



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church) – Intention to Designate, Part IV, Ontario Heritage Act, Approval of Alterations to a Heritage Building, and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement.

Date:	June 22, 2007
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto & East York Community Council
From:	Ted Tyndorf, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Wards:	Trinity-Spadina – Ward 19
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, approve alterations to the heritage building, and grant authority to enter into a heritage easement agreement for the subject property. The property was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties on December 2, 2004.

The applicant is proposing to convert the existing place of worship into 28 dwelling units with below-grade parking located within the existing basement. The proposed conversion is sympathetic to the heritage elements of the building and will retain and maintain the character and defining heritage attributes of the building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act;
2. If there are no objections to the designation in accordance with Section 26(6) of the Ontario Heritage Act, the solicitor be authorized to introduce the Bills in Council designating the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act;
3. If there are objections in accordance with Section 29(7) of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Clerk be directed to refer the proposed designation to the Conservation Review Board;
4. The alterations to the heritage building at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church) be approved substantially in accordance with the plans by Bernard Watt Architect (Attachment No. 4) on file with the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services, subject to the owner:
 - a. Prior to the introduction of Bills in Council:

entering into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the retained and restored section of the heritage building located at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church);
 - b. Prior to final site plan approval:

providing a Conservation Plan for the restoration of the heritage building located at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church), satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services;

providing a landscape plan for the subject property;
 - c. Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the heritage building located at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church), including a permit for the demolition, excavation, and/or shoring of the subject property:

providing a letter of credit, in a form and an amount satisfactory to the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to secure all work included in the Conservation Plan;

providing a record of the as-found condition of the Centennial Japanese Church located at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church);

providing final plans satisfactory to the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services;

- d. Prior to release of the Letter of Credit:

providing and implementing an Interpretation Program for the heritage building located at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church), satisfactory to the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services;

5. Authority be granted by City Council to execute a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the owner of 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church); using substantially the form of easement agreement prepared in February 1987 by the City Solicitor and on file with the City Clerk, subject to such amendments as may be deemed necessary by the City Solicitor in consultation with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division;

Financial Impact

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

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The property is being redeveloped as a residential condominium that will preserve the Centennial Japanese United Church. An Official Plan Amendment, Zoning Amendment, and Site Plan Application were submitted and are currently being reviewed by Community Planning staff.

COMMENTS

Background

The property at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church) was included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural resource value or interest by City Council on December 2, 2004. The present church at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church) was completed in 1906. Originally named Centennial Methodist Church, it became known as Centennial United Church in 1925 following the formation of the United Church of Canada. In the early 1980's the congregation began to dwindle in size and in 1986, amalgamated with the Nisei congregation of the Toronto Japanese Church.

Reasons for Designation

The property at 703 Dovercourt Road (Centennial Japanese Church) is worthy of designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value or interest, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario. Located on the east side of Dovercourt Road, south of Bloor Street West, Centennial Japanese Church is an excellent example of Neo-Gothic design, an institution of historical importance to the community, and a local landmark.

A location map (Attachment No. 1) and photographs (Attachment No. 2) are attached. The Reasons for Designation are attached (Attachment No. 3) and include a statement of the cultural heritage value of the property with a description of its heritage attributes. The Reasons for Designation will be advertised on the City's web page according to the provisions of the City of Toronto Act, and served on the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust and included in the designating by-law.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to convert the existing place of worship into 28 dwelling units with below-grade parking located within the existing basement. Access to the parking garage is through the rear (east) elevation of the building off the public lane. The main floor is occupied by residential units and two additional floors will be inserted into the volume to allow for a second and third floor. The mezzanine (roof level) will consist of the second floor of the units on the third floor. The existing roof on the rear addition will be extended to the rear to accommodate additional units.

Heritage Comments

The proposed conversion of the existing place of worship into residential units has been designed in a manner that is respectful to the form and heritage elements of the existing building. The architect has attempted to preserve the elements of the congregation hall while fulfilling the need to occupy the volume with units. The altar and skylight, both important elements that will reference the building's previous use, have been retained and incorporated into the interior design in a manner that allows for the easy interpretation of the building's history.

The proposed exterior alterations are minimal and preserve the essential character of the building. New openings are proposed to allow additional light and ventilation into the building; staff has concerns about the design and configuration of these new openings and will work with the architect to resolve these issues prior to the issuance of a building permit for the conversion of the building.

Overall, the application represents an excellent adaptive reuse of a heritage building. The designation of the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and the execution of a heritage easement agreement will ensure the long-term protection of the building.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Ted Tyndorf
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1: Location Map
Attachment No. 2: Photograph
Attachment No. 3: Reasons for Designation
Attachment No. 4: Permitted Alterations