



Staff Report for Heritage Richmond Hill Meeting

Date of Meeting: October 3, 2024

Report Number: SRPBS.24.091

Department: Planning and Building Services

Division: Policy Planning

Subject: **SRPBS.24.091 - Heritage Permit for 16 Macleod Estate Court Tree Removal - City File No. D12-07230**

Purpose:

To seek Heritage Richmond Hill's recommendation that Council approve the removal of the fallen carriageway tree at 16 Macleod Estate Court.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That staff report SRPBS.24.091 titled, "Heritage Permit for 16 Macleod Estate Court Tree Removal" be received;
- b) That Council direct Heritage Planning staff to work with the owners of 16 Macleod Estate Court to secure an Indigenous artist who will convert the stump of the fallen Silver Maple tree described in staff report SRPBS.24.091 into a design that commemorates the area's Indigenous heritage; and,
- c) That the heritage permit application to formally recognize the removal of the fallen Silver Maple tree at 16 Macleod Estate Court, as described in staff report SRPBS.24.091, be approved.

Contact Person(s):

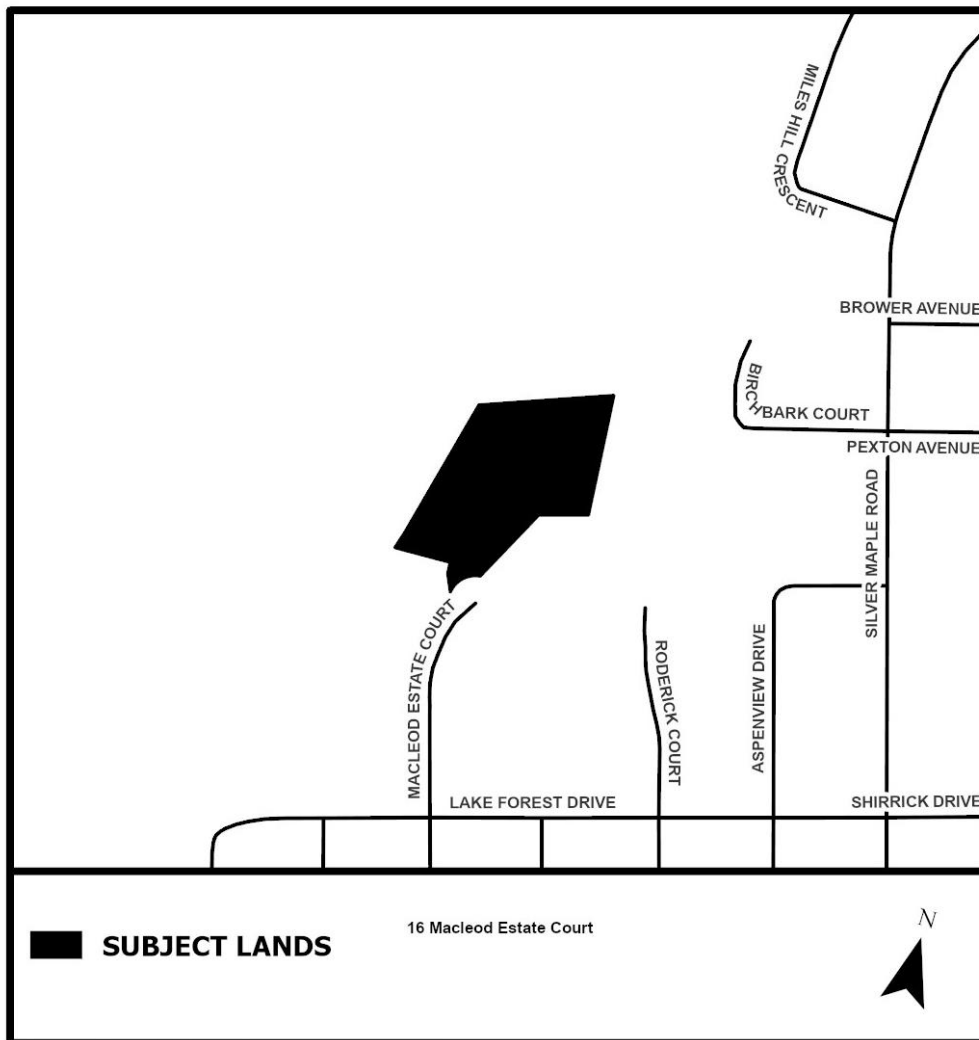
- Pamela Vega, Urban Design/Heritage Planner, extension 5529
- Kunal Chaudhry, Manager of Heritage and Urban Design, extension 5562
- Gus Galanis, Commissioner of Planning and Building Services, extension 2465

Report Approval:

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.

Page 2

Location Map:



Background:

The Drynoch Estate at 16 Macleod Estate Court was designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 2017 due to its architectural and historical value. The house was originally built by Captain Martin Donald Macleod circa 1845 and reflects an eclectic design with Classical Revival elements. The property also contains a portion of the tree-lined carriageway that originally provided the property access to Yonge Street, which was described by author Sherrill MacLaren as “one of the finest carriage ways in Upper Canada”¹. This carriageway is believed to have been constructed by the Macleod family in 1848 and includes an allée of Silver Maple trees on both the north and south sides of the carriageway.

¹ McLaren, Sherrill. *Braehead – Three Founding Families in Nineteenth Century Canada*. McClelland and Stewart, 1986.

Page 3

The carriageway, including the allées of trees, is identified as a heritage attribute in the property's heritage designation by-law (By-law 88-17). As per section 33(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, Council approval is required prior to undertaking work that may alter or remove the property's heritage attributes.

On August 5, 2024, the area was hit with a heavy rainstorm and one of the westernmost trees on the northern allée fell (see Figure 1). A Heritage Permit application is being brought forward to formally recognize the removal of this original carriageway Silver Maple tree.

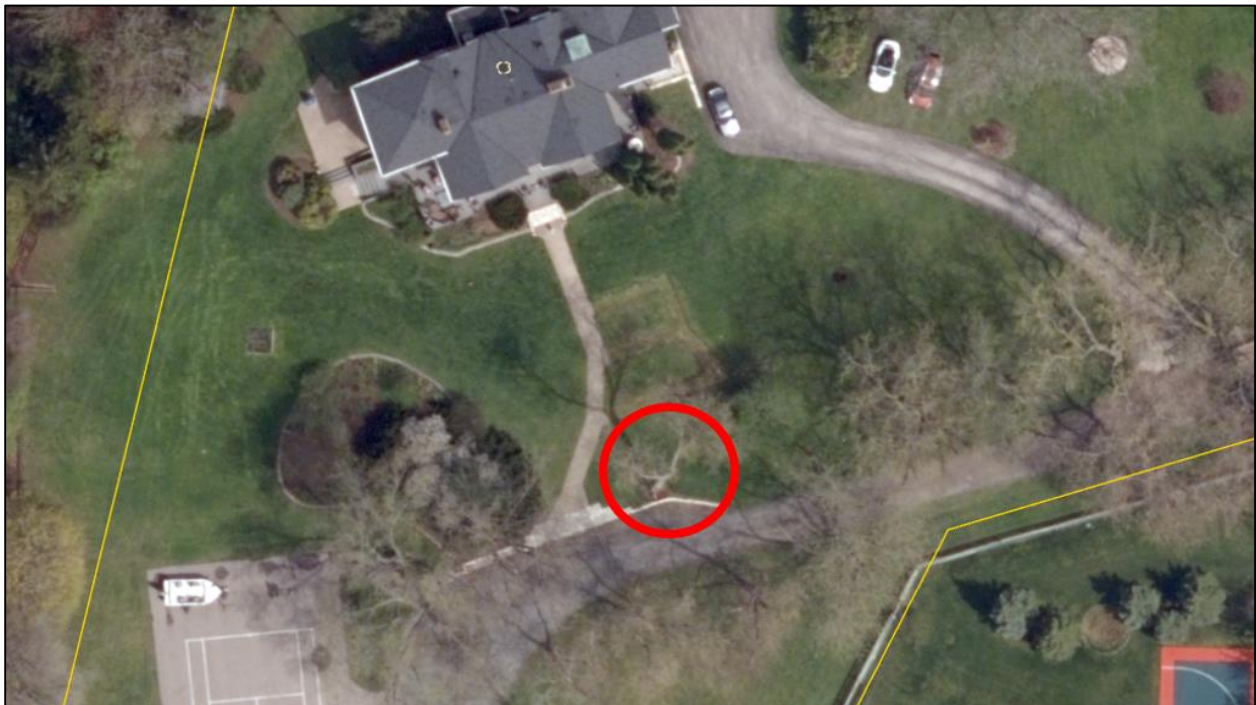


Figure 1: Circled in red, the location of the fallen tree close to the western terminus of the northern allée and adjacent to the pathway that leads to the home's front door (source: City of Richmond Hill).

Discussion:

While Council approval is generally sought prior to a heritage attribute being removed, the falling of the carriageway tree was unplanned and unpredictable, and the damage to the tree could not be undone once it had occurred. Accordingly, Council approval is being sought after the tree removal has already occurred. This approval is being sought to formalize the removal of the tree, and to have a record of when and why the tree was removed.

As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, the trunk of the fallen tree shows evidence of hollowing. Hollowing is a natural process and is not uncommon in older maple trees. Silver Maple trees are also known to have brittle wood and are commonly damaged in storms. With the hollowed trunk and the more intense storms that are occurring due to climate change, it is not unexpected that a carriageway tree has now fallen.

Page 4

It is also important to note that the lifespan of a Silver Maple tree is between 100 and 150 years. As the carriageway trees are over 170 years old, the trees have surpassed their life expectancy.



Figure 2: A photo montage showing the fallen tree *in situ* (source: owners of 16 Macleod Estate Court).

Next Steps

The owners of 16 Macleod Estate Court have requested that, instead of planting a replacement Silver Maple tree, the stump of the fallen tree be retained *in situ* and that it be carved by an Indigenous artist to commemorate the area's rich Indigenous heritage. Staff are in support of this suggestion as it presents an innovative way to celebrate multiple cultures and multiple eras of Richmond Hill's history. It would further acknowledge a component of the city's local heritage that is locally underrepresented in the built form, while also ensuring the visual continuity of the settler-era northern carriageway allée.

Heritage staff will work closely with the property owners and an Indigenous artist who will ensure that the art will appropriately commemorate Richmond Hill's Indigenous heritage. However, because the art will be on private property, the cost of hiring an artist to undertake the work will be borne by the owners of 16 Macleod Estate Court.

Page 5



Figure 3: A photograph showing that the tree's trunk was hollow (source: the owners of 16 Macleod Estate Court).

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications at this time.

Relationship to Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

The long-term conservation of significant cultural heritage resources by replacing removed heritage attributes as needed and commemorating Indigenous heritage supports Pillar 1 of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, "Growing a Livable, Sustainable Community"; specifically, it supports Priority 3, "to build and implement a land-use planning vision and regulatory framework while conserving the city's unique cultural heritage."

Page 6

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPBS.24.091 - Heritage Permit for 16 Macleod Estate Court.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Sep 10, 2024

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

Maria Flores - Sep 10, 2024 - 12:35 PM

Gus Galanis - Sep 10, 2024 - 12:38 PM

Darlene Joslin - Sep 10, 2024 - 1:44 PM