Heritage Districts Work!

Heritage Conservation District Study
Wychwood Park - City of Toronto
2009
Heritage Conservation District Study 2009

Prepared By

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(North Waterloo and Hamilton Branches)

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The efforts of the volunteers were assisted and coordinated through cooperation between the ACO and the Heritage Resources Centre (HRC) at the University of Waterloo. Professor Robert Shipley is the Director of the HRC. The Project Coordinator, report manager and principal volunteer facilitator was Kayla Jonas. Additional data collection and research analysis was conducted by Jason Kovacs, Beatrice Tam and Martha Fallis. Administration and help was also provided by Marg Rowell, Chelsey Tyers, Paul Dubniak and Kirsten Pries.

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Thanks!
Wychwood Park Executive Summary

Introduction

- 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.
- 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.
- 32 districts designated in or before 1992 were examined.

Background of Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District

- Located in the City of Toronto.
- Consists of 64 residential properties.
- The district was designated in 1985.
- Plan was written Keith Wagland, Truman and Jennings, Harold Klaman and John Stewart.

Study Approach

- Resident surveys were conducted door to door by local citizens.
- Land use mapping and a streetscape evaluation were conducted.
- Sales history trends were collected from GeoWarehouse™ and analyzed.
- Key stakeholders were interviewed.
- Data on requests for alterations was collected.

Analysis of Key Findings

- The following objectives of the district plan have been met:
  - to maintain park-like ambience including trees
  - to maintain low density residential quality of the area
- 80% of the people surveyed are very satisfied or satisfied with living in the district.
- All of the properties with sales histories in the district had average or above sales history trajectories.
- The area has multiple levels of organization which supports the heritage of the area.
- There is unfounded concern that new residents do not accept the heritage of the area.
- Overall, the Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District has been a successful planning initiative.

Recommendation

- Track alteration requests 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"\(^1\). 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"\(^2\).

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\(^3\).

1.2 Rationale for Heritage Conservation District Study

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 92 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.

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, volunteers from branches of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) and Historical Societies were assisted by the Heritage Resources Centre (HRC) at the University of Waterloo to undertake 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?

Since it takes a period of time for the impacts of district designation to manifest this study concentrated on examining districts that are well established. Applying the criterion of residential, commercial or mixed use areas designated in 1992 or before there were 32 HCDs that the study examined. These districts are found in or near the following areas: Cobourg, Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Huron County, Brampton, Toronto, Ottawa, the Region of Waterloo and Thunder Bay.

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\(^1\) Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 5
\(^2\) Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 5
\(^3\) Ontario Heritage Toolkit, Heritage Conservation Districts, Ministry of Culture (2006), Page 12
Figure 1 shows that the 32 districts have a wide geographic distribution and represent the various community sizes. The various types of districts which are part of the study are also evident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Distribution</th>
<th>Community Size</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>1 Small Community</td>
<td>9 ~ Commercial 9~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>11 * Medium Sized</td>
<td>11 Residential 18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>12 Large City</td>
<td>12 * Mixed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Western</td>
<td>8 ~</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 5 of these districts make up the HCD known as Sandy Hill
~ 2 of these districts make up the HCD known as Goderich Square

**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 Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District

2.1 Description of the District
The Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District is located off of Wychwood Avenue between Alcina Avenue and Davenport Road in the City of Toronto. The district consists of 64 residential properties.

2.2 Cultural Heritage Value of the District
According to the revised Heritage Conservation District Plan the cultural heritage value of the area is:

"Wychwood Park has unique and outstanding features which give it heritage significance. It is a residential area of some 60 homes located near the centre of the city and laid out essentially according to a plan registered in 1891. Although many of the houses are of considerable architectural significance, it is the park-like ambience of Wychwood Park as a whole that justifies its designation as a Heritage Conservation District. It is this feature that the District Plan intends to preserve.

Wychwood Park has a unique collection of important houses erected between the years 1905 and 1917, which represent very well the Canadian interpretation of the English Arts and Crafts movement associated with the work of architects, C.F.A. Voysey and M.H. Baille Scott."

2.3 Location of the District

Figures 2: Map of Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District

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4 Revised Heritage Conservation District Plan, Wychwood Park Heritage Advisory Committee (1994), Page 1
2.4 Designation of the District

According to the stakeholders, the designation of Wychwood Park was initiated by the local residents. The Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District is protected by By-law 421-85 which was passed on May 21, 1985 by the City of Toronto. The designation was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board under the 1980 *Ontario Heritage Act* on March 17, 1986.

The Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District Plan was prepared for the City of Toronto by consultants Keith Wagland, Truman and Jennings, Harold Klaman and John Stewart. This plan was replaced by a Revised Heritage Conservation District Plan that was adopted by the City of Toronto in May 1994. The Revised Heritage Conservation District Plan contains sections introducing the district, outlining the preservation of the historic elements of the park and implementation of the plan.
3.0 Study Approach

3.1 Resident Surveys
Residents of the Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District were asked a series of questions relating to their experiences and satisfaction living in the district. These surveys were conducted door to door by local volunteers. Fourteen of 64 residents answered surveys, representing a 21.88% response rate. The tabulated findings of the survey are presented in Appendix A.

3.2 Townscape Survey
A Townscape Survey of Wychwood Park was conducted in November 2008. 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 Wychwood Park (see Appendix B). The streetscape evaluation involves the use of a view assessment pro forma which generates scores between one and five for 25 factors in view. A total of eight 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 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 range were identified for individual district properties using GeoWarehouse™, an online subscription database commonly used by real estate professionals.

Properties with more than one record of sale were plotted on graphs and compared with the average sales figures for non-designated properties. A number of sales property averages were obtained for each "non-designated area" within a 1 km radius from the district. The mean selling price for these property averages, which were also obtained through GeoWarehouse™, were calculated and plotted against each district unit sales record (see Appendix F). It was expected that the use of average sales prices from the immediate vicinity of a district as opposed to the use of city-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 an 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, etc.).

3.4 Key Stakeholder Interviews
People of who 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 Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District. Both interviews were conducted over the phone. Those interviewed included a past Heritage Planner for the City of Toronto, as well as a local committee member. 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.

5 The method for obtaining the average sales price for non-designated areas within the 1 km radius was adjusted according to the number of properties within an Heritage Conservation District. For example, to obtain figures on non-designated areas, average sales histories within a 1 km radius from the largest districts (201-600 properties) were obtained using every fiftieth district property as a basis for calculating each area sales record. The mean average of these sales records were subsequently calculated and used as the comparative sales history trend on each graph. Every fifth, tenth, and twenty-fifth property were used to find the immediate average sales histories within a 1 km radius for smaller districts with 1-10, 11-100 and 101-200 properties respectively.
3.5 Requests for Alterations

With respect to the requests for alterations within the Heritage Conservation Districts, 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 Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District, the information about the number of applications for alterations and their time for approval was not available.
4.0 Analysis of Key Findings

4.1 Have the goals or objectives been met?

The Heritage Conservation District Plan outlines the purpose of the district, with objectives that fall into two categories:

a) Maintain park-like ambience including trees

The objective to maintain the park-like ambience has been met. The categories of public and private planting scored very high. This means that the area’s vegetation is well maintained.

Despite the fact that this goal does not directly address the buildings of the area, they contribute to the ambiance of the area. Drawing on measures collected in the Townscape Survey, conserved elements evident, quality of conservation work, and maintenance all scored very well. This means that visually the area is has been well maintained and historic elements have been conserved. Very high scores in the categories of absence of dereliction and facade quality also contribute to the visual confirmation that buildings have been well maintained (see Figure 3).

b) Maintain low density residential quality of the area

The second objective, to maintain a low density residential environment, has clearly been achieved. There has been no change in land use from the map created for the district plan (Section 2.3) and the current land use map (Appendix B). The land use maps also show that all the buildings are two-storeys. The area is completely residential, predominantly single family dwellings. In addition, there are only eight properties with sales records, of which only one has more than two sales.

4.2 Are people content?

Two questions in the resident surveys addressed people’s contentment with living in the district. At the time of designation, five of the 14 residents surveyed lived in the district and all of them felt positive about the designation. Now 80% of the residents surveyed are very satisfied or satisfied with living in the district. In addition, the resident comments are very supportive. People said things such as “privilege to live here”, “knowledge of heritage importance had increased in the area” and “creates a sense of place”. The contentment with the district is also evident by the fact that most people’s understanding of the district revolves around positive elements such as preservation and having a local committee.

4.3 Is it difficult to make alterations?

Of the residents surveyed six people made applications and all were approved. However, three of the four people that answered the question indicated that the applications took over four months. The records from the City of Toronto were not available. This longer timeline might be a result of the lengthy process described by the stakeholders. According to the stakeholders, the applications come to the Wychwood Park Advisory Committee who tries to involve Preservation Services, and then the application goes to the relevant Community Council followed by the City Council.
4.4 Have property values been impacted?

Of the residents surveyed the majority of people (ten of 14) think that they will have no problem selling their houses in the future.

The data from GeoWarehouse™ indicated that eight of 64 properties had sales histories. Of these eight properties five had above average sales value increases (see Figure 4). The remaining three properties had average sales history trajectories. None of the properties performed below average. Almost all the properties had an above average sale price which indicates the district is a better neighbourhood than its immediate surroundings.

![Figure 4: An above average sale history trajectory](image)

4.5 What are the key issues in the district?

a) Layers of organization

According to the stakeholders, the area of Wychwood Park had an internal governance structure that predates the Heritage Conservation District. The multiple levels of organization include a rate payers association, a landscape committee, a tennis committee, a needlework group, and three trustees who are responsible for the common land. This community structure strengthens the sense of place and community which complements the heritage.

b) Lack of acceptance by new people

There is concern expressed by the stakeholders and in the resident surveys, that new people to the district do not accept the designation. However, according to the resident surveys, of the nine people who moved into the area after designation, five said that the designation affected their decision to move to the area. Clearly, the area is attracting people who want to live in this type of designated district.
5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

- The following objectives of the district plan have been met:
  - to maintain park-like ambience including trees
  - to maintain low density residential quality of the area
- 80% of the people surveyed are very satisfied or satisfied with living in the district
- All of the properties with sales histories in the district had average or above sales history trajectories
- The area has multiple levels of organization which supports the heritage of the area
- There is unfounded concern that new residents do not accept the heritage of the area

Overall, the Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District has been a successful planning initiative.

5.2 Recommendations

The following aspects of the district are areas for improvement:

- Track alteration requests in a comprehensive and easily accessible manner
Appendices
Appendix A

Tabular Results of Resident Surveys
1. Are you the owner or tenant of this property?

Responses 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Tenant-Commercial</th>
<th>Tenant - Residential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Are you aware you live within a HCD?

Responses 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Responses 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>35.71</td>
<td>64.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Responses 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Mixed Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Responses 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>55.56</td>
<td>44.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. What is your understanding of how the HCD works?

Responses 14

Preserve  7
Restrict  4
Guidelines  0
Committee  3
Good  2
Landscape Elements  4
Lacks Teeth  2

Additional Comments: Group of trustees (1), provides continuity (1), intended to preserve but is ineffective (1), government funding needed (1)

Note: Residents could provide more than one response to question 6

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

Responses 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>57.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Responses 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Responses 4

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 5 months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3 months</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 month</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not long</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Responses 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score out of 5</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Do not Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. How do you think the HCD designation has affected the value of your property compared to similar non-designated districts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score out of 5</th>
<th>Increased a Lot</th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Lowered</th>
<th>Lowered a lot</th>
<th>Do not Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>38.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- No: 9
- Yes: 1
- Yes, easier: 1
- Yes, harder: 0
- Don't know: 0
- Maybe: 3

13. Comments

**Additional Comments**: newer people do not respect (1), new people are given a book with the guidelines (1), infill means a loss of vistas (1), privilege to live there (1), need real professional advice about renovations (1), knowledge of heritage importance has increased in the area (1), creates a sense of place (1)
Appendix B

Land Use Maps
Second Floor Land Use in Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District, Toronto

Legend

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

0 10 20 40 60 80 100 Meters

Author: Heritage Resources Centre
April 14, 2009
Data provider: Teranet Inc.
Coordinate system: NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N
Appendix C

Map of Views
Appendix D

Photographs of Views
Appendix E

Townscape Evaluation Pro Forma
Heritage Conservation District Townscape Summary

Name of District: Wychwood Park HCD
Date: November 6, 2008

### A. Streetscape Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Out of</th>
<th>% Out of 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1-Pedestrian friendly</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2-Cleanliness</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3-Coherence</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4-Edgefeature Quality</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5-Floorscape Quality</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6-Legibility</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7-Sense of Threat</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A8-Personal Safety: Traffic</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9-Planting: Public</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10-Vitality</td>
<td>20.5</td>
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<td>A11- Appropriate Resting Places</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>A12-Signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>A13-Street Furniture Quality</td>
<td>24.5</td>
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<td>A14-Traffic Flow, Appropriateness</td>
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<td>SUM A</td>
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### B. Private Space in View

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>B15-Advertising, In keeping</td>
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<td>B16-Dereliction, Absence of</td>
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<td>B17-Detailing, Maintenance</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>B18-Facade Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>B19-Planting: Private</td>
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<td>SUM B</td>
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### C. Heritage in View

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<td>C20-Conserved Elements Evident</td>
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<td>C21-Historic Reference Seen</td>
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<tr>
<td>C22-Nomenclature/Place Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>C23-Quality of Conservation Work</td>
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<td>C24-Quality of New Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>C25-Historic Features, Maintained</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUM C</td>
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</table>

Impression Score | Aggregate Score
---|---
592 | 790 | 74.94 | 3.7 |

Weather: Sunny

# of views: 8
Appendix F

Real Estate Data
Toronto - Wychwood Park - Property 3

- Sale Price
- Average Sale Price within 1 km
- Year of Designation

Toronto - Wychwood Park - Property 4

- Sale Price
- Average Sale Price within 1 km
- Year of Designation
Appendix G

Summary of Key Stakeholder Interviews
### Heritage Conservation District Name:
Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District, City of Toronto

### Month(s) of Interviews:
March 2009

### Number of People Interviewed:
2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Summary of Answer</th>
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</table>
| **1. How are you involved in the HCD?** | • Preservation Officer for the Toronto Historical Board (1)  
• Part of Wychwood Park Residents Association (1)  
• Past member of Wychwood Park Advisory Committee – officially set up to review permits (1) |
| **2. How did they HCD come about?** | • During the early 80’s the potential demolition of one property with the replacement of several townhouse led to the Park being designated under Part V of the OHA (2) |
| **3. In your opinion how has the HCD designation been accepted?** | • There was no opposition the designation (1)  
• Some new owners questioned the legitimacy of the guidelines and power of the WP Heritage Committee (1)  
• Through careful negotiations and communications with owners, the Committee and the THB effectively managed issues as they arose (1)  
• 100% acceptance (1)  
• Only one issue – one person has bought a lot and is trying to build (1) |
| **4. In your experience what are the HCD management processes in place and how do they work?** | • WPHC reviewed any and all proposed changes to the exterior of buildings as well as contextual issues including landscape matters (2)  
• Matters not requiring building permits were approved by the WPHC (1)  
• Others were approved by city at building permit stage (1)  
• Unresolved matters could be referred to the THB and then to City Council as required under the OHA (1)  
• Preservation staff was a permanent member of the WPHC (1)  
• Toronto Historical Board does not exist anymore and the City has not replaced this body (1)  
• Lack on contact between community and City (1)  
• 3 trustees- own the common land and do not change much (1) |
| **5. In your experience what is the process for applications for alterations?** | • Applications come to the committee – try to involve Preservation Services (1)  
• Preservation Board (1)  
• Community Council (4 in Toronto) (1)  
• City Council (1)  
• Not effective because there is no heritage staff on the committee and the City staff only have planning credentials (conflict of interest) (1) |
| **6. Is there a communication process set up for the HCD?** | • One dedicated THB Preservation staff member provided contact between the THB and the WPHC, ratepayers, owners and City Departments (1)  
• There was a mix of residents on the WPHC representing ratepayers, trustees and all were volunteers (1)  
• All new owners were provided a copy of the WP Guidelines (1)  
• There were open Park activities during the year (1)  
• Area had an internal governance structure that predates the HCD (e.g rate payers association, landscape committee, tennis committee, needlework group) (1) |
### 7. In your opinion, what are the issues that are unique to the HCD and how have they been managed?

- WPHCD is unique for the natural setting. The reasons for designation rest on both existing built form and natural elements of WP. All existing houses are considered valuable. All trees are to be protected. Privacy fences discouraged. The relationship of house to park and park to houses is critical to maintaining natural environment. All these and more are outlined in the WPHCD Guidelines (1)
- The Guidelines were updated a number of years ago under my supervision and approved by THB and City Council (1)
- Preservation Services is part of the Urban Development Department – making insensitive recommendations (1)
- Landscape in unique – natural environment is important, the houses are secondary (1)
  - “community in a park”
- Involvement of people (1)

### 8. What are similar non designated areas?

- Thorncrest Village (formerly Etobicoke) (1)
- Etobicoke Council failed to designate this area in 1980’s when the land covenants placed on all lands in Thorncrest Village expired. Since that time all the 1940’ and 1950’s modernist homes have been replaced by monster homes, reducing the potential for heritage value (1)
- In WP there has been no demolition and no monster additions have been permitted (1)

### 9. Other comments

- The biggest challenge facing WP is generational. Communicating the heritage value to the second and third generation of new home owners is the difficult task. As a rule this requires a few very dedicated and persuasive residents with assistance from supportive City preservation staff (1)
- Alterations to house and to Park must be carefully reviewed with input from WPHC and City staff. In the past, WP has been a success but the future is open to problems if the residents(new owners) and City staff do not fully appreciate or understand the heritage value of WP (1)