



Staff Report for Heritage Richmond Hill Meeting

Date of Meeting: June 5, 2025
Report Number: SRPBS.25.064

Department: Planning and Building Services
Division: Policy Planning

Subject: SRPBS.25.064 - Heritage Permit for 32
Richmond Street (William Harrison Rental
House) - City File D12-07354

Purpose:

To seek Heritage Richmond Hill's recommendation that Council approve the construction of a rear addition and repairs to the William Harrison Rental House at 32 Richmond Street.

Recommendation(s):

That Heritage Richmond Hill recommends to Council:

- a) That staff report SRPBS.25.064 titled, "Heritage Permit for 32 Richmond Street (William Harrison Rental House)" be received;
- b) That the heritage permit application to construct a rear addition and repair the William Harrison Rental House at 32 Richmond Street, as described in Staff Report SRPBS.25.064, be approved subject to the following condition:
 - i) That the owner enter into a Heritage Conservation Agreement containing provisions ensuring insurance coverage for protection of the heritage house during construction and that the work is completed as proposed in the approved heritage permit; and
- c) That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute a Heritage Conservation Agreement with the owner of 32 Richmond Street.

Contact Person(s):

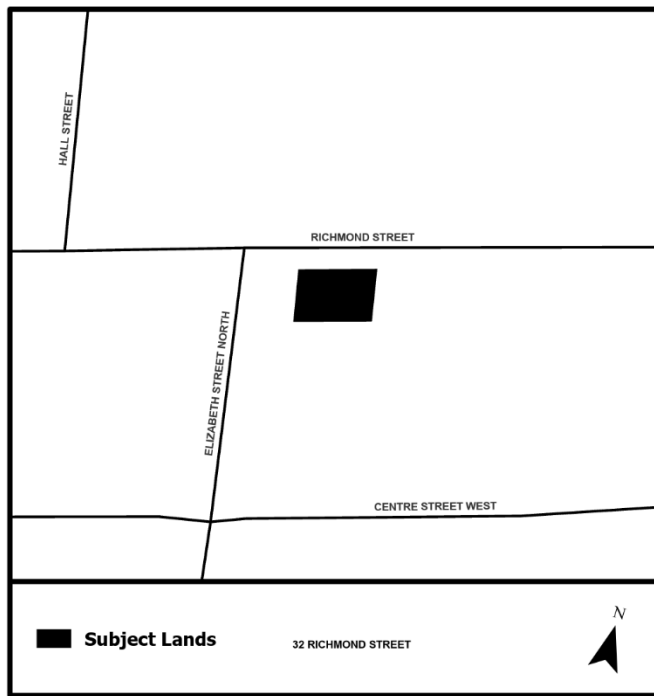
- Pamela Vega, Urban Design/Heritage Planner, 905-771-5529
- Kunal Chaudhry, Manager of Heritage & Urban Design, 905-771-5562
- Maria Flores, Director of Policy Planning, 905-771-5438
- Gus Galanis, Commissioner of Planning and Building Services, 905-771-2465

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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 report's approval are attached.

Location Map:



Background:

The William Harrison Rental House was designated in 2024 for its design and physical value, historical and associative value, and contextual value. Dating to 1881, it is a good representative example of late-Victorian Ontario Gothic Revival architecture in Richmond Hill, and retains many original architectural details. It was originally built by William Harrison, who was Richmond Hill's second Reeve, the owner and operator of an important saddle-and-harness-making business, and was one of the village's first local historians. He rented out 32 Richmond Street as an income property for nearly 20 years. A rear addition was later constructed and is not considered to have cultural heritage value.

As per section 33 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (the "Act"), no owner of a designated property shall alter the property without Council approval if the alteration is likely to affect the property's heritage attributes. Council has 90 days in which to make a decision on the alteration request. Should Council not make a decision within 90 days, they are deemed to have approved the alteration.

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A Heritage Permit application proposing the construction of a rear two-storey addition and repairs to the William Harrison Rental House was received. The application was deemed complete on May 1, 2025. As the repairs are extensive and the addition may impact the building's structural system, this alteration request requires Council approval. Council must make its decision by July 30, 2025.

Discussion:

The work proposed to be undertaken on the William Harrison Rental House can be classified as either repairs or new construction and are described in detail in the subsections below.

Repairs

A number of exterior elements are being proposed to be replaced due to their poor condition. Where applicable, the replacements will match the appearance of the existing elements to minimize the visual impact to the building's architectural character.

Foundation

The existing foundation of the heritage building is constructed of bricks. This brick foundation has severely deteriorated, which has caused the western part of the building to be lower than the eastern part and has caused cracks in the exterior. The owner is proposing to replace the foundation with concrete.

Verandah

The front verandah does not appear to be original and is in a poor condition. The owner is proposing to replace the wooden deck and stairs with a poured concrete deck and stairs and reconstruct the roof and posts to match the appearance and dimensions of the existing roof and posts. The railings are proposed to be clear glass (see Figures 2 and 4).

Bargeboard

The gingerbread bargeboard trim at the north, east and west gable ends are in disrepair. The owner proposes to replace them with trim that replicates the existing trim.

Windows

While many of the windows are original, they are in advanced states of disrepair. To ensure that the building continues to remain usable and to prevent moisture from entering the building, the owner is proposing to replace all the windows with white aluminum windows with a wood-like finish that will match the existing windows.

Doors

The owner is proposing to replace the existing non-original doors with new aluminum doors that will have a wood-like finish and will closely match the existing doors.

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Chimney

The owner is proposing to remove the non-original chimney on the west side of the building. As this chimney is not identified as a heritage attribute, staff do not have concerns with its removal.

New Construction

The owner is proposing to demolish the existing rear addition and construct a new two-storey addition and garage. As the existing rear addition is not believed to have any cultural heritage value, staff do not have any concerns with this demolition.

The new rear addition is proposed to be clad in dark grey ACM (aluminum composite material) panels. The colour and appearance of these panels are more neutral in nature and will not compete with the richer, textured appearance of the William Harrison Rental House's brick. The east side will include detailing that reflects the heritage building's gables (see Figures 2-5).

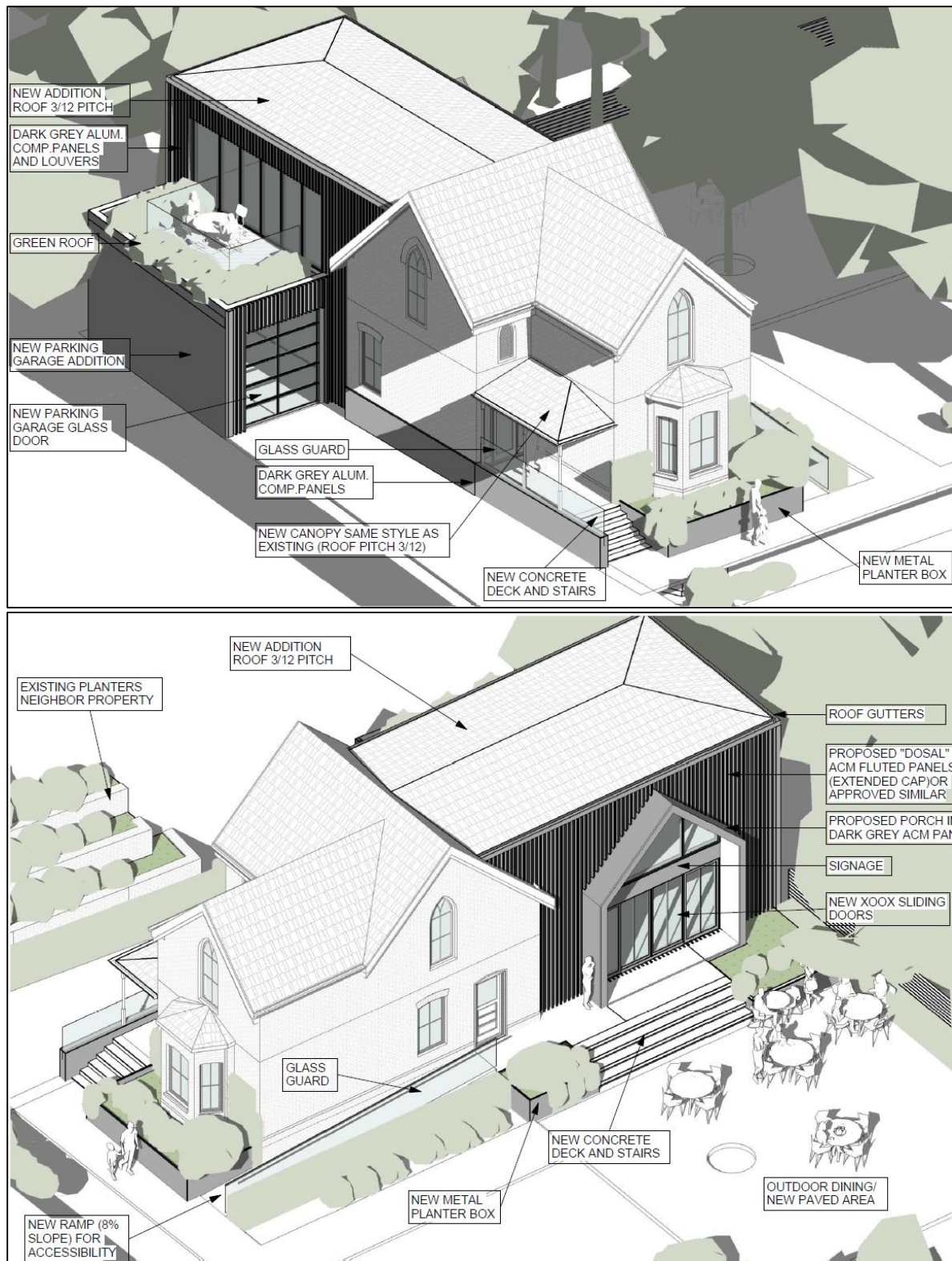
The one-car garage is proposed to be constructed to the west of the new rear addition. It will be clad in ACM fluted panels and have a dark glass garage door. It will also have a green roof to increase the building's environmental sustainability and is designed to minimize its visual impact on the existing building. An outdoor seating area is also proposed to be constructed on its roof (see Figures 2 and 4).

A concrete ramp with glass railing is proposed to be constructed along the eastern side of the building to lead to the side entrance (see Figures 3 and 5).



Figure 1: Existing condition of the William Harrison Rental House (City of Richmond Hill, 2024).

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Figures 2, 3: Drawings showing the proposed changes to the property (courtesy Goal Architects, 2025).

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Figures 4, 5: Renderings showing views to the property from Richmond Street. Note that the renderings are for illustration purposes only. The existing dichromatic brick will be retained (courtesy Goal Architects, 2025).

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Staff Assessment

The use of glass railings will minimize the visual impact of the new side ramp and will give the front verandah a sense of openness. Furthermore, as the repairs to the William Harrison Rental House will have minimal visual impacts, it will prevent moisture from entering the building and will help to ensure the building's continued use, staff are in support of these alterations.

While the size of the rear addition is large, City staff believe that the visual impact to the property's heritage attributes will be minimal for the following reasons:

1. The height of the proposed addition is shorter than the William Harrison Rental House.
2. The use of smooth, dark grey metal panels on the proposed addition will further decrease visual dominance of the addition and maintain its subservience to the William Harrison Rental House.
3. The new glass entrance on the eastern side of the building reflects the proportions of the William Harrison Rental House's architecture and helps tie the new addition to the original heritage building.

It is staff's opinion that the addition is a good example of heritage conservation in the City. The construction of a contemporary addition allows for the retention and adaptive reuse of the historic William Harrison Rental House. As the continued use of a property is important in helping to ensure the long-term retention of heritage attributes, the construction of the addition will assist in conserving the building for future generations. Furthermore, the contemporary style of the addition enhances the property's heritage value, highlighting the warmth of the historic brick and the more ornate style of the William Harrison Rental House.

The proposed addition also complies with Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. Specifically, it does so by selecting a location for the addition that ensures the heritage value of the property is maintained, designing the addition in a manner that draws a clear distinction between what is historic and what is new, and using materials and massing that is compatible with the exterior form of the historic building and its setting.

Furthermore, allowing these alterations to the property aligns with the *Provincial Planning Statement* ("PPS"; 2024). The PPS mandates the conservation of protected heritage property, which may contain built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes, and encourages Planning Authorities to develop and implement proactive strategies for conserving significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.

The commitment to heritage conservation continues at the regional and municipal level through supportive objectives and policies in the York Region Official Plan (2022), and the City of Richmond Hill Official Plan 2010 ("the Plan"; 2023 office consolidation). The

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City's Official Plan recognizes that the conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral part of place-making, contributing to the City's identity, economic potential, and quality of life.

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 allowing changes that support their continued use aligns with 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."

Attachments:

There are no attachments associated with Staff Report SRPBS.25.064.

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPBS.25.064 - Heritage Permit for 32 Richmond St.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	May 21, 2025

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

Maria Flores - May 20, 2025 - 9:06 AM

Gus Galanis - May 20, 2025 - 9:07 AM

Darlene Joslin - May 21, 2025 - 9:40 AM