Proposed Drawings

## **Previous Reports**

Heritage Memorandum - Heritage Permit Application File: HPA-2020-04 - September 13, 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