

This Week in the Annex:

March 06, 2024

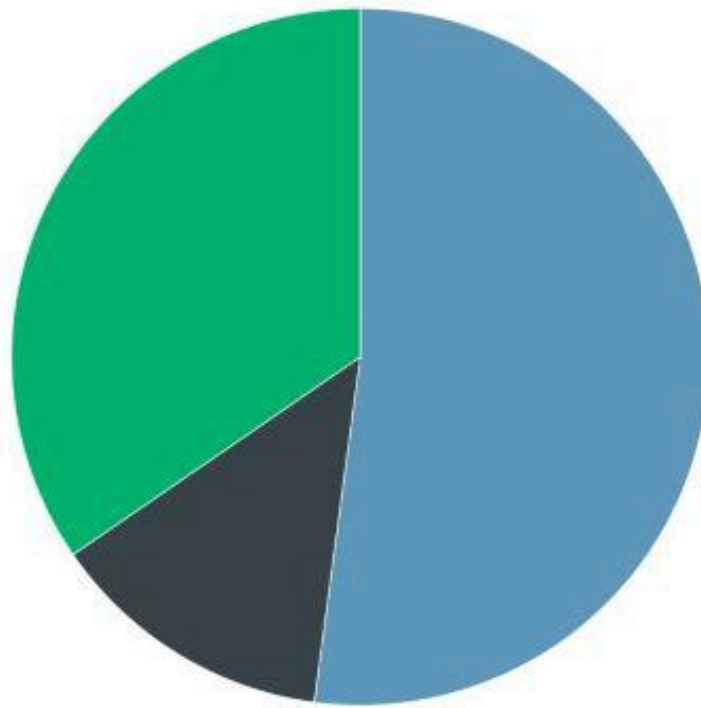
The State of Our Heritage

A couple of weeks ago we alerted you to the City's Heritage meeting held last Monday, February 26. The point was to learn what the City plans to do in the face of recent amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. According to those amendments, properties on the Heritage Register that are "designated" remain untouched. No problems there. But properties that are only "listed" will lose their status after two years if they have not been researched and determined eligible for designation in the meantime. The deadline for the first batch of "listed" properties to be lopped off the register is January 1, 2025 — and it's fast approaching.

The ARA's Heritage authority, Sandra Shaul, attended the meeting to learn what was in store for us in the Annex. And here follows her report.

The City's First Challenge is the Numbers

In case you think the easy solution would be to simply designate all listed properties on the register and designate rather than list properties in the future, the numbers show this is not possible. The greatest number of designated, or protected, properties are those included in heritage conservation districts and make up 52% of the register, or 5817 addresses. Individual designated properties make up the rest of the protected properties and represent 13% of the register, or 1483 addresses. All the rest — the listed properties — number 3863, or a whopping 35% of the registry. That's the green slice of the following pie.



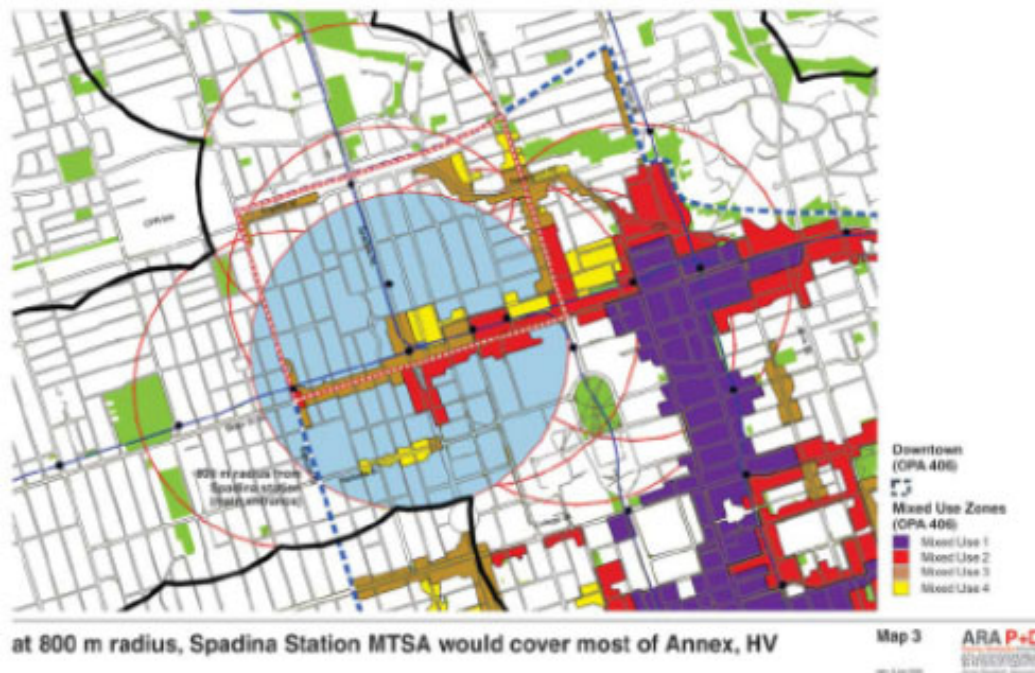
- HCD Designated
- Single Designations
- Listed Only

The City's Second Challenge is Time

To give you an idea of how fast things move (NOT), in designating properties, the [East Annex HCD](#) was the first heritage conservation district for a neighbourhood in Toronto, coming into force in 1995. [The West Annex Heritage Conservation District Phase One - Madison Avenue](#) — was a community effort with the assistance of a heritage professional who prepared the final reports. It was completed in 2015, but only came into force four years later in 2019. Madison was grandfathered as a community-led project, because after changes to the Ontario Heritage Act in 2005, City Staff no longer allowed communities to take the lead. Instead, City Staff set priorities and hired consultants.

The Annex's Challenge is Location

In the face of recent changes, the City hired consultants to assist City Staff in establishing a set of principles that determine level of risk in order to set priorities for addressing designation. And one major risk identified was properties located within [Major Transit Station Areas \(MTSAs\)](#), that is, properties within a radius of 500 to 800 metres or a 10-minute walk to a subway station. As you can guess, that's us: the entire Annex is within MTSAs.



The map above shows that the Spadina subway station taken just on its own renders almost the entire Annex an MTSA. Adding the St George and Dupont stations to the equation simply ensures that our neighbourhood is in its entirety subject to MTSA planning guidelines.

And because of that, the City wants our population density to increase, and that inevitably means building more housing capacity.

Of course, what we would prefer in the Annex is to meet population growth targets while embracing the current architecture—in other words adding to what exists rather than demolishing and replacing.

At Least We Can Help

If there is any silver lining to the present situation, the City is committed to going back to the pre-2005 universe by allowing well-trained community volunteers to help conduct and prepare the research for designations. That said, it was made clear that speeding up the research will not move the properties up the priority list for designation. It would only mean that the City could get through its backlog faster.

So work such as the ARA recently conducted on the West Annex Heritage Project is a step in the right direction, and it is referenced by City Staff. But, as we say, time is not on our side.

To learn more about the City's heritage programs, you can search through <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/heritage->

[preservation/](#) . And you can be sure that we'll keep you informed of future meetings.

Notes and Queries

Let's Do Lunch — Monday March 18th

Our ARA dinner Meet 'n' Eats have been so successful that we have decided to expand the concept to include getting together at lunchtime. That's why we're asking you to consider joining us on **Monday, March 18th** at **12:00 noon** at **Master's Buffeteria** at **310 Bloor Street**.

Hidden away behind blind wooden doors and accessible only by two (short) flights of stairs, the Buffeteria is one of the best-kept secrets in the 'hood. The cafeteria-style service offers robust home-style comfort food at reasonable prices in a casual atmosphere.

While there's no requirement to reserve — feel free just to show up on that Monday — it would help Mary, the manager at the Buffeteria, if she had some idea of numbers. In other words, if you're set on spending an amenable lunch hour with fellow Annexionians, then we'd be grateful if you'd RSVP on our website by [clicking here](#).



250 Davenport Honoured

We reported last week on the Community Recognition Award, 2024 edition, presented by MPP Jessica Bell to the Avenue Road Safety Coalition (ARSC). The full list of honorees has now been released by her office, and we were delighted to see that also given the nod was the team at 250 Davenport — Christopher King, John Corso, and Rita Debiasi — who were acknowledged for their extensive community service over the past 25 years. You can [read the full citation here](#). Congratulations to Chris, John, and Rita (shown flanking Jessica, centre left to far right) for their unstinting efforts to enhance life at 250 Dav.



Game On — Monday, April 1st

And just in case you thought we'd forgotten — not so! This April Fool's Day, **Monday, April 1st**, from **7:00 pm to 9:00 pm** we'll be gathering in person at the **Friends' House** on Lowther Avenue for a convivial evening of board games and cards. There will be a number of games on hand to get the crowd started, but you're welcome to bring your old favourites to share if you're set on one in particular. There'll be refreshments of a sort, but most important the opportunity to meet with fellow Annexionians while enjoying an evening of relaxed fun. So if you're at all interested, please RSVP [on our events page](#).



Reducing Waste

Now here's a project we can get behind. Our neighbours in the Palmerston and Harbord Village RAs have initiated a Zero Waste Pilot Project. The goal is to work with volunteer households in Ward 11 who want to reduce the amount of waste they generate each week.

The project involves three main stages. First, you'll be asked to measure just how much waste your household currently generates. Then you'll receive education, training, tools, and tips on waste reduction. Finally, after an allotted amount of time, you'll be asked to measure your household waste once again, the hope being for it to be significantly reduced.

For more details and to sign on, [click here](#).



Finally!

It's only been weeks (see the note in our [newsletter of January 24](#)) but feels like months since the sidewalk paving on Bedford heaved overnight directly in front of the entrance to the condo at 55 Prince Arthur. We had assumed the damage was related to a major watermain repair just up the road, but workers at the scene yesterday were of the opinion that someone must have knocked over the fire hydrant.

Whatever the cause, the sidewalk is now being repaired. Within a day or so immediate neighbours will once again lose their water supply overnight. But after that — smooth walking for us all.



Passages

We are saddened to report that Andrew Baines, a loyal supporter of the ARA, died last week in his 90th year. Despite the demands of a distinguished medical career followed by another in academia, supplemented by a host of avocations including cabinetry, painting, and music, Andrew also found time to volunteer as Chair of the ARA Board in the years from 2005 to 2010.

Elizabeth Whelan, herself both past Chair and later Secretary to the Board, remembers Andrew as a consummate professional and a pleasure to work with.

"I especially enjoyed the executive meetings at his home that were well known for their hospitality." Micky Fraterman, Secretary to the Board since 2008, found it a real privilege working with Andrew. "He was such a gentleman and had a vision for the structure of the ARA."

Our condolences to Cornelia ("Corrie") Baines, Andrew's equally distinguished partner of some 67 years, who also for a time served as a Director of the ARA. You can read Andrew's full obituary [by clicking here](#).



Andrew and Corrie Baines in their Annex home, 2016

Photo credit: NATHAN CHAN/THE VARSITY

Crocuses Have Bloomed

If you are a gardener — or even just a gardener at heart — you likely have some select spots in the 'hood that you watch annually for those first inspiring blossoms of the season. We've already reported on the early arrival of snowdrops. But on Monday Chris Varley spotted the first crocuses fully open in the patch of lawn that he monitors annually at the northwest corner of Lowther and Madison. With the temperature on Monday reaching 16 Celsius, they had burst into bloom. Then by Tuesday clusters of crocuses throughout the Annex had followed suit. "All due to climate chaos, no doubt," Chris remarked, "but nevertheless welcome."



An Hour to Lose

Love it or hate it there's nothing you can do — The Authorities — whoever they may be — decree that we all must lose an hour of sleep this coming weekend. So on Sunday morning when it feels like 9:00 am and time for a leisurely breakfast, the clocks will declare instead that it's 10:00 am and you'd better hurry up. Never mind. The discombobulation should all be gone by the next time Sunday rolls around.



The Annex Residents' Association is a volunteer organization of residents committed to improving and preserving the distinctive character of our neighbourhood. Our strength depends on our base of support in a well-informed community.

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The Annex Residents' Association