

West Annex Heritage Project

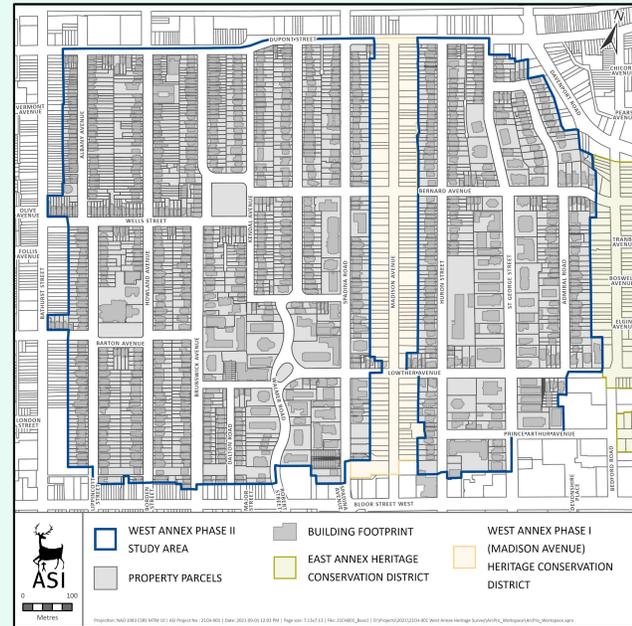
Report prepared by
Maximum City

Public Information Meeting

Meeting Date:	September 23rd, 2021 7-9pm
Participants:	62 including project team
Format and Tools:	Facilitated Zoom Session Informational Presentation Online Participant Polls Question & Answer

PURPOSE OF MEETING

- Introduce the West Annex Heritage Project (WAHP)
- Outline the process being followed, who is being engaged, how, and when.
 - Engagement process and values
 - WAHP timeline
- Provide clear information on what is being studied and how participants can get involved
- Answer questions from the community about the WAHP



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the evening of September 23 via Zoom, 62 participants took part in an information session on the West Annex Heritage Project, which included a presentation followed by a question and answer period. A [PDF of the presentation](#) was shared with all 103 event registrants following the meeting, as well as information on future opportunities to take part in focus groups. Most participants (85%) lived in the West Annex, and the most common methods for learning about the meeting were through the ARA website and newsletter, the Gleaner, and Councillor Layton's newsletter.

During the question period, the most common types of questions were about project scope and content, or about process and ways to get involved. Community members wanted to know, for example, whether trees were part of the project (yes), or whether specific property designation will result from the project (no). Other questions focused on how individual property owners can contribute to the project, honoring Indigenous heritage, affordability, and the important role of rental and apartment stock in the West Annex. Several questions focused on the Heritage Conservation process and its implications, which falls outside of this project's scope. A summary of the Q&A follows. A note about the language in this report: *project* refers to the West Annex Heritage Project; *study* refers to the future phase of a potential HCD.

POLL RESULTS

Participant Poll #1: *The West Annex neighbourhood is defined roughly as the area west of Bedford to Bathurst and north of Bloor to Dupont. Do you live in the West Annex neighbourhood?* (53 respondents)

85%

live in the West Annex neighbourhood

13%

do not live in the West Annex neighbourhood

2%

preferred not to answer

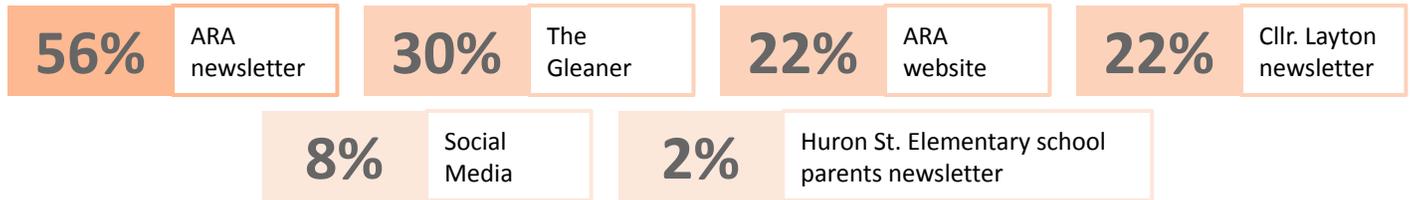
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POLL RESULTS (*continued*)

Participant Poll #2: *How did you find out about tonight's meeting? (Select all that apply)* (50 respondents)



Participant Poll #3: *If you are interested in participating in a future focus group about the WAHP, what is your preferred meeting time? (Select all that apply)* (46 respondents)



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (organized by theme)

Questions about Project Scope & Content

Are trees considered in this project?	Yes. All natural and landscape features from the creek systems to parks and tree canopy are included in the project survey at an appropriate level of detail.
Is affordability considered in the project?	Affordability is an important consideration in so far as the West Annex is traditionally home to wide range of residents, including students, people in supportive housing, the housing insecure, renters, homeowners, young families, and seniors.
Is it correct that the process (at some point) will identify specific buildings, not whole streets or neighbourhoods? If so, what criteria will be used?	<p>This project is about data gathering, including historical research and individual property survey. Through the property survey, ASI is collecting both physical and historical information that may be used future phases of study.</p> <p>ASI is not conducting evaluations and will not be identifying specific properties for protection. Rather they are gathering data, such as date of construction or architect (if known) for each property, without evaluating for heritage value.</p> <p>As part of the data-gathering process, ASI will review historical mapping and review architectural styles to identify a potential date range of construction for each building. Information gathered as part of the survey work will also inform the historical context statement being prepared as part of this project.</p>

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (organized by theme)

Questions about the Project Scope (*continued*)

<p>Does the project have any effect on the approval of rezoning applications?</p>	<p>No, that falls out of the scope of the current project which focuses on research and data gathering to inform the potential next phases of the study.</p>
<p>How will pre-contact, pre-1886 / pre-treaty information be reflected or used in policy?</p>	<p>This project focuses on background information and completing an inventory of buildings. There will be no policy changes as a result.</p>
<p>Why was the historical development timeline selected for this project? The first date is years after the signing of the Toronto Purchase Treaty. Earlier in this presentation, you noted that Indigenous heritage is of value. Can this please be addressed?</p>	<p>The project report will speak to the pre-colonial history and the heritage context statement will look at the earliest known land use and Indigenous presence on the land.</p>
<p>Will it be possible to acknowledge the pre-colonial past in the report?</p>	
<p>How are particular streets and buildings selected to be part of the project?</p>	<p>The City of Toronto conducted a major street study 20 years ago, which can provide useful background information to identify which streets are selected for any future phases of a study.</p> <p>During any future study and plan phases, boundaries can change and the process can reveal details that help inform what ultimately gets protected and how.</p> <p>Within an HCD, properties that are determined to contribute, or not contribute, to the heritage significance of the district will have different sets of guidelines. Contributing buildings and associated policies and guidelines are determined at the HCD Plan phase.</p>

Questions about Project Process & Getting Involved

<p>How will renters be addressed in this project and named as key stakeholders?</p>	<p>The West Annex contains many multi-unit residences, apartments, and a significant renter population; the study team understands that this is an important part of the area's evolution. These demographics will be part of the historical context statement as ASI looks into the themes of renters, different types of housing, and how that has changed over the years.</p>
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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (organized by theme)

Questions about Project Process & Getting Involved (*continued*)

What is the timeline for this preliminary project and when is the next phase expected to start?	The historical context statement, which is the major deliverable near the end of this project, is due in September 2022. The City is the decision-maker for any potential future phases and would need to determine when those phases start in relation to other HCD studies it is conducting or considering.
Will U of T architecture students be lending a hand in conducting the survey?	The survey will be conducted by ASI using their own technicians to ensure consistency of data collection and particularly given that approximately 1000 buildings are being surveyed. Volunteers are an important part of this type of work; however, ASI must ensure that property data collected is consistent and accurate.
Will the ASI final report be made public?	The final report will be delivered to the City in September 2022, who will determine next steps. The heritage focus groups will be another forum where information collected by ASI will be shared with the public, and reported on by Maximum City.
How can individual property owners contribute to this project?	For those who have information about West Annex properties, they can email info@theara.org with the subject line 'West Annex Heritage'. The focus groups are another good forum for sharing this type of information.
Are there any City staff at the meeting? Or will they be at any of the upcoming meetings?	There is a City staff person supervising the project who may be present at the focus groups. If there are questions for the City, participants can contact Sandra Shaul at info@theara.org with the subject 'West Annex Heritage'; she will provide the City contact.
Are you finding out what dates buildings are built, looking into plumbing/individual property specific data?	Building dates or periods can be part of the inventory but detailed house-specific data are not necessarily examined. Individual property owners are encouraged to share information about their properties.
Will the presentation be emailed to the attendees afterwards?	Yes. A link to the presentation will be shared with all attendees and the presentation and subsequent report will be available on the website. <i>Update:</i> link sent to all registrants on September 27, 2021
How may I indicate that I would like to be part of future focus groups?	Participants can sign up for future focus groups through the events page on the ARA website or by emailing info@theara.org

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (organized by theme)

Questions about the Heritage Process

<p>Does a project like this always lead to a designation to an area?</p>	<p>Designation is not a foregone conclusion at this stage as this project is focused on historical research and data gathering.</p> <p>The information gathered as part this project may be used in a future HCD Study and HCD Plan. It is possible that after completion of the HCD Study phase, a municipal council may choose to not establish an HCD Plan and designate the area under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. In such instances, the municipal council may instead decide to proceed with alternative protective mechanisms such as individual listings on the Municipal Heritage Register or designations of individual properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.</p>
<p>Who would appeal the HCD process?</p>	<p>Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, which enables designation of a Heritage Conservation District, also establishes provisions for individuals to object to the designation. This provision extends to any person. Appeals are made to the Ontario Land Tribunal.</p>
<p>How does laneway housing affect (or how would laneway housing be affected by) the West Annex neighbourhood's heritage characteristics? Re: Current and future laneway housing.</p>	<p>ASI will be reviewing all existing buildings, which includes looking at all properties. Laneway housing may be a theme in the Historical Context Statement. The extent to which laneway housing would be recommended in the future would be a focus of the HCD plan stage where guidelines for infill are developed to support objectives of the HCD Plan.</p>
<p>If the City designates a property with heritage status, must the owner comply to the designation?</p>	<p>Protection is registered on title for designated properties through municipal by-law. This enables a permitting process for activities such as exterior alterations, demolitions, and/or erecting buildings or structures on properties within the Heritage Conservation District.</p>
<p>If a building is designated as heritage, can it be demolished or is that forbidden?</p>	<p>A property owner may submit a demolition permit and municipal council has up to 90 days to review and make a decision.</p>

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ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANT QUOTES, COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

The history of apartment buildings and the City's banning of apartment buildings should be considered for the project.

The importance of including pre-colonial history: the early parts of the Annex go back to before the 1850s; going back to the East Annex annexation of 1886 is not early enough.

Desire to see renters acknowledged as valued members of the neighbourhoods and for renters to be included not as "other stakeholders" but as a primary stakeholder group, alongside homeowners.

Spadina and Lowther has great planning history. The building at the southeast corner was the site of one of the first apartments where setbacks were proposed. The area has a complicated and interesting history.

Affordability concerns: the West Annex has many multi-unit dwellings and presumably if a designation means increased renovation costs to homeowners, these will ultimately likely be passed to tenants through higher rents.

Suggestions to connect to:

- Blackhurst historical project
- Tranzac Club
- Friendship Centre