

Communication C1

HN - Item 3  
Submitted by Deputy  
G. Borean.  
March 26, 2014

PHILIP GOLDSMITH | ARCHITECT

24 March 2014

Heritage Committee  
City of Vaughan,  
Maple, Ontario

Re: 20 Bell Court, Kleinburg

Committee members

I understand that the application for approval for a proposed new dwelling at 20 Bell Court will again come before your Committee the evening of 26th of March 2014. Unfortunately I can not attend the meeting that night due to a prior engagement and so I am writing this letter in support of approval of the design for the proposed house.

I have reviewed the relevant sections of the Conservation District Study and Plan for the Kleinburg Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and will comment on these below. In addition to reviewing the Guidelines I have spoken with their author. This letter does not comment on City of Vaughan Zoning Bylaw or other matters.

In my experience, the general objective of an HCD is to Conserve original buildings and cultural landscapes and when work is proposed within them, that it be in keeping with good heritage practice. This includes objectives for preservation, restoration and reuse. For new buildings in conservation districts objectives are generally focused on the idea that new buildings should fit into the context of the original buildings in scale, form and general appearance in order to preserve the character of the district, but not to mean that a new building be a copy of a heritage building which would obscure the line between what is original and what is new. To be sure, it is a delicate balance.

The Study and Plan (S&P) for the Kleinburg HCD captures these common concepts.

In section 3.2 Guiding Principles, the S&P includes a copy of the Provinces "Eight Guiding Principles". Principle 7 states "legibility, New work should be distinguishable from old. Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new."

For me this means that the objective of "fit" does not, indeed, should not, require that a new building be a copy of an old one but that the sensitivity of its design respect local character while referencing contextual forms, materials and scale.

Section 5.2.5 of the S&P addresses concepts for Future Development in the HCD which I find it to be consistent with the principle stated above. It states the purpose is: "to encourage new development that will enhance the heritage character of the District on vacant lands and replacement construction or alterations to non heritage buildings.

To guide new development so that it can provide for contemporary needs, and to ensure its design will be compatible with and complimentary to the character of the District and the heritage resources within."

Once again the S&P does not require a building be a copy of heritage but describes fit as being compatible with and complimentary to.

This concept is further reinforced in section 6.3, Policies for New Development. This section goes further and notes that new development should be sympathetic in siting, scale, material, texture, and general design to the heritage buildings around them. The S&P does not say a copy of, it says sympathetic to, which again is consistent with the principle of fitting into the district while being of its time.

### 3.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Ministry of Culture's Architectural Conservation Note No. 1 lists Eight Guiding Principles in the Conservation of Historic Properties. These are quoted in full below:

1. **Respect for Documentary Evidence:** Do not base restoration on conjecture. Conservation work should be based on historic documentation such as historical photographs, drawings and physical evidence.
2. **Respect for Original Location:** Do not move buildings unless there is no other means to save them.  
Site is an integral component of a building. Change in site diminishes heritage value considerably.
3. **Respect for Historic Materials:** Repair/conservé rather than replace building materials and finishes, except where absolutely necessary.  
Minimal intervention maintains the historical content of the resource.
4. **Respect for Original Fabric:** Repair with like materials.  
Repair to return the resource to its prior condition, without altering its integrity.
5. **Respect for the Building's History:** Do not restore to one period at the expense of another period.  
Do not destroy later additions to a house solely to restore to a single time period.
6. **Reversibility:** Alterations should be able to be returned to original conditions. This conserves earlier building design and technique.  
e.g. When a new door opening is put into a stone wall, the original stones are numbered, removed and stored, allowing for future restoration.
7. **Legibility:** New work should be distinguishable from old.  
Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time, and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new.
8. **Maintenance:** With continuous care, future restoration will not be necessary.  
With regular cleanup, major conservation projects and their high costs can be avoided.

### 5.2.5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DISTRICT

To encourage new development that will enhance the heritage character of the District as Infill construction on vacant lands and replacement construction or alterations to non-heritage buildings.

To guide new development so that it can provide for contemporary needs, and to ensure its design will be compatible with and complimentary to the character of the District and the heritage resources within.

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I believe insisting a new building use exact historic details as if it were a historic building misses this point.

Section 6.3 refers to Section 9.5 for guidance on new development. The application of Section 9.5 I believe should be understood in the context of Sections 3.2, 5.2.5 and 6.3 as reviewed above.

Section 9.1 states "the best test of new work in the district is whether or not it shows good manners towards its neighbours and neighbourhood" and "The objective of these Guidelines is not to prevent change, but to ensure change is complimentary to the heritage character of the District and enhances, rather than harms it."

Section 9.2 when referencing Architectural Styles states "new developments should be designed in a style that is consistent with the vernacular style of the community". It is my opinion that a late Victorian Style base for the design of 20 Bell Court is such a style.

Section 9.5.1 states "New Development within the District should conform to qualities established by neighbouring heritage buildings and the overall character of the setting. Designs should reflect a suitable local heritage precedent style."

The guidelines go on to provide examples of various period styles for both Heritage and Non Heritage Buildings and to identify many typical period details associated with these styles for reference.

It is my opinion that this guidance directs design for new, or replacement buildings to conform to qualities and to reflect local heritage appropriately but as stated above not to attempt to be exact copies of heritage building but to be new buildings that fit the context.

## 9.1 OVERVIEW

The purpose of these Design Guidelines is to serve as a reference for anyone contemplating alterations or new development within the Hamilton Westville Heritage Conservation District. They are intended to clarify and illustrate, in a useful way, the two equally important factors found in the District. The first guidelines are provided by the existing heritage buildings and the character of their settings. The best test of new work in the District is whether or not it shows good manners towards its heritage neighbours and neighbourhood. The District Plan examines the past but looks to the future. It recognizes that change must and will come to a living and evolving District. The objective of these Guidelines is not to prevent change, but to ensure that change is complementary to the heritage character of the District and enhances, rather than harms it.

## Extract from 9.2

The guidelines that follow, reference is made to architectural styles for all types of buildings in the District, existing Heritage Buildings, existing non-heritage buildings, and new development.

Additional guidelines for new development should be consistent with the style of the principal building. New developments should be designed in a style that is consistent with the vernacular style of the community. All construction should be of a particular style, rather than a hybrid one. Recent developments have tended to use hybrid designs, with ornate details and proportions for larger homes, the French manner of design style that is appropriate for the District.

Hamilton Westville Heritage Conservation District Study and Plan, 110

## 9.5 NEW DEVELOPMENT

### 9.5.1 OVERVIEW

The overall heritage character of the District is composed of buildings, streetscapes, landscapes, and views. This overall character has more significance than any individual building, even if it is one of the finest. Within the design of any individual building, architectural elements contribute to the character of the public realm of the street. Massing, materials, scale, proportions, rhythm, composition, texture, and siting all contribute to the perception of whether or not a building fits its context. Different settings within the district have different characters of siting, landscaping and streetscapes.

New development within the District should conform to qualities established by neighbouring heritage buildings, and the overall character of the setting. Designs should reflect a suitable local heritage precedent style. Research should be conducted so that the style chosen is executed properly, with suitable proportions, decoration, and detail. The following guidelines describing the dominant elements that contribute to the heritage character of the District, are divided according to the principal settings found in the District.

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We must consider then whether the proposed design is suitably contextual while at the same time being a contemporary home.

Bell Court is recognized as being an enclave of mid-century ranch style bungalows. They are deemed to be non-heritage structures and therefore suitable sites for redevelopment. It is our understanding Bell Court properties bridge between the Core Area and Valley Lands and Bell Court itself is in the Core Area as shown on the HCD Boundary Map.

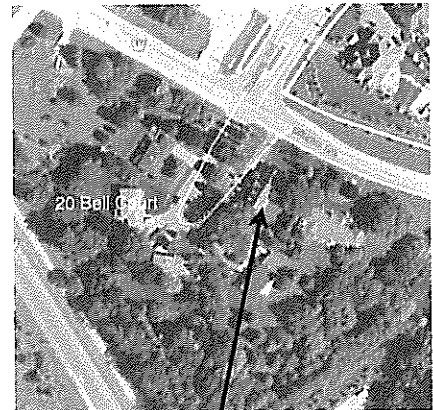
From this perspective, the proposed house at 20 Bell Court faces toward and will be understood to be a part of the Core Area.

The rear of the house faces a back yard that runs down a slope and terminates in a treed lot line along Hwy 27. From the rear the house will be considerably elevated above Hwy 27 and screened by existing trees. This house will not be seen as a building on Hwy 27.

The immediate neighbours to this proposed house are mid-century ranch style bungalows, however, there is a large single late Victorian house located off Bell Court to the immediate south. From Bell Court to the more densely developed areas of historic Kleinberg is a considerable distance. With both Victorian and Ranch Styles as neighbouring houses it would have arguably been possible within the Guidelines to select either as the basis for the design of the proposed house. The Guidelines suggest a contemporary style for Bell Court (sec. 9.4.2)

In selecting a "suitable style" for the proposed house the owners have proposed a late Victorian based design a reflection of the Victorian house to the south side of Bell Court.

I believe the design as proposed suitably fits the context from an architectural perspective. Although the adjacent houses are Ranch Style



Neighbouring Victorian House south side of Bell Court

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designs, they are considered non-heritage. The house nearby that could be considered heritage is the neighbouring Victorian house.

Using the criteria identified in Sec. 6.3 “new development should be sympathetic in siting, scale, material, texture, and general design to the heritage buildings around them.” Is the proposed house sympathetic?

Siting; The house is proposed to be located on the footprint of the original house, sited with a similar setback but with smaller side yards. The setback to Hwy 27 is similar and the house generally sits at the crest of the hill similar to other houses in this area, however, today it is not possible to see the site and it will have little to no presence on Hwy 27.

Scale; The proposed house is a 2 storey Victorian design with a 1-1/2 storey garage wing. This is consistent with other similar Victorian Houses including the neighbouring Victorian house which is a tall 1-1/2 storey and similar to other Kleinburg Core Area houses.

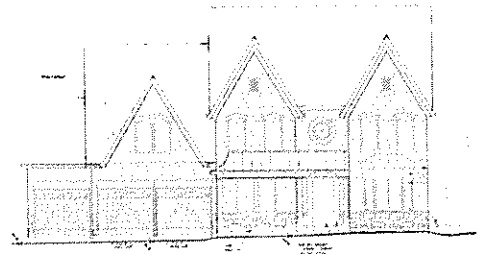
Material; It is proposed that the house is constructed of red brick with stone base. These materials are common in Victorian Houses generally and the neighbouring Victorian house is also red brick.

Texture; the proposed house has many of the characteristic design details of the Victorian style including pointed gables, a single storey front porch with Victorian columns and a bell cast roof, a bay window on a stone base with bell cast roof and, period style braced wood garage doors, 2/2 double hung windows with arched brick voussoir lintels and a turreted projecting bay at the rear. All of this detail is consistent with Victorian Style design and lends a historic texture to the proposed house.

General Design; the general design is that of a late Victorian house which is sympathetic to the neighbouring Victorian house and other Victorian houses in the HCD. As a contemporary house it includes functions such



View to site from Highway 27, Trees completely obscure the view. Google Earth



Proposed Front Elevation. GG Architects

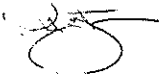
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as the garage and rear walk-out deck which were not a part of Victorian life but which, nonetheless are designed in a compatible manner to suit a Victorian Style. The design details of the house draw, as we showed in our previous presentation, inspiration and correlation with Victorian period precedents. This is not a proposal for house in a completely foreign style but is stylistically similar to the neighbouring Victorian house to the south. Although the house is not Victorian in every respect its General Design fits, is compatible with, complementary and sympathetic to the context and it is my opinion meets the intent of the Guidelines.

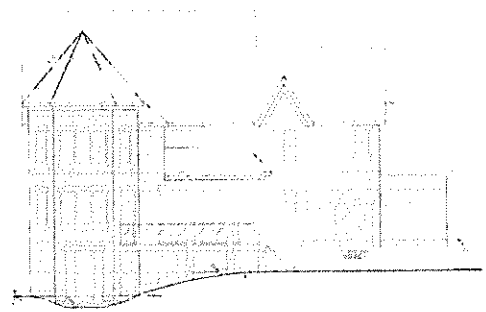
If the test of a successful new development is "whether or not it shows good manners towards its neighbours and neighbourhood" and is "complimentary to the heritage character of the District and enhances, rather than harms it." (9.1) I believe this proposal suitably fits its context and meets this test.

Should you have any questions please contact me.

Sincerely



Philip Goldsmith, OAAS, BES, BARCH, CAHP



Proposed Rear Elevation. GG Architects