



Staff Report for Heritage Richmond Hill Meeting

Date of Meeting: July 3, 2025

Report Number: SRPBS.25.065

Department: Planning and Building Services

Division: Policy Planning

Subject: **SRPBS.25.065 – Heritage Permit for 86 Major Mackenzie Drive West (Highland Cottage/Ada Mackenzie House) – D12-07324**

Purpose:

To seek Heritage Richmond Hill's recommendation that Council recognize the alteration to the front (south) elevation of the Highland Cottage/Ada Mackenzie House and the removal of the front door and original classical door case at 86 Major Mackenzie Drive West.

Recommendation(s):

That Heritage Richmond Hill recommends to Council:

- a) That staff report SRPBS.25.065 regarding Heritage Permit for 86 Major Mackenzie Drive West (Highland Cottage/Ada Mackenzie House), be received;
- b) That the heritage permit application to recognize the construction of a vestibule on the front façade and the removal of the front door and original classical door case at 86 Major Mackenzie Drive West, as described in Staff Report SRPBS.25.065, be approved; and,
- c) That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Contact Person(s):

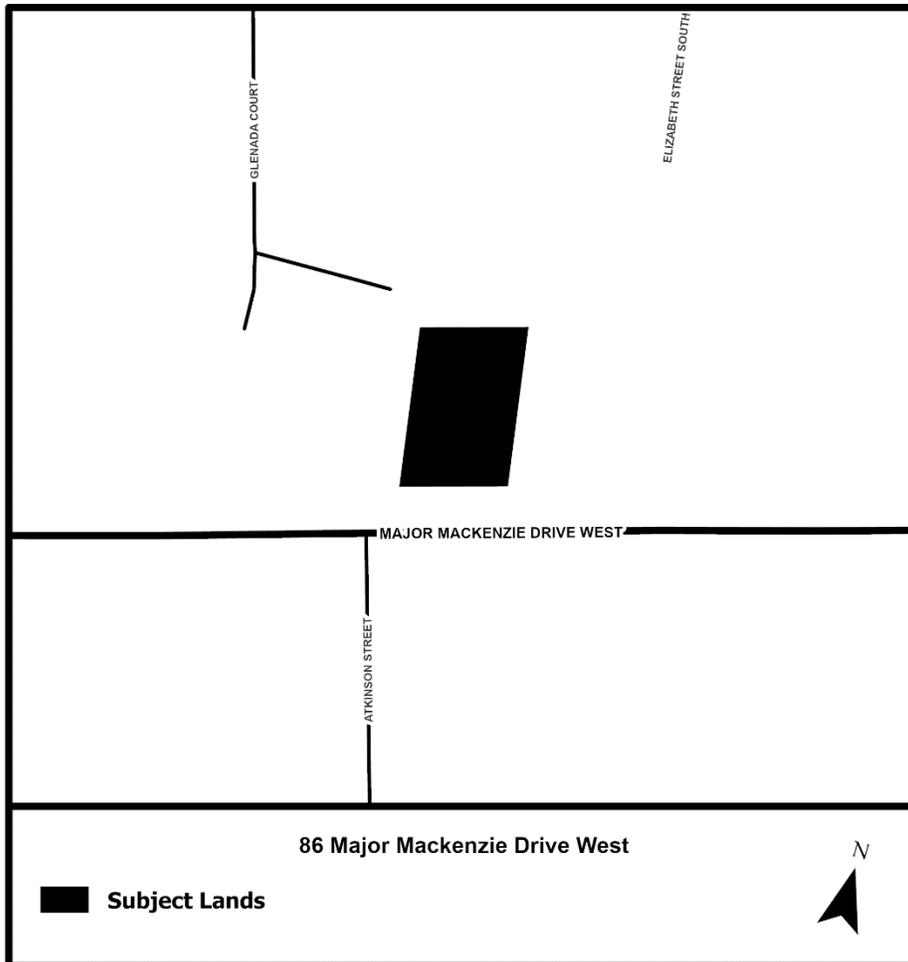
- Pamela Vega, Urban Design/Heritage Planner, 905-771-5529
- Kunal Chaudhry, Manager of Heritage & Urban Design, 905-771-5562
- Maria Flores, Director of Policy Planning, 905-771-5438
- Gus Galanis, Commissioner of Planning and Building Services, 905-771-2465

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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 reports approval are attached.

Location Map:



Background:

The Highland Cottage/Ada Mackenzie House was designated in 2008 for its design value, historical value, and contextual value. Built c.1850-1855, it is an early example of an Ontario farmhouse built in the saltbox form. Ada Mackenzie, Canada's first pre-eminent female golfer, renovated the structure in the 1940s with the advice of well-known Canadian architect Charles E. Langley. It is a rare and sensitive example of an early adaptive re-use project in Richmond Hill. The property also has historical value

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because of its association with the early farming settlers the Arnold Family, its association with noted Richmond Hill resident David Boyle Sr who was a part of with the establishment of the City's Pioneer Park, as well as its association with David Boyle Jr, a prominent and influential figure in the development of archaeology in Ontario.

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 consent to the alteration.

A Heritage Permit application requesting the recognition of the construction of a front vestibule, and the removal of the front door and door case of the Highland Cottage/Ada Mackenzie House, was received and deemed complete on May 22, 2025. As this application involves heritage attributes, it requires Council approval. Council must make its decision by August 20, 2025

Discussion:

The work described in this staff report was completed between 2021 and 2023 but no Council approval was sought or received for these alterations.

Work Completed

A glass vestibule was added to the front façade (see Figure 1), and the front door and door surround were replaced with a new contemporary-style door and simple door case (see Figure 2).



Figure 1: Existing condition of the Highland Cottage/Ada Mackenzie House. Note the one-storey vestibule on the front façade (City of Richmond Hill, 2025).

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Figure 2: The existing front door (courtesy applicant, 2025).

Staff Assessment

The three-bay front elevation is part of the original c.1850 house and it is identified as a heritage attribute in the property's heritage designation by-law. The use of glass minimizes the visual impact of the vestibule and does not impact the legibility of the three-bay façade. Furthermore, the construction of the vestibule increases the usability of the historic building by providing an additional layer of protection from the elements to both users and the building's interior.

The central six panel front door and classical door case is identified as a heritage attribute in the property's heritage designation by-law. While the removal of heritage attributes is generally not encouraged, the visual prominence of the front door and door surround is minimized due to its location inside the vestibule. Its location within the vestibule also removes the front door from publicly visibility and converts it from an

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exterior element to an interior element. As it has been the City's practice to primarily designate exterior elements of privately owned properties, facilitating the alteration of the front door aligns with the practice of allowing interior elements to be altered. The vestibule's location at the centre of the façade, and it having the same width as the middle bay, maintains the vestibule as the visual and physical front entrance, and allows the front (south) façade's three-bay, symmetrical design to continue to be legible. Accordingly, staff are of the opinion that these alterations do not impact the property's cultural heritage value.

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.25.065.

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPBS.25.065 - Heritage Permit for 86 Major Mackenzie Dr W.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jun 11, 2025

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

Maria Flores - Jun 11, 2025 - 1:08 PM

Gus Galanis - Jun 11, 2025 - 2:05 PM

Darlene Joslin - Jun 11, 2025 - 4:53 PM