



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

**Date of Meeting:** December 5, 2024

**Report Number:** SRPBS.24.125

**Department:** Planning and Building Services

**Division:** Policy Planning

**Subject:** **SRPBS.24.125 – Request to Demolish the George W. Baker Cottage at 64 Major Mackenzie Drive East – City File D12-07314**

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### **Purpose:**

To seek Heritage Richmond Hill Committee's recommendation that Council endorse the request to demolish the listed heritage property at 64 Major Mackenzie Drive East, known as the George W. Baker Cottage. While the building has cultural heritage value, support for the demolition request is being sought since it has been irreparably damaged by fire and cannot be salvaged.

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

- a) That Staff Report SRPBS.24.125 be received;
- b) That Council approve the demolition of 64 Major Mackenzie Drive East;
- c) That, prior to the issuance of a Demolition Permit for the subject property, the owner shall submit building documentation for the George W. Baker Cottage and as-built measured plan and elevation drawings, to the satisfaction of Heritage and Urban Design staff;
- d) That, once the George W. Baker Cottage is demolished, 64 Major Mackenzie Drive East be removed from Richmond Hill's Heritage Register.

### **Contact Person(s):**

- Pamela Vega, Urban Design and Heritage Planner, 5529
- Kunal Chaudhry, Manager of Heritage and Urban Design, 5562
- Maria Flores, Director of Development Planning, 905-771-5438
- Gus Galanis, Commissioner Planning and Building Services, 2465

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### 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 reports approval are attached.

### Location Map:



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**Figure 1:** Undated photograph of the George W. Baker Cottage (photo by the City of Richmond Hill).

### **Background:**

The property at 64 Major Mackenzie Drive East is located on the north side of Major Mackenzie Drive East, east of Church Street, within the historic village core. It contains a c.1913 one-and-a-half storey residential building that is known as the George W. Baker Cottage. It was listed on the Richmond Hill Register as a non-designated building in 2007 when the City's *Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance* was formally recognized as the Heritage Register.

The property was included as part of a development application that would have resulted in the relocation of the George W. Baker Cottage to the east side of Church Street South, north of Major Mackenzie Drive East. However, this development has been inactive for some time and there are currently no active plans for the development of the property.

On September 2, 2024, a fire broke out in the George W. Baker Cottage. The building was vacant at the time. The property owner claims that the cottage cannot be repaired and that no architectural or structural elements can be salvaged. They have provided a Structural Review Assessment to support these claims (see Attachment "A").

### **Discussion:**

Blue Grove Engineering Group has conducted a non-destructive assessment of the fire damage to the George W. Baker Cottage. They confirm that the building's structural components are charred beyond repair, and that the wooden structural framing has been further damaged by water from firefighting activity and due to rain falling through the damaged roof structure. They do not believe that the building's structural elements

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can be salvaged or reinforced. Blue Grove Engineering Group also states that the Cottage, which is currently boarded up with hoarding plywood, should remain inaccessible because the building can potentially collapse with minimal applied loading. Accordingly, they recommend that the cottage be demolished.

Based on the recommendations and findings as noted within the attached Structural Review Assessment, the City's Heritage Planning staff support the landowner's demolition request. Furthermore, the structural instability of the George W. Baker Cottage, warrants support for the demolition request as it may pose a safety risk to the public.

### Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications at this time.

### Relationship to Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

The demolition of a built form that poses a safety risk supports Pillar 3 of the City's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, "Strengthening our Foundations"; specifically, it supports Priority 1, to ***"make decisions that are evidence-based and data-driven to enable the City's long term social, environmental and economic sustainability."*** Since the George W. Baker Cottage has been significantly damaged by fire and cannot be salvaged or conserved, the proposed demolition is supportable.

### 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.

- Attachment "A": Structural Review Assessment

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPBS.24.125 Demolition Request for 64 Major Mackenzie Drive East.docx
Attachments:	- SRPBS.24.125 Attachment A.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 17, 2024

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

**Maria Flores - Nov 13, 2024 - 10:57 AM**

**Gus Galanis - Nov 13, 2024 - 12:34 PM**

**Darlene Joslin - Nov 17, 2024 - 10:52 AM**