

Date: 2023-10-20

Subject: **Property Standards Review for Designated Heritage Properties**

Contact: Anastasia Abrazhevich, Assistant Heritage Planner, Integrated City Planning

Report Number: Planning, Bld & Growth Mgt-2023-913

1. That the report from Anastasia Abrazhevich, Assistant Heritage Planner, Integrated City Planning to the Brampton Heritage Board Meeting of December 12, 2023, re: **Property Standards Review for Designated Heritage Properties**, be received; and,
2. That staff be directed to prepare to report on proposed changes to the Heritage Incentive Grant and recommendations for the Implementation of the Municipal Heritage Tax incentive for presentation to the January Meeting of the Brampton Heritage Board.

Overview:

- The City of Brampton Official Plan includes information and direction regarding the maintenance and occupancy of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional properties.
- Under Property Standards By-law 165-2022, the City has the authority to administer and enforce standards for property maintenance.
- There are more than 250 properties designated under the Heritage Act within the City, including both city-owned and privately-owned properties with buildings that may be occupied or unoccupied. Among these are a number of heritage properties that are vacant and unattended throughout the year. This creates a serious threat to overall building conditions and deterioration in heritage attributes.
- Staff are working on strategies to address this issue and to implement a comprehensive approach to support state-of-good-repair for heritage properties with a focus on conformity with the Property Standards By-law.

Background:

Over the past several years the City has lost heritage properties, both designated and listed, due to circumstances of neglect and/or lack of adherence to existing Property

Standards By-law. In some cases, this has led to the removal of properties from the Heritage Register due to their significantly deteriorated condition.

Recently, Council passed resolution **CW169-2023** directing Designation By-laws 198-2017 and 199-2017 for the properties at 164 and 166 Main Street North to be repealed. This was in response to the advanced state of disrepair into which the buildings had fallen. Further to the repeal of the Designation By-Laws, Council directed staff to report back by the fourth quarter of 2023 on a process for property standards enforcement on designated heritage properties to proactively address issues of neglect or disrepair.

Current Situation:

Staff are working to address this issue through a series of three related initiatives.

- 1) A review of the condition of all the Designated properties in the City of Brampton. The survey will:
 - a. Create a baseline of information regarding the current state of each property.
 - b. Help in the creation of a long-term strategy to support an overall state-of-good-repair standard for Designated properties.
 - c. Provide a basis for discussions with By-Law Enforcement regarding specific actions to be taken in the short and long term relative to property standards for both vacant and occupied heritage properties.
- 2) A review of current City policies and programs that support the maintenance of heritage properties.

At present, the City's main tool for encouraging and supporting maintenance is the Heritage Incentive Grant. Through this program, property owners are eligible for a grant of up to \$10,000 every two years for repairs that address the specific heritage attributes of the property.

There is also the façade improvement program that is available to owners of commercial properties within the area of the Downtown Community Improvement Plan. This program is limited to commercial properties within a limited area of downtown.

As an additional tool, the City has brought Property Standards Orders to property owners to require that specific maintenance activities are completed due to significant deterioration of a particular resource.

- 3) Review and recommend additional tools that the City can employ to support state-of-good-repair for privately owned heritage properties.

Staff have completed a review of strategies and policies employed by municipalities across southern Ontario to address issues of maintenance for designated properties. In many cases, municipalities employ a two-part strategy: the use of a Heritage Incentive Grant, similar to that already in use in Brampton, and implementation of the Heritage Incentive Tax Rebate offered by the Province through the Municipal Act.

Heritage Tax Rebate

Under Section 365.2 of the Municipal Act, municipalities have the option of establishing a program to provide tax reductions or refunds for eligible heritage properties. Under this program a municipality may provide property tax relief between 10 and 40 per cent to owners of eligible heritage properties. Under the program, the province shares in the cost of the program by funding the education portion of the property tax relief. The Heritage Tax Rebate recognizes that heritage conservation serves a broad public interest and encourages property owners to consider and maintain designation of their property.

In reviewing implementation of the heritage tax rebate in other municipalities, it is clear that the program provides a flexible tool to support heritage conservation. It signals the municipality's commitment to conservation and provides a support to a property owners that recognizes the cost of maintaining a heritage property in good condition.

Heritage Incentive Grant

The Heritage Incentive Grant, or similar program, is also widely used by municipalities across the province. The amount and frequency of the grant are highly variable. Based on the nature of the grants applied for within Brampton over the past few years, it is clearly shown that the Heritage Incentive Grant is a successful tool in helping property owners to maintain heritage buildings. However, the list of items eligible for the grant is restricted to identified heritage attributes. While this is a key purpose of the grant, it has been suggested by property owners that the list of eligible expenses should be expanded. Staff are conducting research to identify additional items that can be considered for inclusion in the grant.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

Other Implications:

Not applicable.

Strategic Focus Area:

This report aligns with a 'Growing Urban Centres & Neighbourhoods', supporting the creation of complete communities by supporting the diversity and distinctiveness of the City through the preservation and conservation of its cultural heritage resources.

Conclusion:

The Property Standards review exercise for all designated Heritage Properties in Brampton is necessary to ensure compliance with Property Standards bylaw and to prevent demolition by neglect. From staff's findings, about 4-6% of the designated properties in Brampton have notable property standards deficiencies. A report to the Brampton Heritage Board on these deficiencies including a list of vacant heritage properties will be provided at a future date.

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Attachments:

- Attachment A– Property Standards Bylaw- Vacant & Heritage Properties
- Attachment B – Council Motion CW169-2023
- Attachment C- Supplementary Materials: Designated Heritage Properties Location Map, Evaluation Worksheet
- Attachment D- Property Standards Bylaw-Vacant and Heritage Properties PowerPoint