



## Staff Report for Heritage Richmond Hill Meeting

Date of Meeting: June 14, 2022

Report Number: SRPI.22.067

Department: Planning and Infrastructure

Division: Policy Planning

**Subject: SRPI.22.067 – Request to Demolish the David Hislop House at 1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East (City Files D12-07322, D12-07323)**

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### Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Heritage Richmond Hill's recommendation to Council regarding the demolition request of the David Hislop House located at 1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East, a property designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* under By-law 143-97 (amended by By-law 68-06).

### Recommendation(s):

- a) That Council consent to the demolition request for the David Hislop House located at 1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East;
- b) That the Clerk provide the Ontario Heritage Trust and the owner of the designated property described in municipal By-law 143-97, as amended by By-law 68-06, written notice of Council's decision regarding the demolition request for the David Hislop House;
- c) That the Interpretation Strategy as described in SRPI 22.067 be endorsed and implemented;
- d) That the owner carefully salvage at least 2,500 intact bricks from the David Hislop House, and transport them to the storage facility agreed upon with the City; and,
- e) That, once the demolition is complete, Council in consultation with Heritage Richmond Hill initiate the repeal process for Heritage Designation By-law 143-97, amended by By-law 68-06, which designated the property at 1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

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### Contact Person:

Pamela Vega, Urban Design and Heritage Planner, phone number 905-771-5529

Joanne Leung, Manager of Heritage and Urban Design, phone number 905-771-5498

### Report Approval:

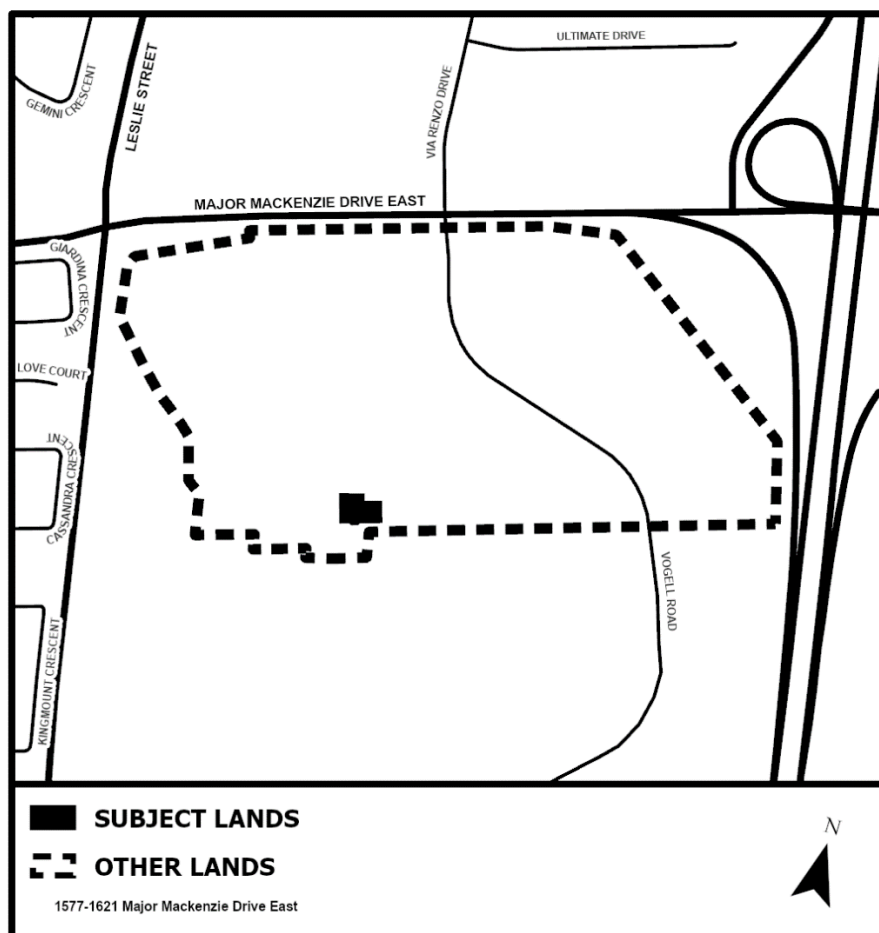
**Submitted by:** Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Infrastructure

**Approved by:** Darlene Joslin, Interim 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 reports approval are attached.

### Location Map:

Below is a map displaying the location of the subject lands. Should you require an alternative format call the person listed under “Contact Person”, above.



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### Background:

The subject lands are located on the southern side of Major Mackenzie Drive East, between Leslie Street and Highway 404, at 1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East. The property contains an existing structure known as the David Hislop House, which is a one-and-a-half-storey brick clad frame farmhouse, and is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (the “Act”) for its design and historical value, as described in Designation By-law 143-97. The designation by-law was amended in 2006 by By-law 68-06 to limit the extent of the protected area to the footprint of the house, in response to the then owner’s request for greater flexibility in developing the property. The remnants of a mill also exist on the property, though they are not covered by this heritage designation.

In 2008, an application was received to develop the lands for large format retail use, and which proposed the David Hislop House to be retained *in situ*. These plans were later revised to relocate the David Hislop House to the northern edge of the property and front onto Major Mackenzie Drive East. Council approved this relocation in 2013, and the owner entered into a Heritage Restoration Agreement with the City to carry out this relocation and to restore the David Hislop House’s exterior. As the mill remnants were located in an area deemed “Open Space”, they were not to be impacted by the proposed development.

In preparation for this relocation, in 2014 the David Hislop House was raised on a structural platform and the later eastern additions to the house were removed. However, the development for the broader property did not go forward, and no further work was done on the David Hislop House. It remains on the structural platform today (see Figures 1 and 2).



**Figures 1 and 2:** The existing condition of the David Hislop House on a structural platform (left) and an example of an exterior load-bearing wall not being properly supported (Soscia Engineering Ltd., 2021).

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In 2020, a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) was enacted to expedite the development of a range of low, medium, and high density residential uses on the property proposed by a new owner. A Draft Plan of Subdivision application was submitted proposing the demolition of the David Hislop House. It included a Building Condition Assessment (Soscia Engineering Ltd., May 18 2021) which concluded that the heritage house was structurally unsound.

On April 14, 2022, the owner of the property submitted a request to demolish the designated structure, and the application was deemed complete by City staff on May 3, 2022. To mitigate the loss of the David Hislop House, which is the property's only heritage attribute, a robust interpretation plan to interpret and commemorate the property's cultural heritage value was proposed.

In accordance with Section 34(4.3) of the Ontario Heritage Act, Council must make a decision within 90 days upon notifying the owner that their demolition application is complete. If Council fails to make a decision within the period determined, Council is deemed to have consented to the application. The decision period for the demolition application for the David Hislop House ends on August 1, 2022.

This staff report seeks Heritage Richmond Hill's recommendation to Council regarding the request by the owner to demolish the David Hislop House, the heritage attribute located at 1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East, that is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act under Bylaw 143-97 (amended by By-law 68-06), and to accept the interpretation strategy to commemorate the property.

### **Cultural Heritage Significance**

Designated by Richmond Hill Council in 1997, the David Hislop House embodies significant historical cultural heritage value for the community of Richmond Hill due to its connection to the owner of the Headford Mills, David Hislop, and its connection to the early development of the community of Headford.

It has significant design value as a good example of Picturesque architecture within the City of Richmond Hill. Constructed in 1877 for David Hislop, the building contains millstone motifs in the brick of the gables, signifying its association with the milling operation that occurred on the property.

### **Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment**

The owner submitted the 1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East Richmond Hill, ON Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (dated August 3, 2021) prepared by ERA Architects Inc. (attached as Appendix A) as part of their subdivision development application.

Given that the Building Condition Assessment Report (see Appendix B) concluded that the David Hislop House showed significant deterioration, visible water damage, mold, rot, corrosion, and cracking of the exterior load-bearing wall, and was thus not

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habitable, the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA) concludes that the conservation works outlined in the 2013 Heritage Restoration Agreement is no longer viable.

To mitigate the loss of the David Hislop House, which is the property's only heritage attribute, the CHIA proposed a robust interpretation plan to interpret and commemorate the property's cultural heritage value.

The CHIA identified two general themes to guide the interpretation strategy: the Headford Mills, and the Rouge River Watershed. It also proposed a number of approaches that could express these two themes including interactive displays, landscape design, interpretation of the millstone motif, a water feature, building footprint marker, and plaques.

City staff met with the consultant and the owner in February 2022 to discuss the options, and an Interpretation Plan was finalized in May 2022 (see Appendix C).

### Interpretation Plan

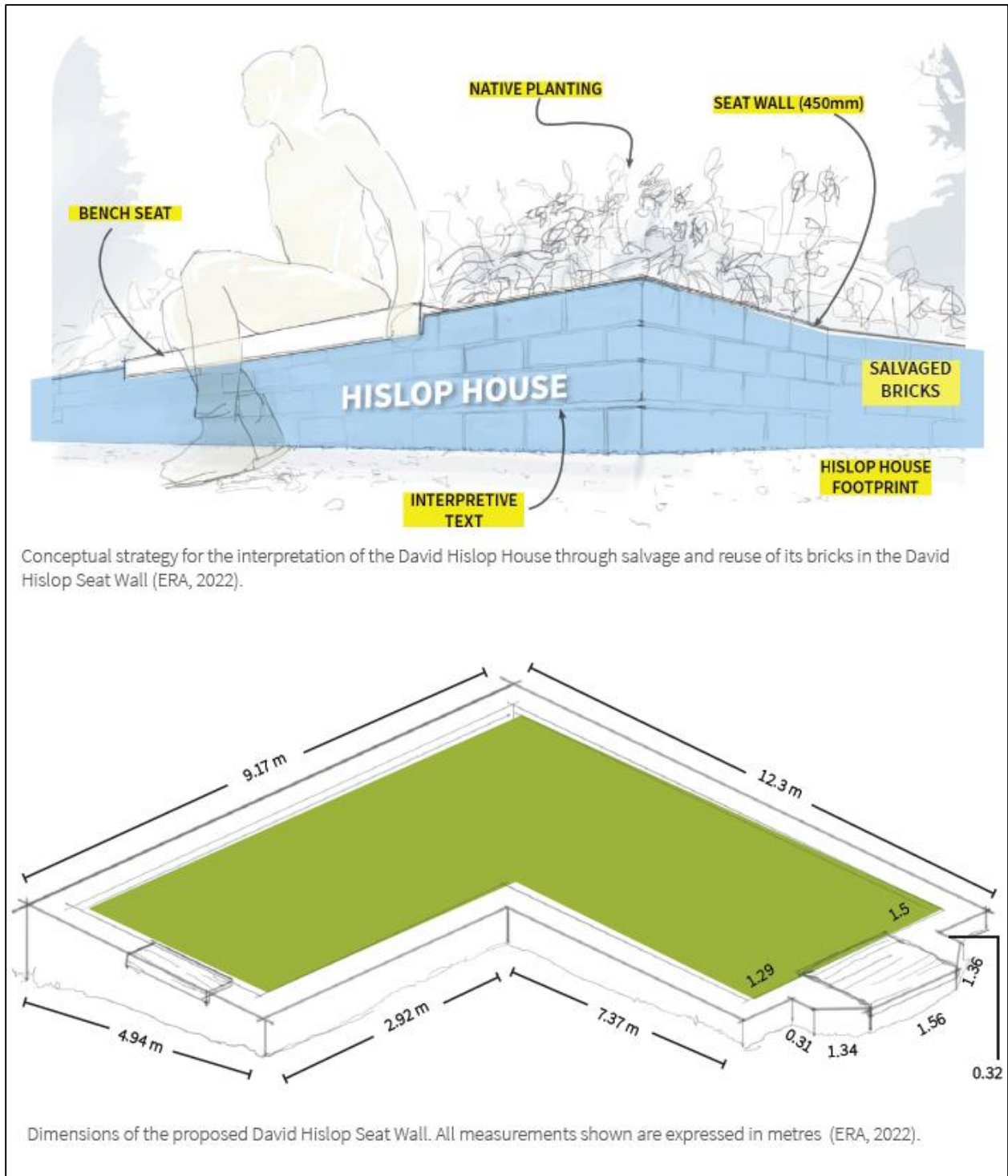
Building on the two themes identified in the CHIA, the Interpretation Plan (prepared by ERA Architects Inc. and dated May 3, 2022) recommends the use of creative and diverse media to complement the more traditional plaque commemoration to better engage audiences. This includes creating a landscape design in the park block that reflects the property's history as a mill and its ties to the Rouge River, and which provides interpretation elements including mill-inspired play equipment and a seat wall constructed from bricks salvaged from the David Hislop House.

#### Seat Wall

A seat wall within the park block is being proposed as part of the property's interpretation strategy. This seat wall would be constructed from bricks salvaged from the David Hislop House, and will have an inner core of concrete blocks. The salvaged bricks will form the outside and inner faces of the seat wall, covering the concrete blocks from view. Approximately 2,500 bricks will be needed to construct this feature (see Figure 3).

While the seat wall is proposed to be in the shape of the David Hislop House footprint, City staff will confirm the feasibility of this design based on the park's layout. Given the size of the footprint, the seat wall may also need to be reduced in size to be incorporated into the park block.

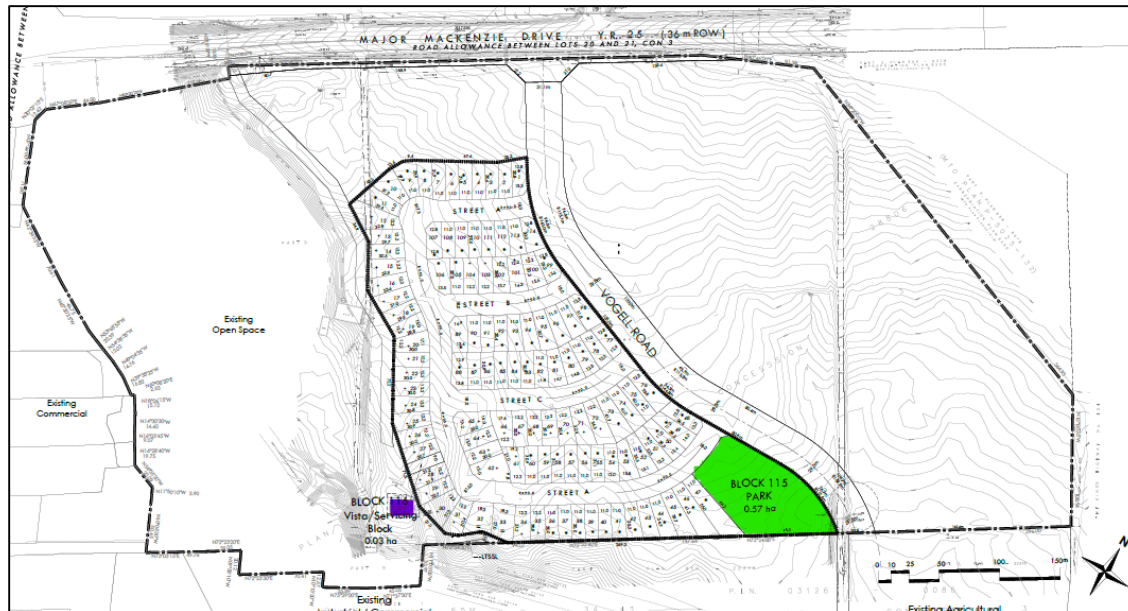
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**Figure 3:** Conceptual drawings for the proposed seat wall in the park block (ERA, 2022).



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**Figure 4:** Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision. The location of the David Hislop House is identified in purple, and the location of the proposed park is identified in green.

While it is preferable to establish interpretive structures close to the original location of the heritage structure, the limited space and severe grading conditions around the David Hislop House did not make this location a feasible option. The alternate commemoration site proposed in the park block, however, is at the highly visible southwest corner of the Vogell Road and Street “A” intersection (see Figure 4). This location makes the interpretive components easily accessible to the neighbouring community and the general public, and will allow for increased engagement with a wider audience.

The elements that are proposed for the interpretation strategy for the park block include:

1. Native species planting beds;
2. Incorporating graphical street furniture and/or paving that features the circular millstone motif found on the Hislop House;
3. Mill-inspired play equipment in the playground;
4. Using bricks salvaged from the David Hislop House to recreate the House’s footprint and serve as a seat wall; and,
5. Two interpretive panels located at the park’s access points and/or along its internal pathways.

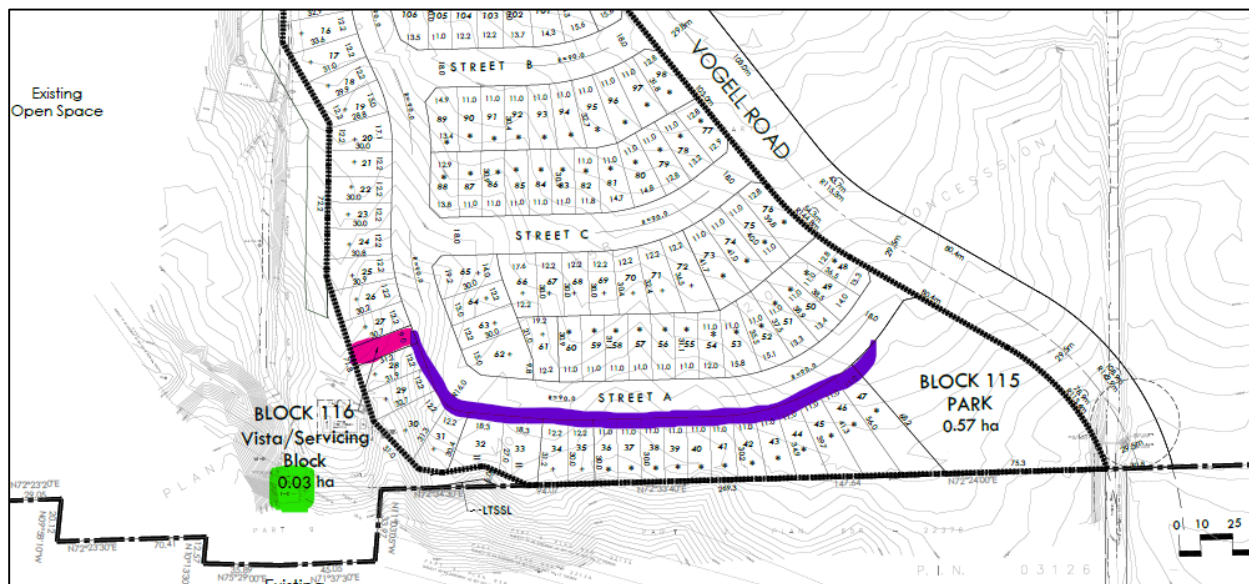
There are also interpretation elements proposed in other parts of the development (see Figure 5), which include:

1. Incorporating stamping along the sidewalk of “Street A” between the park and the open space walkway (Block 116), to call attention to the site’s historical context and to guide users from the park to the mill remnant;

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2. An interpretive panel in Block 116;
3. The repair and stabilization of the mill remnant, and the erection of a heritage plaque near the mill remnant.

The implementation of all of the interpretation elements will be secured through the Draft Plan of Subdivision approval process. However, the salvaging of the bricks is being recommended specifically through the demolition application of the David Hislop House because it is directly connected to demolition activity. The salvaged bricks will be stored in a City facility to be reused in the future park block.



**Figure 5:** Detail of the proposed Plan of Subdivision. The location of the stamped sidewalk linking the walkway to the park is identified in purple, the location of the interpretive panel is identified in pink, and the location of the mill remnant and the heritage plaque is identified in green.

## Discussion:

### Municipal and Provincial Legislation

Section 3.4.2 of Richmond Hill's Official Plan recognizes the importance of preserving cultural heritage resources in a way that allows historical buildings, structures, and landscapes to be experienced and appreciated by existing and future generations. It directs that cultural heritage resources shall be protected and conserved in accordance with applicable legislation and recognized heritage protocols. Designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act is one of the applicable legislations.

1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East is a designated property on the City's Heritage Register. Section 34(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act provides that no owner of property designated under section 29 shall demolish or remove a building or structure on the property unless the owner applies to the council of the municipality in which the property is situate and receives consent in writing to the demolition or removal.



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Section 34(4.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act further provides that the council, after consultation with its municipal heritage committee, if one is established, within 90 days of serving notice on the applicant informing them that their demolition application is complete,

- (a) may,
  - (i) consent to the application,
  - (ii) consent to the application, subject to such terms and conditions as may be specified by the council, or
  - (iii) refuse the application;
- (b) shall serve notice of its decision on the owner of the property and on the Trust; and
- (c) shall publish its decision in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality.

The 90 days deadline for Council to make its decision regarding the demolition application for the David Hislop House ends on August 1, 2022.

Recent changes to the Ontario Heritage Act require that once a designated structure has been demolished, Council must review the property's cultural heritage value. Should the demolished structure be the property's only identified heritage attribute, Council may decide to repeal the heritage designation by-law.

Given that the David Hislop House is the only heritage attribute identified on the subject lands, staff shall bring forward a staff report to Council recommending that Council repeal Heritage Designation By-law 143-97 (amended by By-law 68-06), should the demolition of the David Hislop House be approved.

### Staff Consideration

The integration and adaptive re-use of the David Hislop House had been an objective of the previous owners. However, the development applications associated with the restoration of the David Hislop House have not come to fruition and the lack of regular maintenance over the past eight years has caused the structure to deteriorate significantly.

The 2021 Building Condition Assessment (see Appendix B) describes the structural issues in detail, including moisture damage (including mold and wood rot), compromised structural integrity, cracking of the exterior load-bearing walls, inadequate base support for the chimney, and deteriorated floor framing. The Assessment also states that the David Hislop House will not be able to structurally withstand a relocation. The report goes on to state, "Transportation of this building will pose a safety hazard to the general public."

The retention of the David Hislop House would require it to be moved to a new location within the development boundaries. Given the concerns with its structural integrity, this

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relocation is not feasible. Furthermore, as the subdivision development may take a few years to complete, the structure will become more unsafe and may pose a safety risk to the public.

Notwithstanding the previous efforts of staff and the former property owner to conserve the cultural heritage of the David Hislop House, it has become clear that the work as set out in the 2013 Heritage Restoration Agreement is no longer a viable option, and that other means of preserving or commemorating the cultural heritage value of the property should be considered.

The interpretation strategy proposed by the owner communicates the property's history in a meaningful and engaging way. By using bricks salvaged from the David Hislop House and by incorporating the circular millstone motif found in the David Hislop House's gable, it provides a tactile link to the past to complement the text and photographs provided on the interpretive plaques. The decorative stamping that will be provided along the sidewalk of "Street A" will help guide residents to the nearby mill remnants, adding another tangible link to the property's past use as a grist mill and a woolen mill, and to the Hislop family.

The implementation of the interpretation strategies both in the park block and throughout the subdivision will be finalized through the subdivision approval process. This includes the design of the mill-inspired play equipment, native species planting beds, interpretive panels, and sidewalk markers to guide users from the park to the Headford Mill remnant. However, the salvaging of bricks for the seat wall is being recommended as part of the demolition approval of the David Hislop House, as this will ensure the retention of these materials prior to the removal of the historic House from the property.

According to Section 34(4.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act, a municipal council may consent to the demolition application of a designated property subject to such terms and conditions as may be specified by the council. Given the above-noted physical deterioration of the building and the potential risk to public safety, staff recommends that Council consent to the demolition request subject to the owner implementing the Interpretation Strategy through the subdivision approval process and carefully salvaging enough bricks from the David Hislop House to construct a seat wall within the park proposed on Block 115.

City staff will confirm the location where the salvaged bricks will be stored until they can be incorporated into the seat wall, and is recommending that the owner transport the bricks to this location once it is finalized.

### **Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:**

The cost of carrying out the Interpretation Plan, including the salvaging and using of bricks as a seat wall within the park block, will be borne by the applicant. The bricks will

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be stored in existing City facilities. There are no financial implications for the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

While the salvaging of bricks for the seat wall is being recommended as part of the demolition approval of the David Hislop House, the implementation of the interpretation strategies both in the park block and throughout the subdivision will be finalized through the subdivision approval process. This includes the design of the mill-inspired play equipment, native species planting beds, interpretive panels, and sidewalk markers to guide users from the park to the Headford Mill remnant.

### **Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:**

A detailed consideration of the impacts that the proposed demolition will have on the property’s cultural heritage value is in keeping with the Strategic Priority “Strong Sense of Belonging”, as the interpretation strategies for the David Hislop House propose to commemorate the area’s history in an engaging and informative way.

### **Conclusion:**

While the David Hislop House contains significant cultural heritage value, its poor condition makes its conservation and restoration no longer a viable option. As such, alternative approaches to communicate its cultural heritage value and mitigate the loss of the building were considered.

Given the physical deterioration of the building, and given the robust interpretation strategy being proposed by the owner to mitigate the impact that demolition will have to the property’s cultural heritage value, staff recommends that Council consent to the owner’s demolition request, and that the owner salvages enough bricks to erect a seat wall as described in the Interpretation Plan. Once the demolition is complete, staff will bring forward a separate staff report recommending that the designation by-law be repealed.

### **Attachments:**

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix A: Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment
- Appendix B: Building Condition Assessment
- Appendix C: Interpretation Plan

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPI.22.067 Demolition Application for 1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A.pdf - Appendix B.pdf - Appendix C.pdf
Final Approval Date:	May 26, 2022

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

**Patrick Lee - May 26, 2022 - 10:56 AM**

**Kelvin Kwan - May 26, 2022 - 11:30 AM**

**Darlene Joslin - May 26, 2022 - 2:18 PM**