



Staff Report for Heritage Richmond Hill Meeting

Date of Meeting: May 7, 2019
Report Number: SRPRS.19.091

Department: Planning and Regulatory Services
Division: Policy Planning

Subject: **SRPRS.19.091 – Assessment of the Cultural Heritage Value of 53 Centre Street East (D12-07086)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Heritage Richmond Hill's recommendation regarding staff's proposal to designate the property municipally known as 53 Centre Street East as having cultural heritage value or interest under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Staff Report SRPRS.19.091 be received;
- b) That Heritage Richmond Hill recommends to Council that the property located at 53 Centre Street East merits designation under Section 29, Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and,
- c) That Heritage Richmond Hill recommends to Council that a Notice of Intention to Designate be published in the Liberal Newspaper and that the Notice of Intention to Designate be served on the owner of the subject property and the Ontario Heritage Trust; and,
- d) That should no objections be received during the mandatory 30-day public objection period following publication of this Notice of Intention to Designate, Council enact a by-law for the purpose of designating 53 Centre Street East under section 29, Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Contact Person:

Pamela Vega, Heritage / Urban Design Planner, phone number 905-771-5529 and/or Joanne Leung, Manager of Heritage and Urban Design, phone number 905-771-5498

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Regulatory Services

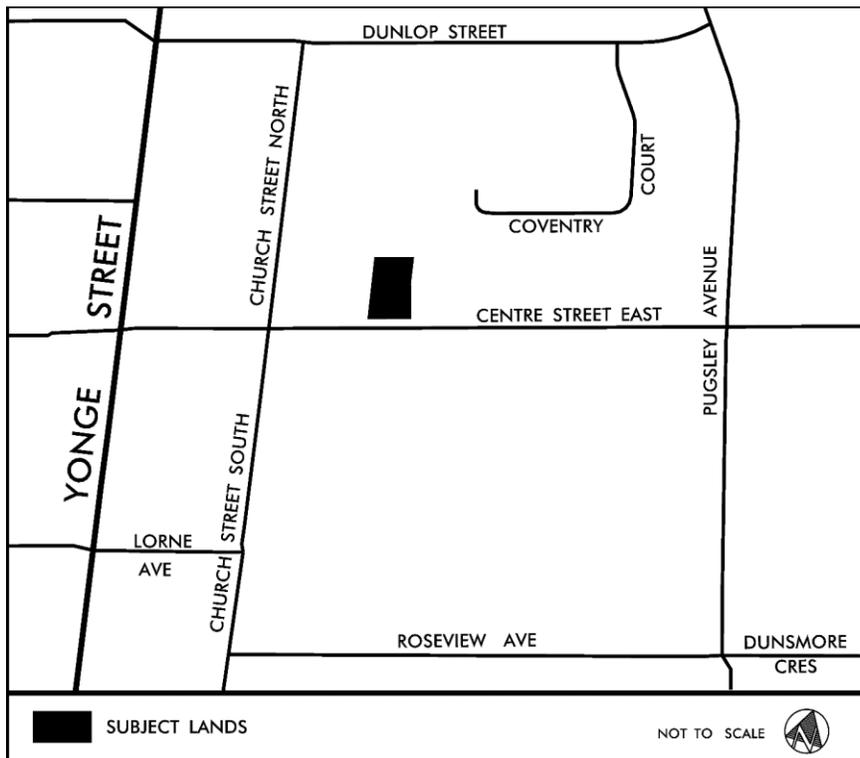
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Approved by: Neil Garbe, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the report's approval are attached.

Location Map:

Below is a map illustrating the location of the subject property. Should you require an alternative format, call the person listed as "Contact", above.



Background:

The subject property is located on Centre Street East in the historic Richmond Hill village core, an area identified for its unique historic character. The village core is a highly coveted area by both visitors and residents, and its historic homes have been identified by residents as being important elements in creating and maintaining the area's unique character. Centre Street in particular has been identified in the Village Core Neighbourhood Design Guidelines as one of five streets within the village core that exhibits a particularly rich heritage character.

The subject property entails an Edwardian Foursquare two storey brick veneered dwelling constructed in 1912-1913 by William Graham for Ira D. Ramer. Ramer was a well-respected Richmond Hill businessman who ran an elevator, grain, fuel and building

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supplies business. Graham was a prolific builder who, in his short career of 13 years, built over 30 houses and 10 public buildings in Richmond Hill, including M.L. McConaghy Public School, the Standard Bank of Canada building, and the Loyal True Blue & Orange Home. He also built in north Toronto, Aurora, and York Mills. He is believed to have designed most of his building plans.

This city block between Church Street North and Pugsley Avenue has a concentration of historic houses, with 18 properties being identified on the Inventory of Cultural Heritage Resources. It also contains the largest cluster of houses built by William Graham, with approximately nine of the houses on this block built by him.

On August 1, 2018, site plan applications to move the dwelling to the easterly portion of the property and construct a new two-storey dwelling on the westerly portion of the property were received. As historic homes create a sense of place and contribute to the City's identity and quality of life, staff supports the retention and conservation of historic buildings. Staff was highly supportive of this proposal because it allows for the retention of a historic home as well as the construction of a new home to add to the housing stock of the area. The applicant was advised on March 18, 2019 that Heritage & Urban Design staff were in support of both the relocation of the existing dwelling and the design of the proposed new dwelling.

Despite the agreement between staff and the property owner to move the existing dwelling, the applicant submitted a demolition permit for the dwelling on April 1, 2019.

Cultural Heritage Evaluation

As per section 27(3) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (the "Act"), the owner of a listed property may not demolish a structure on the property unless they give Council at least 60 days' notice. This 60 day period allows the municipality to review the property's potential cultural heritage value and determine whether it merits designation.

Should Council find that the property has cultural heritage value, they may proceed with designating the property under Part IV of the Act. Should Council find that the property does not merit designation, they may remove the property from the Heritage Register and can allow the structure to be demolished.

Regulation 9/06 outlines the criteria for determining whether a property merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Should one criterion be met, Council may designate a property. The criteria include the following set of three overarching values within which are nine sub-criterion:

- 1) Design or physical value:
 - a. Is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method;
 - b. Displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit; or
 - c. Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

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- 2) Historical or associative value:
 - a. Has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community;
 - b. Yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture; or
 - c. Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
- 3) Contextual value:
 - a. Is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area;
 - b. Is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings; or
 - c. Is a landmark.

The following provides staff's consideration of the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA) report for the subject property (Joan Burt Architect, July 2017) as viewed through the lens of this regulation (see Appendix A).

Design or Physical Value

The existing house was built by William Graham between August 1912 and September 1913. While it displays slightly above average craftsmanship, it is a typical example of a middle income Edwardian Foursquare house and is built with standard materials using standard construction methods. Staff concurs with the CHIA's assessment that the structure does not have design or physical value.

Historical or Associative Value

Well-respected businessman Ira Ramer owned the property for 13 months during which time he had the house built, but it is doubtful that he lived there for any length of time. The house in which he lived for 44 years until his death, and which he moved to in the year after the subject dwelling was built, is designated and is known as the Ira D. Ramer House. It is located at 33 Roseview Avenue.

While the subject property's association with Ira Ramer is minor, it has a direct link to a renowned local builder, William Graham. In his short career of 13 years, Graham built over 30 houses and 10 public buildings in Richmond Hill, including the M.L. McConaghy Public School, the Standard Bank of Canada building, and the Loyal True Blue & Orange Home. All three of these buildings are designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

A prolific builder, Graham constructed approximately nine houses on Centre Street East alone, including the house at 53 Centre Street East. The subject property is part of a cluster of Foursquare homes built by Graham, being adjacent to 59 Centre Street East (built c.1913), and across the street from 48 Centre Street East (built c.1920) and 58 Centre Street East (built c.1921). There is also a c.1930 dwelling at 52 Centre Street

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East, whose builder is unknown. Built during a time when Richmond Hill saw exponential growth due to a booming rose industry, this cluster of historic homes provides a tangible link to an era in Richmond Hill's history that was vital in shaping it into the City we know today. Staff believe that it has the potential to yield information on the evolution of the middle class during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Contextual Value

53 Centre Street East is one of several Foursquare houses on a street that has a mix of differing architectural styles. While eclectic, the houses within this block of Centre Street East were built during the same period, when Richmond Hill underwent growth as a result of a burgeoning rose industry in the first quarter of the 20th century.

Staff disagrees with the CHIA's assessment that the house is not visually linked to its surroundings. As one of 18 properties identified in the Inventory of Cultural Heritage Resources within this block of Centre Street East, with all but one believed to have been built in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the subject property is part of a larger early 20th century streetscape. The subject property is also part of a small cluster of Foursquare houses, being adjacent to 59 Centre Street East and across the street from 48 Centre Street East and 58 Centre Street East. On a street that has a mix of architectural styles, this cluster of Foursquare homes provides a strong visual link to a seminal period in Richmond Hill's development.

Staff also disagrees with the CHIA's assessment that the house is not historically linked to its surroundings. As one of approximately nine houses built by William Graham on this block of Centre Street East, it is the largest cluster of houses built by William Graham in Richmond Hill (see images below), and part of a larger neighbourhood that was developed in the first part of the 20th century. A remnant of an early 20th century residential streetscape, the subject property along with the other historic dwellings on the block provides a link to the street's history and reflects the styles and tastes of its residents at a particular time.

The Value of Designation

As tangible connections to our history, historic buildings help to create an attractive and unique character that in turn helps to create a sense of place. This character positively affects the residents' quality of life and increases the desirability of the neighbourhood. Heritage buildings also contribute to creating a sense of continuity and to understanding a community's identity; they help to make an area a pleasing place to visit and to live.

Designating a property under the *Ontario Heritage Act* helps to ensure that the City's limited heritage resources are retained for future generations. It is a means through which a community can protect the structures that provide tangible links to its past, and is a way to publicly recognize the significance of these resources. Cultural heritage resources help to define the City's identity and creates a sense of place.

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Designation also protects a property from unsympathetic changes that may negatively affect its architectural or aesthetic value. The neighbourhood also benefits from this as it helps to maintain or enhance the block's streetscape.

Designation also makes a property eligible for the City's heritage grant program, which provides assistance with restoration and maintenance work. A matching grant, this program helps property owners to continue being stewards of the City's heritage resources.

Designating 53 Centre Street East will help to protect a contributing resource to the area's unique historical character, which is valued by residents and visitors alike.



Houses built by William Graham on Centre Street East. Clockwise from top left: 48 Centre Street East; 53 Centre Street East (subject property); 58 Centre Street East; 59 Centre Street East; 72 Centre Street East; 75 Centre Street East; 76 Centre Street East; 82 Centre Street East; 90 Centre Street East. Photos taken c.2017.

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Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

The recommendations in this report will have no financial or staffing implications.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

The recommendations in this report relate to the Strategic Plan Goal of “wise management of resources in Richmond Hill” and the objective of being responsible by serving as a role model for municipal management. A detailed consideration of the heritage merits of the subject property is in keeping with Goal 3 – Outcome 1 of the Strategic Plan, which is to “Respect the past through promoting the awareness of the Town’s heritage.” Consideration of the subject property’s heritage merits also aligns with the direction to “steward Richmond Hill’s heritage resources”, and implements Outcome 2 of Goal 3 which is the promotion of a sense of identity and place through “the celebration, promotion and enhancement of the Town’s unique places.”

Conclusion:

Staff is of the opinion that 53 Centre Street East has heritage value as measured by Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Staff support the designation of 53 Centre Street East due to its historical and contextual value under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. A full list of the attributes proposed to be included in the designation by-law for 53 Centre Street East is included in Appendix B.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendices, maps and photographs. If you require an alternative format please call contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix A Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment, 53 Centre Street East, prepared by Joan Burt Architect (July 2017)
- Appendix B Draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest for 53 Centre Street East

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPRS.19.091 -53 Centre St E.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A.pdf - Appendix B.docx
Final Approval Date:	Apr 30, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Patrick Lee - Apr 29, 2019 - 1:03 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Apr 30, 2019 - 11:39 AM

Neil Garbe - Apr 30, 2019 - 11:58 AM