
4.0 GUIDELINES FOR ALTERATIONS, ADDITIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

4.1 Introduction

The character of the Trafalgar Road District relies on its historical development as a distinctive residential area. Most residential construction took place over a number of years, primarily after the 1860s to the 1950s. The Trafalgar Road District is, in part, characterized by a variety of architectural styles, lot sizes, position of buildings on the lots and building materials.

The neighbourhood reflects a stable stock of single family residential buildings although there has been some pressure to convert to commercial units with the accompanying demands for parking and upgrading of existing structures. Redevelopment of the building stock, i.e., remodeling and enlarging existing houses; and, demolition of an existing house and construction of a new building, is evident. There is some limited potential for minor infilling.

Physical change that may be expected to occur within the Trafalgar Road District can be categorized by:

- alterations and additions to existing structures;
- new construction, either through infill or redevelopment; and,
- public works.

Often exterior alterations to buildings are undertaken to update the appearance of a house; to add additional living space; and to minimize the exterior maintenance of the house. Each of these actions produces a different effect on the exterior appearance of a heritage building. Cumulatively these actions can remove all traces of the earlier building.

An important objective in the following guidelines is to encourage change that is in keeping with and respects the existing building form.

The guidelines should be read:

- in conjunction with advice on building conservation found in Section 3; and,
- as a prerequisite for the consideration of permit applications under Part V, Section 43 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The guidelines are organized to respond to those who are directly responsible for change in the district, namely:

- owners of heritage properties;
- owners of non-heritage properties;
- owners of infill lots; and,
- public officials undertaking public work projects.

Sub-section 4.2 and 4.3 provides specific guidance for changes to heritage buildings with a view to retaining distinguishing features and fabric.

Sub-section 4.4 is intended for the owners of properties within the district that are not considered of heritage value.

Sub-sections 4.5 and 4.6 address the integration of new construction and public works into the district.

A note of caution is advised in the purpose, use and application of these design guidelines. The guidelines are intended to provide a *general framework* for considering the minimum standard of appropriate change within the district. They must be considered an aid to consistent decision making rather than a specific formula for designing a new building, addition or architectural feature.

4.2. Alterations to heritage buildings and sites

Within the Trafalgar Road Heritage Conservation District, 118 buildings are considered to have been constructed prior to 1952 and therefore of varying degrees of heritage value and interest. It is the intent of this plan that these existing heritage structures be retained. The demolition of buildings is discouraged. Likewise the moving of heritage features is not promoted. It is recommended that changes to heritage properties be undertaken in the context of these guidelines.

The term **alteration** is used in a comprehensive sense to apply to any work undertaken to a property such as repairs, rehabilitation, restoration and additions. Alteration activities can be regulated under the *Ontario Building Code* although maintenance and some repairs and replacements are exempt.

4.2.1 Guiding Principles

Design features of the building and site and historic building materials should be maintained and enhanced.

Any plans or actions involving a heritage property should be based upon a clear understanding of the particular problem with the building or site. They should be based on a sound literature research and physical evidence provided by the building fabric.

Contemplated work should be truthful both historically and architecturally. Beware of over-enthusiasm: replacing too much; cleaning too well; or making an inappropriate historic appearance.

“Quick fix” and “magic remedies” should be avoided as at best they may be simply ineffectual and at worst may cause irreparable damage to a significant building.

4.2.2 Features and spaces around buildings

Maintain traditional views of property by avoiding the masking or hiding of prominent building features with new additions.

Ensure that front lawns, tree plantings, hedges and fences are maintained.

Keep parking areas and outbuildings including garages and utilities such as heat pumps and satellite dishes to the side or rear as traditional service areas.

Continue historic means of access: drives, paths and doorways. Encourage required new entrances to be installed on secondary elevations. Where external staircases are proposed they should be located at the rear.

Maintain proper site drainage in any work so that water does not collect or drain towards foundations.

4.2.3 Existing Building Fabric

Attempt to repair rather than replace.

Base all designs for replacement or restoration of former features on dependable documentary evidence, where available.

When undertaking repairs, replacement or restoration, use the same materials as the original, whenever possible.

New or repair work should not confuse the historic character of an area by creating an impression of greater age or of a different region or even country. Do not obscure signs of age or irregularities found in older work.

Do not violate symmetry or other important features of architectural design, particularly on the main elevation(s).

Do not move heritage structures.

4.2.4 Roofs

Decorative roof features and original roofing materials should be retained, conserved and if appropriate, restored.

Ensure that vents, skylights and other new roof elements are sympathetic in material and that they are discretely placed out of general view from the street and public rights-of-way.

4.2.5 Foundations and Walls

Protect original wall surfaces from cleaning methods that may permanently alter or damage the appearance of the surface or give a “falsely” new look to the building, for example, sandblasting, strong liquid chemical solutions and high pressure water cleaning.

Avoid application of new surfaces or new coatings that alter the appearance of the original material, especially where they are substitutes for masonry repairs. This may include the application of waterproof and water repellent coatings, paint, aluminum or vinyl siding and stucco.

4.2.6 Windows

Protect and maintain original window openings as well as their distinguishing features such as materials, frame, surrounds, shutters, sash, muntins, glazing and paint colour.

Modifications to the size or shape of window openings, removal of muntins, installation of snap-in muntins, replacement with sealed units or covering of trim with metal or other material is discouraged.

Avoid removing or blocking up windows that are important to the architectural character of the building.

New windows should be installed sensitively, in an area that is inconspicuous. New window design that is compatible with the original in terms of proportions, rhythm and scale is encouraged; however, the new should not attempt to replicate the original in terms of historical details.

4.2.7 Entrances

Protect and maintain entrances and porches especially on principal elevations where they are often key elements in defining the character of the building. Retain the historic means of access.

Avoid the removal of porches. Conserve important features such as doors, glazing, lighting, steps, balustrades and door surrounds.

Restoration of a missing porch should be based upon accurate research using both pictorial and physical evidence. Where documentation does not exist, the design and construction of a new entrance or porch compatible with the character of the building is preferred over a conjectural design of the original.

Where new entrances are required, they should be installed on secondary elevations.

4.3 Additions to heritage buildings and sites

There is evidence in the district that buildings have been added to over the years. Often an addition is needed to update a structure for a particular, contemporary need that may result from:

- the opportunity to update mechanical services of an existing building;
- the expansion of living space for a growing family or a specialized activity; and,
- economic constraints that make acquisition costs of a new property impossible, but make an addition or re-building of an older structure feasible.

Additions even more than alterations, can have a profound influence on the aesthetic architectural qualities of an heritage building. A key objective in the design of an addition is to ensure that the completed structure adds to or enhances the history of the building and does not devalue it.

A balance is sought between the new and old or more specifically, a relationship of harmony. While good design is important it will only be as good as the tradespeople who put it in place. Good quality craftsmanship is vital to the overall success of the project.

There are two important points to be considered when building an addition to a heritage building:

- 1) try to visualize the impact of the structure from the street or at a pedestrian level; and,
- 2) design new additions from the outside in.

Finally, new additions should be constructed in a way that:

- they are clearly differentiated from original historical fabric and compatible with the historic fabric; and,
- the continued protection of distinguishing architectural features is ensured and they do not radically change, damage; obscure, destroy or detract from such features.

4.3.1 Location

- 1) Exterior additions, including garages, balconies and greenhouses are encouraged to be located at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of the building, limited in size and scale to complement the existing building and neighbouring property. Additions at the rear should always be slightly lower than the existing roof line and stepped in at the sides in order not to overpower or dominate the existing heritage building and the view from the street. Additions so constructed will also tend to be more neighbourly to adjoining property owners.
- 2) Multi-storey exterior additions are best set back as deeply as possible from the existing front wall plane in order to be as unobtrusive as possible in the streetscape.
- 3) Additions to structures with symmetrical facades should avoid creating imbalance and asymmetrical arrangements in building form.

4.3.2 Design

- 1) New additions are best designed in a manner that distinguishes between old and new; and that avoids duplicating the exact style of the existing heritage building or imitating a particular historical style or period of architecture.
- 2) Contemporary design for additions is appropriate when such additions do not destroy significant architectural, historical or cultural material and when the design is compatible with mass, ratio of solids to voids, colour, material, and character of the property, neighbourhood or environment.
- 3) New additions should be designed in such a manner that the essential form and integrity of the existing building would be unimpaired if the addition were removed in the future.
- 4) Additions are encouraged to be located at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of the building, limited in size and scale to complement the existing building and neighbouring properties. Keep the height and bulk of the new addition smaller than the existing building.
- 5) Additions are encouraged to not add to the height or roof of an existing historical building as changes to the roofline alter the character of a building significantly.
- 6) Additions to structures with symmetrical facades should avoid creating imbalance and asymmetrical in building form.
- 7) Pay close attention to the junction of the old and new ensuring a sound visual as well as functional connection.