



## **Staff Report for Heritage Richmond Hill Meeting**

**Date of Meeting:** May 11, 2023

**Report Number:** SRPI.23.045

**Department:** Planning and Infrastructure

**Division:** Policy Planning

**Subject:** **SRPI.23.045 Heritage Permit – 10066 Yonge St  
(Richmond Hill Presbyterian Cemetery  
Octagonal Vault) Roof Replacement D12-07438**

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### **Purpose:**

To seek Heritage Richmond Hill's recommendation to Council to approve the Heritage Permit Application to replace the roof of the Part IV heritage designated Octagonal Vault, located in the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery at 10066 Yonge Street.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- a) That Heritage Richmond Hill recommends to Council:
  - (i) That the Heritage Permit Application to replace the roof of the Octagonal Vault located at 10066 Yonge Street, as described in report SRPI.23.045, be approved.

### **Contact Person:**

Julia Smith, Urban Design/Heritage Planner - Phone 905-771-5529

Steven Bell, Manager of Heritage and Urban Design – Phone 905-771-9996

### **Report Approval:**

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

**Approved by:** Darlene Joslin, 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.



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### Background:

The Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery is located at 10066 Yonge Street. The property is situated on the west side of Yonge Street, just north of Major Mackenzie Drive.

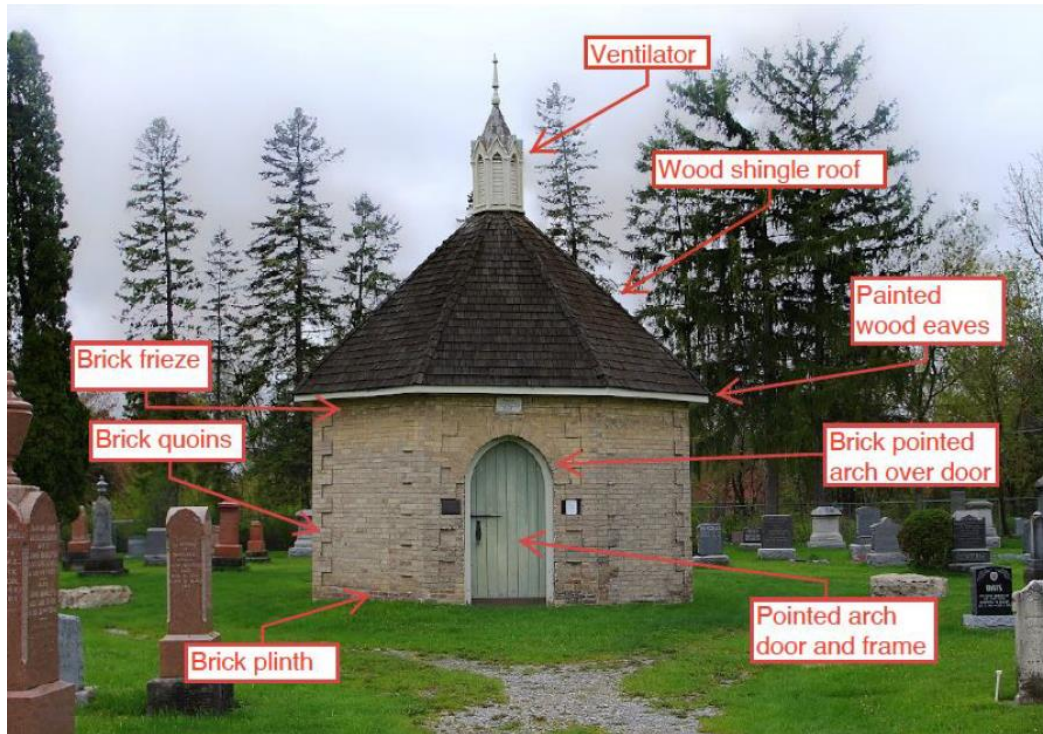
### Heritage Status

The Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery at 10066 Yonge Street is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* through Designating By-law 05-93. Among other attributes, the Cemetery features a highly significant buff-brick Octagonal Vault (the Vault), which was designed by Aurora architect Thomas Harris and built in 1863. Originally used for storing caskets in the winter for interment in the Spring, the Vault possesses design and historical value, and also plays an important part in the overall setting of the Cemetery.



**Figure 1** View of the Octagonal Vault within the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery (source: Edwin Rowse Architecture Inc.).

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**Figure 2** Architectural elements of the Vault design (source: Edwin Rowse Architecture Inc.).

### **Vault Condition Assessment & Project Phasing**

In 2022, the Trustees of the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery initiated a comprehensive assessment of the Vault's physical condition, as there were concerns that repairs were needed to protect the heritage fabric of the building, approximately 25 years after the last round of repairs. This resulted in a phased Conservation Plan for the Vault, outlining a scope of work for future repairs, as well as a strategy to phase these repairs to ensure the prioritization of the most urgent work.

The condition assessment found that the Vault is well constructed and in stable condition, with the exception of the roof finish (see Figure 3). The roof finish was determined to be the first priority to tackle in order to minimize further deterioration of other heritage fabric in the short term.

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**Figure 3** Detailed view of the Vault's existing deteriorated roof shingles (source: Edwin Rowse Architecture Inc.).



**Figure 4** View of the Vault rafters and roof deck. The roof structure, though stained and damp due to the leaking roof finish, remains firm and undecayed (source: Edwin Rowse Architecture Inc.).

### **Heritage Permit Application:**

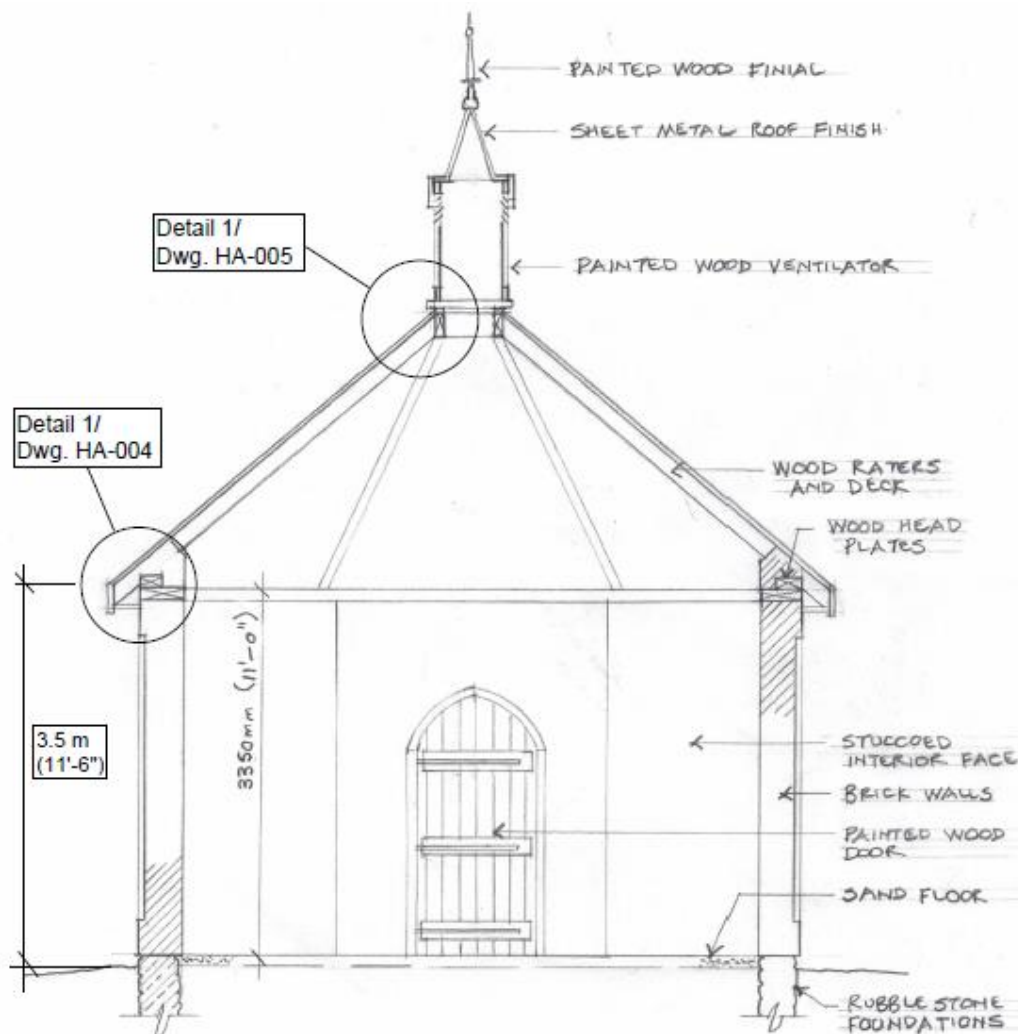
This Staff Report concerns the heritage permit application to replace the Vault's existing cedar shingle roof with a new asphalt roof, to ensure the building's continued conservation.

The Vault's existing cedar shingle roof is heavily deteriorated and leaking severely, putting the rest of the building at risk in the immediate future (see Figures 3 & 4). While the original intent was to replace the roof in-kind, the cost of installing a new cedar shingle roof was found to be prohibitively expensive. As a result, the applicants are proposing to install a new asphalt roof finish on the Vault, in a colour to match the

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existing grey weathered cedar shingle roofing (see Appendix A). The proposed roof replacement work will include the following:

- Remove the existing decayed shingle roof down to the wood roof deck and make good any damaged or decayed deck boards;
- Install new metal drip edge flashing and waterproof membrane;
- Install a synthetic breathable underlayment over all remaining exposed areas of wood deck;
- Install new dark grey asphalt shingles; new shingle colour has been selected to match the dark grey of existing weathered wood shingles;
- Install metal flashing around ventilator base; and
- Selectively refasten and repaint existing wood eaves soffit and fascia, where necessary.



**Figure 5** As-found cross section of the Vault (Dwg. No. HA-002), looking east (source: Edwin Rowse Architecture Inc.).

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### Discussion:

The following section describes the impacts that the roof replacement work will have on the Subject Property's heritage attributes and value, and also discusses additional considerations influencing the assessment of these impacts.

#### Physical Impact

As the proposed roof work replaces the existing wood shingles with new asphalt roofing, it constitutes a physical change for the Vault's historic fabric. However, the installation of a new upgraded roofing system will prevent surface damage from extending further into the building. The proposed new roofing finish will also safeguard against the physical deterioration of other building fabric, including more valuable structural elements such as the roof decking, walls, and foundation.

#### Visual Impact

As the proposed roof work replaces the existing wood shingles with new asphalt roofing, it will impact the overall appearance of the Vault. However, this impact has been mitigated by selecting an asphalt shingle colour to match the grey of the existing weathered cedar shingles.

#### Additional Considerations

Staff acknowledge that the proposal to replace the roof finish in asphalt shingles does not follow the widely accepted heritage conservation principle of 'replacing like with like'. Consequently, the proposed work to this *one element of the building* will have impacts on the heritage value, appearance and authenticity of the building fabric, but these impacts are deemed to be reversible. In addition, the impacts resulting from the roof replacement need to be measured against the more significant risks to the overall heritage value of the building, should the work not proceed due to the prohibitive costs of installing cedar shingles.

National and provincial heritage conservation standards and guidelines do not contemplate the implications of prohibitive costs on heritage conservation projects. However, it can be reasonably inferred that the overall protection of a building's original heritage fabric, and its associated cultural value, is the highest conservation objective. While the Vault's roof finish, due to its protective nature and shorter lifespan, has likely been replaced many times since the building was constructed in the 1860s (most recently in the 1990s), original load-bearing structural elements such as the walls, roof structure, and foundation are more fundamental to both the building's heritage value and long-term survival. Further, the asphalt roof finish that is currently being proposed is 'reversible', and will immediately protect the overall building fabric, while still allowing the possibility of a wood shingle roof in the future.

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After accounting for both the anticipated negative impacts and additional considerations such as cost, originality of existing features, and reversibility, staff are in support of the proposed roof replacement work.

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

There are no financial or staffing implications at this time.

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

Careful consideration of alterations to this designated heritage property supports Council’s priority to foster a ***Strong Sense of Belonging***, through “placemaking” and the conservation of Richmond Hill’s cultural heritage resources.

### **Conclusion:**

The heritage permit process is designed to ensure that heritage attributes, as described in a heritage designation by-law, are not obscured, damaged or destroyed unnecessarily by alterations and other forms of intervention. The Vault’s existing cedar shingle roof is heavily deteriorated and leaking severely, putting the rest of the building at risk in the immediate future. While replacement in-kind is typically the preferred approach for heritage conservation work, installing a new cedar shingle roof was found to be prohibitively expensive for the Cemetery. Consequently, staff are supportive of the proposal to replace the existing wood roof with a new asphalt roof as an acceptable intervention, as this will ensure the immediate and continued protection of the building’s more integral structural features, such as its walls and roof structure. As such, staff recommend approval of this heritage permit application.

### **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:** Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery Addendum to the Conservation Plan for Octagonal Vault (Winter Crypt) (March 23, 2023: Edwin Rowse Architecture Inc.)



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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPI.23.045 Heritage Permit - 10066 Yonge St (Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery Octagonal Vault).docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A_Winter Crypt_Addendum to Conservation Plan_Redacted - AODA.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 19, 2023

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

**Maria Flores - Apr 18, 2023 - 9:19 AM**

**Kelvin Kwan - Apr 18, 2023 - 9:21 AM**

**Darlene Joslin - Apr 19, 2023 - 7:55 PM**