

# Heritage Conservation District Study

## Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District City of Toronto



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Prepared for  
The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

By

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Generous support provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation

December 2012



# Acknowledgements

This project was carried out under the direction of Professor Robert Shipley, Chair of the Heritage Resources Centre (HRC) at the University of Waterloo. The Project Coordinator was Kayla Jonas Galvin. Data collection and research was conducted by Lindsay Benjamin, a Master's student from the School of Planning, Christopher Sanderson, a PhD student in Planning, and Beatrice Tam, a recent graduate of the School of Planning.

This research endeavour represented a joint project between the Heritage Resources Centre and the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO). The HRC Staff members are particularly grateful to the ACO Manager Rollo Myers, President Susan Ratcliffe and ACO board member Richard Longley for their time, effort and guidance.

The ACO is indebted to Dr. Robert Shipley and Kayla Jonas Galvin for their assistance with the preparation of the *Ontario Trillium Foundation* grant application.

The project was undertaken in support of the volunteer efforts of ACO branch presidents and members, Heritage Ottawa, members of the local heritage committees and interested citizens across Ontario. These dedicated volunteers surveyed residences in the Heritage Conservation District and provided energy and purpose to the project.

We would like to thank staff at the Ministry of Culture for providing information and advice about the project: Paul King, Chris Mahood and Bert Duclos.

We would also like to thank the staff at the Heritage Resources Centre who are involved in other endeavours, yet provided support and helped with the fieldwork and administrative tasks during this project: Marg Rowell, Melissa Davies and Kristy May.

Recognition is deserved as well for Professor Rob Feick and Scott McFarlane at the University of Waterloo for their help obtaining and formatting the GIS maps. Thanks are extended to Dr. Susan Sykes at the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo for the thorough and timely approval of our research design.

We would also like to thank the local volunteers and municipal staff for their time and effort surveying residents, answering interview questions and helping to gather other vital information.

Thank you!

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

- The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to designate Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs)
- Heritage Conservation Districts allow municipalities to guide future changes in these areas of special character
- This study of Heritage Conservation Districts has been funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and is a joint effort among volunteers of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, the Heritage Resources Centre and volunteer historical societies across the province
- 32 districts designated in or before 2002 were examined

## Background of Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District

- Located in the City of Toronto
- Consists of 230 residential and commercial properties
- District was designated in 2002
- Plan was written by IBI Group

## Study Approach

- Resident surveys were conducted door-to-door by HRC staff
- Land use mapping and a streetscape evaluation was conducted
- Sales history trends were collected from GeoWarehouse and analyzed
- Key stakeholders were interviewed

## Analysis of Key Findings

- The implied goal to preserve existing buildings and streetscapes has been met
- Twelve of 13 people surveyed are very satisfied or satisfied with living in the district
- Information about applications for alterations was inconclusive
- Designation is a minor factor compared to other drivers and property values are much the same as the surrounding areas
- Overall, the Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District appears to be a successful planning initiative

## Recommendations

The following aspects of the district represent areas for improvement:

- Track applications for alterations in a comprehensive and easily accessible manner

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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Heritage Act and Designation

The *Ontario Heritage Act* (Subsection 41. (1)) enables municipalities to designate Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs). A Heritage Conservation District is an area with “a concentration of heritage resources with special character or historical association that distinguishes it from its surroundings.”<sup>1</sup> Districts can be areas that are residential, commercial, rural, industrial, institutional or mixed use. According to the Ministry of Culture, “the significance of a HCD often extends beyond its built heritage, structures, streets, landscape and other physical and special elements to include important vistas and views between buildings and spaces within the district.”<sup>2</sup>

The designation of a Heritage Conservation District allows municipalities to protect the special character of an area by guiding future changes. The policies for guiding changes are outlined in a Heritage Conservation District Plan that can be prepared by city staff, local residents or heritage consultants. A Heritage Conservation District Plan must also include a statement of objectives and guidelines that outline how to achieve these objectives<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.2 Rationale for Heritage Conservation District Study

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, volunteers from branches of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) and Historical Societies partnered with the Heritage Resources Centre (HRC) at the University of Waterloo to undertake Phase 2 of a province-wide research program to answer the question: have Heritage Conservation Districts in Ontario been successful heritage planning initiatives over a period of time?

Many people now consider the Heritage Conservation District to be one of the most effective tools not only for historic conservation but for good urban design and sound planning. At least 102 HCDs are already in existence in Ontario with the earliest designations dating back to 1980. While more are being planned and proposed all the time there is also a residual resistance to HCDs from some members of the public. Typically this resistance centres on concerns about loss of control over one’s property, impact on property values and bureaucratic processes. On the other hand, the benefits of HCDs, establishing high standards of maintenance and design, allowing the development of and compliance with shared community values and the potential for increasing property values, are not as widely perceived as might be the case.

Since it takes a period of time for the impacts of district designation to manifest, Phase 1 of the study concentrated on examining the oldest districts, those designated in or before 1992. Phase 2 continued to look at well-established districts. Applying the criterion of residential, commercial or mixed-use areas designated in 2002 or before, 32 HCDs were examined. These districts are found in or near the following areas: Cobourg, Hamilton, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Markham, Toronto, Centre Wellington, Orangeville, London, Stratford, and the Region of Waterloo. Figure 1 shows that the 32 districts have a wide geographic distribution and represent various community sizes. The types of districts that are part of the study are also evident.

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 5

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 5

<sup>3</sup> Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 12

Geographical Distribution		Community Size		Type	
Northern	0	Small Community	11	Commercial	6
Eastern	7	Medium Sized	10	Residential	20
Central	19	Large City	11	Mixed	6
South Western	6				
	32		32		32

*Figure 1: Distribution of Heritage Conservation Districts under examination.*

The study sought to answer the following specific questions in each of the 32 Heritage Conservation Districts:

- Have the goals or objectives set out in the District Plan been met?
- Are residents content living in the Heritage Conservation District?
- Is it difficult to make alterations to buildings in the Heritage Conservation District?
- Have property values been impacted by the designation of the district?
- What are the key issues in the district?

These questions were answered through the contributions of local volunteers from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario branches, Historical Societies and local heritage committees as well as through communication with local municipal officials.

## 2.0 Background of the Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District

### 2.1 Description of the District

The Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District is located in the City of Toronto. It is situated along Hazelton Road between Davenport Road and Yorkville Road. The district consists of 230 buildings. Most properties are residential, however commercial properties are located at the south end of Hazelton Road and Scollard Street .

### 2.2 Cultural Heritage Value of the District

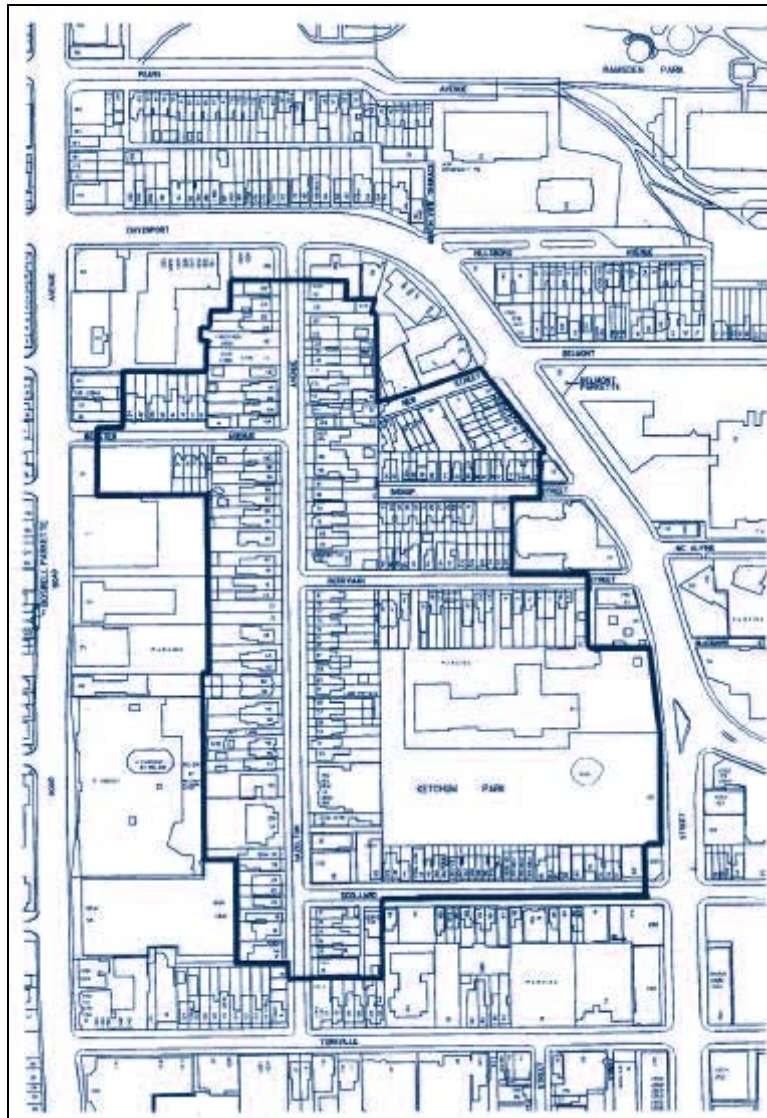
The Heritage Conservation District Plan describes the heritage character as follows:

“The character of the District should reflect and reinforce the Hazelton “village” neighbourhood. The coherence of the district is dependent on the co-operative efforts of both owners and the city to maintain and enhance this character:

- The similar architectural style and overall proportions of the residential buildings balance and compliment one another
- The amount of Victorian details, rhythm of pitched roofs, windows and doors, establish a distinct visual atmosphere
- The well maintained buildings and landscapes contribute to the unique character of the neighbourhood
- Sidewalks have a canopy of mature trees and are complimented by small, intensely planted front yard gardens
- Parking is allocated primarily to the street with very few cars between building face and the street
- The stable built form character of 2 to 3 storey house form buildings in the district is in contrast to the areas around which have changed and continue to substantially change
- The original residential buildings on the periphery of the district are in transition to retail/commercial use generally within the house form envelopes” (p. 3)



## 2.3 Location of the District



*Figure 2: Map of Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District*

## 2.4 Designation of the District

The designation of Yorkville-Hazelton was initiated by local residents. The Heritage Conservation District Study was completed in 2002 by IBI Group. The Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District is protected By-law No. 622-2002, adopted by the City of Toronto in 2002.

## 3.0 Study Approach

### 3.1 Resident Surveys

Residents of the Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District were asked a series of questions related to their experiences and satisfaction living in the district. These surveys were conducted door-to-door by HRC staff. Of the 229 properties, a sample was taken resulting in 100 surveys being conducted. Only 13 of the 100 residents answered surveys, representing a 13% response rate. The tabulated findings of the survey are presented in Appendix A.

### 3.2 Townscape Survey

A Townscape Survey of Yorkville-Hazelton was conducted in September 2012. The purpose of this survey is to provide an objective way to evaluate streetscapes. There are two elements to the survey; land use mapping and a streetscape evaluation. Land use maps, which represent the current use of buildings in the district, were produced for Yorkville-Hazelton (see Appendix B). The streetscape evaluation involves the use of a view assessment pro forma that generates scores between one and five for 25 factors in a view. Views were photographed and evaluated (see Appendices C and D). The summary of the scores is included as Appendix E.

### 3.3 Real Estate Data

Sales history trends for properties within each Heritage Conservation District (HCD) under study were calculated and compared against non-designated properties in the immediate vicinity of each district. Sales records spanning an average 30 year period were identified for individual district properties using GeoWarehouse™, an online subscription database commonly used by real estate professionals.

To measure the market performance of properties within a given HCD the designated properties were compared with surrounding real estate. Properties within the HCD that had more than one record of sale were plotted on graphs and compared with the average sales figures for properties outside the HCD and within a 1 km radius. This comparison was done using three factors: first the line of best fit (a trend line derived from regression analysis) was compared to establish which was rising or falling at the greater rate, second the period between designated property sales was compared with that segment of the longer line that coincided with it and third the gap between the designated property sale value and the average for that year was noted. From this the judgement was made whether the designated property performed above, at, or below the average.

It is expected that the use of average sales prices from the immediate vicinity of a district as opposed to the use of municipality-wide sales trends would provide a more accurate comparative record to show how the district designation status itself affects property values. Aside from the locational factor (i.e. properties located within a district), it must be recognized that this study did not take into account a variety of other issues that can also affect sales prices (e.g. architecture, lot size, zoning etc.). This comparison simply looks at the single variable of designation. A total of 872 properties sales histories were calculated as part of this study

### 3.4 Key Stakeholder Interviews

Individuals that had special knowledge of each district were interviewed for their experiences and opinions. These stakeholders often included the local planner, the chair or a member of the Municipal Heritage Committee and members of the community association or BIA. Two people were interviewed for the Heritage Conservation District. Both interviews were conducted over the phone. Those interviewed included Preservation Officers for the City of Toronto. A summary of the responses is included in Appendix G. Interviewees are not identified in accordance with the University of Waterloo policy on research ethics.

### 3.5 Requests for Alterations

With respect to the requests for alterations within the Heritage Conservation District, the study wished to answer these questions in each district:

- How many applications for building alterations have been made?
- How many applications have been approved or rejected?
- How long did the application process take for individual properties?
- What type of changes were the applications for?

For the Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District, the information regarding the number of applications for alterations and the time it took to receive approvals was not available.

## 4.0 Analysis of Key Findings

### 4.1 Have the goals or objectives been met?

The Heritage Conservation District Plan does not list any specific goals. However, as a heritage district, it is implied that the goal is to preserve existing buildings and streetscapes.

The objective to maintain and conserve buildings appears to have been met. Drawing on measures collected in the Townscape Survey, conserved elements evident, quality of conservation work, façade quality and maintenance all scored well. In addition, there are few neglected historic features and no dereliction. Furthermore, the quality of new development category scored moderately well. In short, the area is well maintained and historic elements, buildings and the streetscape have been conserved.

### 4.2 Are people content?

Two questions in the resident survey addressed people's contentment with living in the district. Half of the respondents (six of 13) moved to the area after it was designated. Of these, half (three) stated that the designation did not affect their decision to move to the area.

Currently, 10 of 13 respondents are very satisfied with living in the district. An additional two people are satisfied with living in the district. Only one respondent indicated they were very dissatisfied.

The satisfaction rates indicate that people are happy with the district, however, due to the low response rate, these findings may not be representative.

### 4.3 Is it difficult to make alterations?

Only three respondents indicated they had made applications for alterations. All three applications were approved and it took less than three months. The records from the City of Toronto were not available.

### 4.4 Have property values been impacted?

The data from GeoWarehouse indicated that only 43 of the 229 properties had sales histories. Of these properties, 14 performed above average, 19 at average and nine below average. There is one significant outlier.

Yorkville-Hazelton exhibits the characteristics of a randomly selected neighbourhood, in that most properties have either an average sales history or only slightly above or below average. There are a few exceptions where renovations may have resulted in a dramatic rise in value over a short time or where a speculative price was paid and then perhaps a planned change (or demolition) was not permitted and the value dropped. It is clear here that the designation is a minor factor compared to other drivers and property values are much the same as the surrounding areas.

There is one outlier that saw a \$1 million plus property fall to less than \$1,000. This cost would be less than the land value. There is no explanation offered for this dramatic change in value.

#### **4.5 What are the key issues in the district?**

##### *a) Development Pressure*

Interviewees indicated that the district is experiencing development pressure from nearby Bloor Street and Avenue Road.

# 5.0 Conclusions

## 5.1 Conclusions

- The implied goal to preserve existing buildings and streetscapes has been met
- Twelve of 13 people surveyed are very satisfied or satisfied with living in the district
- Information about applications for alterations was inconclusive
- Designation is a minor factor compared to other drivers and property values are much the same as the surrounding areas

Overall, the Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District appears to be a successful planning initiative.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The following aspects of the district represent areas for improvement:

- Track applications for alterations in a comprehensive and easily accessible manner

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Tabular Results of Resident Surveys



Heritage Conservation District Name: Yorkville-Hazelton

1. Are you the owner or tenant of this property?

Responses

	Owner	Tenant-Commercial	Tenant - Residential
Counts	5	4	4
Percentage	38.46	30.77	30.77

2. Are you aware you live within a HCD?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	11	2
Percentage	84.62	15.38

3. Did you move here before or after the area was designated?

Responses

	Before	After
Counts	4	8
Percentage	33.33	66.67

4. If you lived here before designation, how did you feel about it at the time?

Responses

Positive	1
Negative	0
Neutral	3
Mixed Feelings	0

5. If you came after the designation did the designation affect your decision to move here?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	3	3
Percentage	50.00	50.00

6. What is your understanding of how the HCD works?

Responses

Preservation	7
Restrictions	2
No understanding	4

7. Have you made application(s) for building alterations?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	3	9
Percentage	25.00	75.00

8. If so, were your applications for alterations approved?

Responses

	Yes	No
Counts	3	0
Percentage	100.00	0.00

9. On average, how long did the application take?

Responses

Over 5 months	0
4 to 5 months	0
1 to 3 months	2
Less than 1 month	1
Not long	0
Unknown	0

10. Overall, how satisfied are you with living in a HCD?

Responses

	Mean Score out of 5	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Do not Know
Counts	4.54	10	2	0	0	1	0
Percentage		76.92	15.38	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00

11. How do you think the HCD designation has affected the value of your property compared to similar non-designated districts?

Responses

	Mean Score out of 5	Increased a Lot	Increased	No Impact	Lowered	Lowered a lot	Do not Know
Counts	3.25	3	2	2	0	0	5
Percentage		25.00	28.57	28.57	0.00	0.00	41.67

12. Do you think the HCD designation will affect your ability to sell your property?

Responses

No	7
Yes	0
Yes, easier	3
Yes, harder	0
Don't know	0
Maybe	2

13. Comments

**Additional Comments:** more convenience of location indicates its valuable (1); concerned with encroaching development (1);

Total Population	100
Participants	13
Participation Rate	13

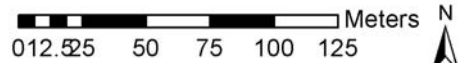
Appendix B  
Land Use Map

# Ground Level Land Use in Yorkville-Hazelton Ave. Heritage Conservation District, Toronto



## Legend

HCD Boundary	Office / Commercial	Services
Not in HCD	Parking	Soft or hard landscaping
Eating / Drinking Places	Public buildings	Under development
Industrial	Residential	Vacant
Land use not assigned	Retail (low end - CS)	Warehouse / Storage
Leisure	Retail	



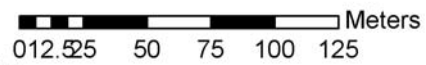
Heritage Resources Centre  
 August 12, 2011  
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.  
 Coordinate system: NAD\_1983\_UTM\_Zone\_17N

## Upper Level Land Use in Yorkville-Hazelton Ave. Heritage Conservation District, Toronto



### Legend

HCD Boundary	Office / Commercial	Services
Not in HCD	Parking	Soft or hard landscaping
Eating / Drinking Places	Public buildings	Under development
Industrial	Residential	Vacant
Land use not assigned	Retail (low end - CS)	Warehouse / Storage
Leisure	Retail	



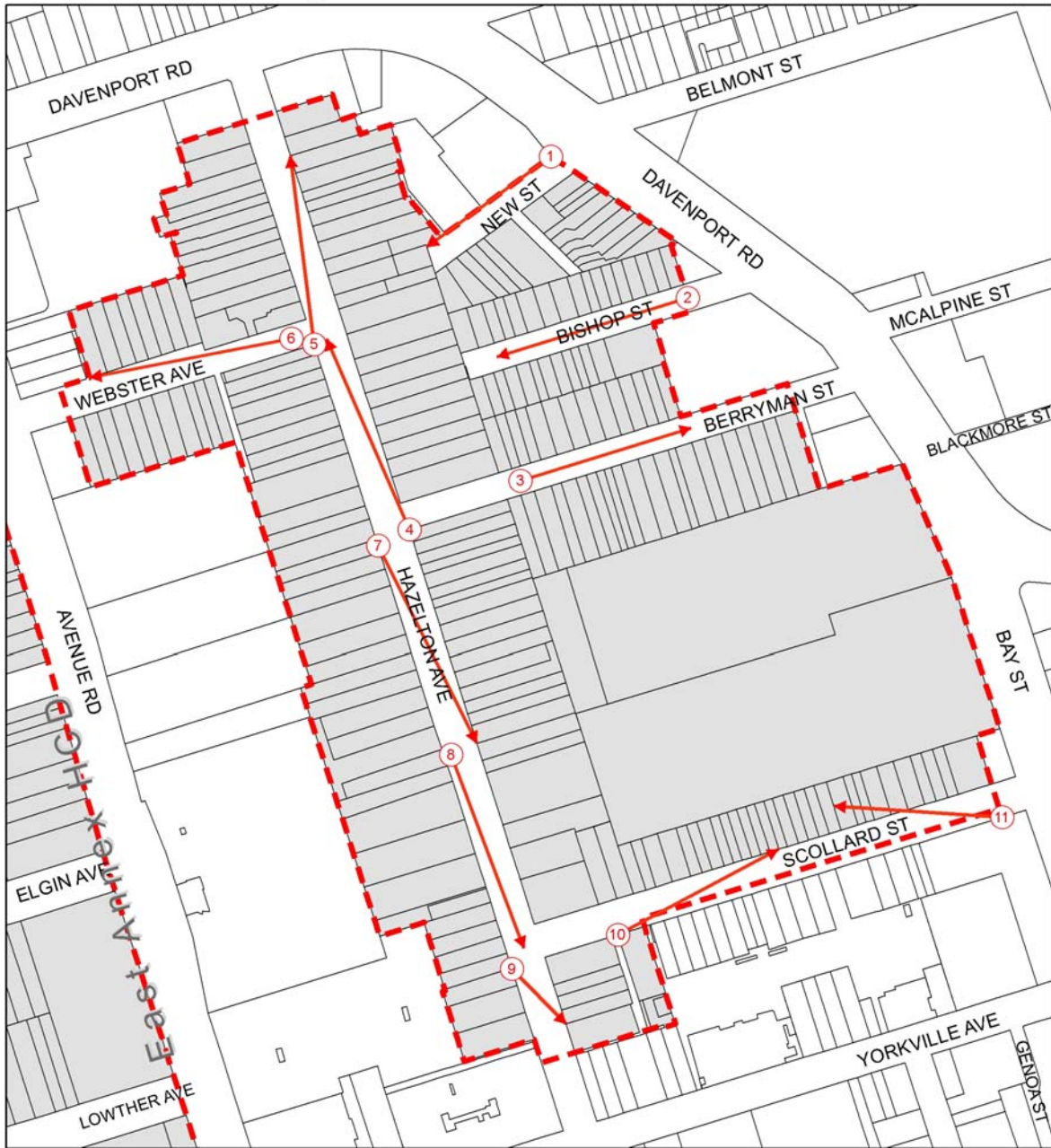
Heritage Resources Centre  
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## Appendix C

### Map of Views

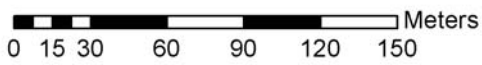


## Views in Yorkville-Hazelton Ave. Heritage Conservation District, Toronto



### Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Not in HCD
- Viewpoints
- In HCD
- Viewlines



Heritage Resources Centre  
 August 12, 2011  
 Data provider: Teranet Inc.  
 Coordinate system: NAD\_1983\_UTM\_Zone\_17N



## Appendix D

### Photographs of Views



View 1



View 2



View 3



View 4



View 5



View 6





View 7



View 8



View 9



View 10



View 11

## Appendix E

### Townscape Evaluation Pro Forma

<b>A. Streetscape Quality</b>				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
A1-Pedestrian friendly	56	95	58.95	2.9
A2-Cleanliness	65	95	68.42	3.4
A3-Coherence	72.5	95	76.32	3.8
A4-Edgefeature Quality	67	95	70.53	3.5
A5-Floorscape Quality	45	95	47.37	2.4
A6-Legibility	66	95	69.47	3.5
A7-Sense of Threat	63.5	85	74.71	3.7
A8-Personal Safety: Traffic	62	95	65.26	3.3
A9-Planting: Public	36	45	80.00	4.0
A10-Vitality	67	85	78.82	3.9
A 11- Appropriate Resting Places	50.5	95	53.16	2.7
A12-Signage	73	95	76.84	3.8
A13-Street Furniture Quality	47.5	85	55.88	2.8
A14-Traffic Flow. Appropriateness	73.5	95	77.37	3.9
<b>SUM A</b>	844.5	1250	67.56	3.4

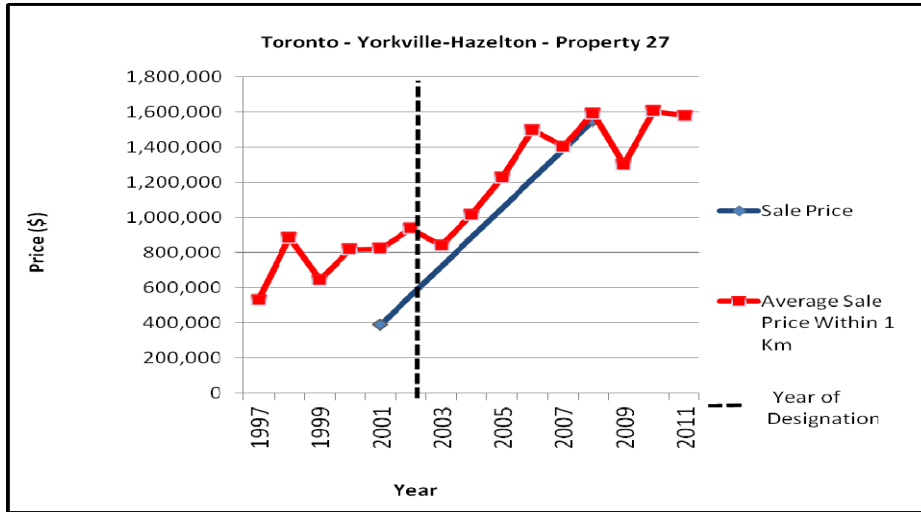
<b>B. Private Space in View</b>				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
B15-Advertising, in keeping	23.5	40	58.75	2.9
B16-Dereliction, Absence of	90	95	94.74	4.7
B17-Detailing, Maintenance	82	95	86.32	4.3
B18-Facade Quality	80.5	95	84.74	4.2
B19-Planting Private	64.5	85	75.88	3.8
<b>SUM B</b>	340.5	410	83.05	4.2

<b>C. Heritage in View</b>				
	Score	Out of	%	Out of 5
C20-Conserved Elements Evident	74	85	87.06	4.4
C21-Historic Reference Seen	31	95	32.63	1.6
C22-Nomenclature/Place Reference	41	90	45.56	2.3
C23-Quality of Conservation Work	72	90	80.00	4.0
C24-Quality of New Development	34.5	55	62.73	3.1
C25-Neglected Historic Features	70.5	85	82.94	4.1
<b>SUM C</b>	323	500	64.60	3.2

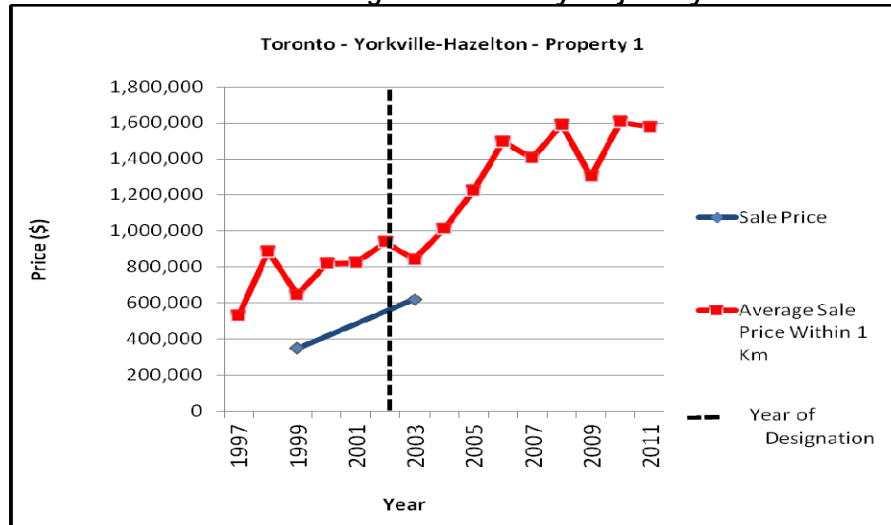
<b>Impression Score</b>				
<b>Aggregate Score</b>	<b>1508</b>	<b>2160</b>	<b>71.73626016</b>	<b>3.6</b>

# Appendix F

## Real Estate Data



**Above Average Sales History Trajectory**



**Average Sales History Trajectory**



**Below Average Sales History Trajectory**

## Appendix G

### Summary of Key Stakeholder Interviews



Heritage Conservation District Name: Yorkville-Hazelton

Month(s) of Interviews: February 2012

Number of People Interviewed: 2

Question	Summary of Answer
1. How are you involved in the HCD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preservation Officer for the City of Toronto's Heritage Preservation Services (2)</li></ul>
2. How did the HCD come about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From the efforts of local community members and Council</li></ul>
3. In your opinion how has the HCD designation been accepted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Well-received by the community but threatened by development pressure</li></ul>
4. In your experience what are the HCD management processes in place and how do they work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rely on the provisions of Part V of the <i>Ontario Heritage Act</i> regarding alterations</li><li>• Applications for alterations are made to staff as part of the building permit application process</li></ul>
5. In your experience what is the process for applications for alterations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When an application for alteration is received, Heritage Preservation Services staff work with the planning and/or development departments to determine it's appropriateness based on the guidelines outlined in the HCD plan (2)</li><li>• Staff have delegated approval authority for minor exterior alterations (2)</li><li>• Major alterations (additions, demolitions) (2) - Council approves/rejects</li></ul>
6. Is there a communication process set up for the HCD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• District has an active Advisory Committee</li><li>• City of Toronto engages with Advisory Committee on more detailed alteration requests</li></ul>
7. In your opinion, what are the issues that are unique to the HCD and how have they been managed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development pressure from the neighbouring Bloor St. and Avenue Rd. area</li><li>• Proposed developments in the area must be assessed against the district plan to mitigate any harm to the area</li></ul>
8. What are similar non designated areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None</li></ul>
9. Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• n/a</li></ul>