

Part B

District Policies

4.0 District Policies—Buildings and Sites

4.1 Overview

The Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District has a wealth of heritage resources, and a recognizable heritage character. The heritage character of the District is enhanced by streetscapes, planting, fencing, open spaces, vistas, valleys and streams.

The Plan and its Policies anticipate change. Heritage buildings will be restored, reused, and have additions. Non-heritage buildings will also be added to or altered. New buildings will be constructed. The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that these activities are complementary to both the individual heritage buildings and the overall heritage environment in the District.

To preserve and enhance the heritage character of the District, policies have been developed concerning the following.

- heritage buildings;
- non-heritage buildings;
- new buildings;
- landscapes.

The Policies are supported by illustrative guidelines, which are found in Section 9.0 of the District Plan.



The old Thornhill Hotel, which burned in 1950. MM-Weaver #290.

4.2 Heritage Buildings

Thornhill is well known for its attractive collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century village buildings of varied types and styles. The heritage buildings in the District are predominantly residential in origin, although many of the houses along Yonge Street have been converted to commercial uses. There are also two churches, a school, a commercial block, and several outbuildings with heritage merit.

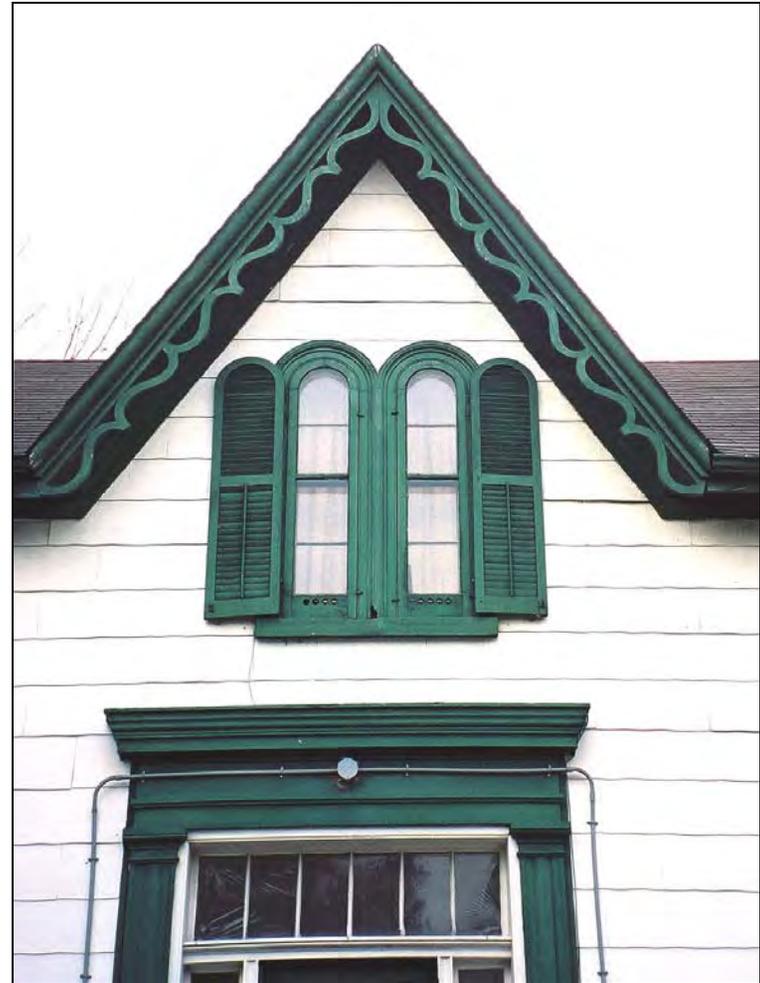
Heritage buildings, as identified by the *City of Vaughan Listing of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Value*, are the most important and visible resources found in the District. The retention of these buildings remains essential to the success of the District. Therefore, the intent is to conserve and restore these resources, prevent their demolition and take extraordinary measures to ensure their protection.

The conservation of heritage buildings involves actions or processes that are aimed at safeguarding the heritage attributes of the resource so as to retain its heritage value and extend its physical life. Conservation can involve preservation, rehabilitation, restoration or a combination of these actions. These terms are defined as follows:

- **Preservation:** The action or process of protecting, maintaining, and/or stabilizing the heritage attributes (materials, form, integrity) of the entire heritage resource (or an individual component of the resource) while protecting its heritage value.
- **Rehabilitation:** The action or process of ensuring a continuing use or a compatible contemporary use of a heritage resource (or an individual component) through repair, alterations, or additions, while protecting its heritage value. This can include replacing missing historic features either as an accurate replica of the feature or may be a new design that is compatible with the style, era, and character of the heritage resource.
- **Restoration:** The action or process of accurately revealing, recovering, or representing the state of the heritage resource (or of an individual component), as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value. This could include removal of features from other periods in its history and the reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period (based on clear evidence and detailed knowledge).

4.2.1 Conservation of Heritage Buildings

- a) Conserve and protect the heritage value of each heritage resource. Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter its intact or repairable heritage attributes.
- b) Conserve changes to a heritage resource which, over time, have become heritage attributes in their own right.
- c) Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach involving minimal intervention.
- d) Evaluate the existing condition of heritage attributes to determine the appropriate intervention needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention.
- e) Maintain heritage attributes on an ongoing basis to avoid major conservation projects and high costs.
- f) Repair rather than replace heritage attributes using recognized conservation methods. Respect historical materials and finishes by repairing with like materials.
- g) Replace, using like materials, any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of heritage attributes.
- h) Correct inappropriate interventions to heritage attributes.
- i) Make any intervention needed to preserve heritage attributes physically and visually compatible with the heritage resource, and identifiable upon close inspection.
- j) Respect documentary evidence. Conservation work should be based on a thorough examination of physical and archival evidence. Where there is insufficient evidence, it may be appropriate to make the design, form, material, and detailing of the new feature or element compatible with the character of the heritage resource as commonly found in the District.



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4.2.2 Alterations and Additions to Heritage Buildings

- a) Conserve the heritage value and heritage attributes of a heritage resource when creating any new addition or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the heritage resource.
- b) Ensure that any new addition, alteration, or related new construction will not have detrimental impact on the heritage resource if the new work is removed in future.
- c) Alterations and additions to the heritage resource shall conform with the guidelines found in Section 9.3.

4.2.3 Relocation of Heritage Buildings

- a) Relocation or dismantling of a heritage building will be employed only as a last resort.
- b) Buildings of cultural heritage value shall be retained in their original locations whenever possible. Before such a building can be approved for relocation to any other site, all options for on-site retention will be investigated. The following alternatives, in order of priority, will be examined prior to any approval of relocation for a heritage building:
 - Retention of the building on site in its original use.
 - Retention of the building on site in an adaptive re-use.
 - Relocation of the building to another part of the original site.
 - Relocation of the building to another site in the District
 - Relocation of the building to a sympathetic site within the City of Vaughan.
- c) A threatened heritage building relocated to the District from another site should generally be compatible in style and type to the existing development patterns in the District.

4.2.4 Demolition of Heritage Buildings

- a) The demolition of heritage buildings within the District is not supported.
- b) The City, under the Ontario Heritage Act, may refuse a demolition permit for either an individually designated building or any building located within the District.

4.2.5 Salvage of Historic Building Materials and Features

- a) In the rare case where a heritage building is permitted to be demolished, the building will be documented and the proponents of the demolition will be required to advertise in the local press, the availability of the building for relocation or salvage of architectural features, as a condition of the demolition permit.
- b) The City may require the demolition of a building to be undertaken in such a manner as to expose the construction techniques used for documentation and educational purposes.



Taking away 7396 Yonge Street in Vaughan, June 26, 1981. It became 148 John Street in Markham. MM-Weaver #42.

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4.2.6 Use of a Heritage Building

- a) The uses permitted for a heritage building will be governed by the zoning by-law.
- b) Uses that require minimal or no changes to heritage attributes are supported.

4.3 Non-Heritage Buildings

4.3.1 Additions and Alterations

The majority of the properties in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District are non-heritage buildings. Many of these properties are good neighbours to the heritage buildings in scale, massing, and design. A prime example is found in the Cape Cod cottages and Victory houses, which were inspired by the same New England precedents that the United Empire Loyalists brought to Upper Canada. There are also newer buildings that have been consciously designed to complement the heritage buildings in the village, with varying degrees of success.

The 1984 Heritage District Plan provided very little guidance on alterations and additions to non-heritage buildings. This proved to be confusing for both property owners and members of the municipal heritage advisory committee. In general, property owners seemed to fall into one of two camps: those that desired to introduce changes to their properties that further reflected the historic architectural styles and features of the area so as to better fit into the area's historic character, and those that preferred changes that represented the existing style of their building. Both approaches are considered acceptable.

4.3.2 Design Approach

Alterations and additions to non-heritage buildings in the District should be consistent with one of two design approaches: historical conversion or contemporary alteration as described in the Guidelines in Section 9.4.

4.3.3 Demolition of Non-Heritage Buildings

Generally, the demolition of a non-heritage building is not supported, if the building's scale, massing and/or architectural style is supportive of the overall heritage character of the District.

4.4 New Residential Buildings

New residential buildings on local streets (i.e., single detached dwellings) will have respect for and be compatible with the heritage character of the District. Designs for new residential buildings will be based on the patterns and proportions of 19th-century and early 20th-century building stock that are currently existing or once existed in the village. Architectural elements, features, and decorations should be sympathetic to those found on heritage buildings.

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4.4.1 Design Approach

- a) The design of new residential buildings will be products of their own time, but should reflect one of the historic architectural styles traditionally found in the District.
- b) New residential buildings will complement the immediate physical context and streetscape by: being generally the same height, width, and orientation of adjacent buildings; being of similar setback; being of like materials and colours; and using similarly proportioned windows, doors, and roof shapes.
- c) New residential building construction will respect natural landforms, drainage, and existing mature vegetation.
- d) Larger new residential buildings will have varied massing, to reflect the small and varied scale of the historical village.
- e) Historically appropriate heights for new residential buildings are considered to be 1 ½ or 2 storeys. New residential buildings should be not less than 80% or more than 120% of the average height of the adjacent residential buildings. Notwithstanding the height limit above, two storey houses are permitted next to one storey houses if the ground floor is no more than 1 metre above original grade. In all instances the height of new buildings shall conform to the City's Zoning By-law.
- f) New residential building construction in the District will conform to the guidelines found in Section 9.5.2.

4.5 Landscapes

Landscapes and landscaping help to define the character of the District and to provide an appropriate setting for its historic buildings. The Ontario Heritage Act extends alteration controls to cover property features, in addition to the exteriors of buildings and structures. Property features can include trees, vegetation, pathways, fences and other landscape elements that are of cultural heritage value or interest.

4.5.1 Landscape Treatment

Existing historical landscapes will be conserved. The introduction of complementary landscapes to the heritage environment will be encouraged. Landscape Guidelines are provided in Section 9.7.

4.5.2 Trees and Shrubs

- a) Mature trees will be preserved except where removal is necessary due to disease or damage, or to ensure public health and safety, as certified by a professional arborist. Lost trees should be replaced with maturing specimens (60-70mm standard caliper).
- b) New trees and shrubs should be hardy, long-living, and suitable for their environment, in conformance with the guidelines found in Section 9.7.
- c) Planting should not obscure heritage buildings, but can frame and accentuate heritage buildings and other important features. Planting should screen less attractive sites and prospects in the District.



Landscaping is a significant element in the District character.

4.5.3 Fences

- a) Fences will be regulated by the municipal fence by-law.
- b) Existing historical fences will be preserved. The erection of fences of historical design, is encouraged. See Section 9.2.11 for guidelines.

4.5.4 Driveways (Residential)

- a) Driveways are to be kept to a narrow width in order to preserve the expanse of the front yard.
- b) Circular driveways are not permitted.
- c) Driveway entrances will not be gated.
- d) Residential driveways will conform to the Guidelines in Section 9.6.6.
- e) Driveways will be regulated by the City's Zoning By-law.

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4.6 Commercial Features

4.6.1 Commercial Signage

- a) Commercial signage will be regulated by the municipal Sign By-law.
- b) The Thornhill Special Sign District should conform to the Heritage District Boundary.
- c) Commercial signage in the District will be consistent with the guidelines found in Section 9.5.3.8
- d) Artistic and commercial murals are not permitted.

4.6.2 Commercial Awnings

Awnings on commercial buildings will be consistent with the guidelines found in Section 9.5.3.8

4.6.3 Commercial Patios

- a) Restaurant or commercial patios will be regulated by the Zoning By-law.
- b) Restaurant or commercial patios will be consistent with the guidelines found in Section 9.5.3.11

4.6.4 Commercial Parking Lots

- a) Attractive, well-designed parking lots that complement the special character of the District are supported. Parking will not be located in front of buildings.
- b) Parking lots will be appropriately screened. Features such as lighting, signage, and amenities used in parking lots will be consistent in design terms with those selected for use throughout the District.
- c) The consolidation and connection of commercial parking lots, to improve the efficiency and appearance of the parking facilities, is supported due to the collaborative nature and interdependence of the various commercial enterprises on Yonge Street and Centre Street.
- d) The development of underground parking facilities, appropriately located and accessed, is supported.