



Rockcliffe Park Residents Association

Rockcliffe Park Residents Association Heritage Committee Comments
written comments to be included in the staff report.
BHC Feb 13, 2024 235 Mariposa

The original application for this property was for an addition and alteration and was approved in 2020. The current proposal has not changed. What has changed is that this house was illegally demolished beyond repair on Oct. 23-Oct 24, 2023. This has shocked our community and is an unacceptable affront to the heritage of our city. There has to be consequences beyond fines. To approve this design contributes to the impunity of the applicant's actions.

The RPRA was not supportive of the original application and continues to have the same serious concerns; even more so considering the grave circumstance under which this application for new construction is coming about. You have the opportunity to improve the development on this property to ensure that the heritage attributes of the Heritage District are conserved.

While it is positive that the circular driveway has been removed and that this property, which is on the Heritage Watchlist, will finally have work done on it, much more needs to be changed, namely the mass and height of this structure need to be reduced.

The RPRA HC understands that more space is needed for a diplomatic residence, but the new structure must be respectful of the heritage district; the proposed design which does not even meet the minimum zoning bylaws, does not do this successfully. It is not enough to meet the minimum requirements of the Zoning bylaws, it is the more restrictive and protective Heritage bylaws that give direction to what is respectful.

It is understood that there is a balance of open space, green landscape and structure on a property. To increase one means that one or both of the others must decrease. In the case of 235 Mariposa if the structure is made so much larger, it negatively impacts this green landscape and the open space on the property, both of which are crucial heritage attribute characteristics of the RPHCD. A successful design will allow for development

that respects these attributes and does not push to the limit what zoning permits, but aims for a higher standard that safeguards green landscape and open space by creating a balance. This application does not appropriately achieve that balance. Below are some excerpts from the RP HCD Plan which support our comments.

Please require that the mass and height be reduced and that setbacks be increased.
Thank you.

RP Heritage Plan heading:	RPRA Heritage Committee Comments
5.0 Statement of objectives	
To maintain the park-like attributes, qualities and atmosphere of the HCD.	
To ensure that the original design intentions of Rockcliffe Park as an area characterized by houses located within a visually continuous, rich landscaped setting continue.	
To ensure that new house construction is compatible with, sympathetic to and has regard for the height, massing and setbacks of the established heritage character of the streetscape in order to conserve the character and pattern of the associated streetscape, while creating a between new and old. distinction	<p>Height The addition of a third floor and the steep pitch of the roof further accentuate the oversized mass of the proposed house. Both the height and the mass are not in keeping with the other houses on the street, be they Grade 1 or Grade II. The height needs to be reduced.</p> <p>Mass: The mass of the proposed home swallows up any of what would have been the original home. The red lines denote the original house. This is a massive house that will have 9 bedrooms, stretch the whole width of the lot and have an entire floor added. The house will increase from 4437 sq. ft. to 7161 sq. ft.</p>



Drawing from Bell + Associates Architecture

Setback

Zoning bylaw requires a minimum of 4.5m side yard setback. It is currently proposed at 3.5m. Given that a new foundation will have to be poured, the new setback should at minimum be brought into compliance. None of the other houses on the associated streetscape are this tall and do not stretch across the entire width of the lot. The applicant should not be rewarded for illegal demolition by approving a non-compliant house that will require a minor variance.

To encourage the **retention of existing trees**, shrubs, hedges and landscape features on public and private property.

The tree report does not adequately indicate which trees will be preserved and which will be retained.

6.0 Statement of Cultural Heritage Values

The **generosity of space around the houses**, and the flow of this space from one property to the next by continuous planting rather than hard fence lines, has maintained the estate qualities and park setting envisioned by Keefer.

The generosity of space characteristic of the associated streetscape will be greatly impacted by the excessive increased height, mass and decreased setback.

Heritage Attributes	
The unobtrusive siting of the houses on streets and the generous spacing relative to the neighbouring buildings;	The mass and height of the proposed structure is not unobtrusive, this house will easily be the largest house on the associated streetscape.
Generous spacing and setbacks of the buildings;	The reduced side yard setback on both sides of the lot removes the generous spacing and setbacks around this house.
The dominance of soft landscaping over hard landscaping;	While the proposed landscaping is appreciated, landscaping can come and go so it can not be relied upon to act as a permanent mitigation to mass, especially when the mass has been increased so dramatically. The only reliable course is to reduce the mass.
The predominance of stucco and stone houses over and the relative rarity of brick buildings;	The house that is being replaced is stucco. The new application proposes brick veneer, not even proper brick. The use of “brick” increases further the perception of heaviness and mass of the house. Stucco, to be approved by staff, should be used.
7.0 Policies and Guidelines	
The purpose of the following sections is to ensure that all change is sympathetic to individual buildings, the adjacent properties and the value of the HCD as a cultural heritage landscape.	Previously, staff has permitted increased height as acceptable if a house is setback further from the road (125 Lakeway); this house however is closer to the road than the neighbouring grade 1 house so the added 2.57 meters in height will have an even greater effect in dwarfing the neighbouring grade I home at 275 Mariposa. Observe the effect in the picture below.

	 <p data-bbox="816 516 1130 541">Bell + Associates Architecture</p>
<p data-bbox="134 579 423 611">7.1 District policies</p> <p data-bbox="134 621 781 821">The distinct heritage character of Rockcliffe Park, as defined in the “Statement of Cultural Heritage Value,” and “Description of Heritage Attributes” shall be maintained and enhanced.</p>	
<p data-bbox="134 861 553 892">7.2 Management Guidelines</p> <p data-bbox="134 903 781 1144">In the event when conditions have changed or new information has been received that may affect a property’s score, or where the property falls within the 45 – 55 range, the City may re-examine the Heritage Survey Form, update and then rescore it.</p>	<p data-bbox="816 861 1422 1186">The Heritage Survey score of this property is 49.45/100 which by 0.55 means that it was not a grade I property, so this is a significant property. It is also important to note that it scored the highest points under the environment section for Character of the existing streetscape, existing property and heritage environs,</p>
<p data-bbox="134 1228 626 1260">7.3.1 Demolition and Relocation</p> <p data-bbox="134 1270 781 1722">(6) Any application to demolish an existing Grade II building will be reviewed with consideration of its historical and architectural significance, its contribution to the historic character of the streetscape, and the appropriateness of the proposed redevelopment. Demolition will be permitted only where the existing building is of little significance and the proposed building is sympathetic to the traditional surrounding natural and cultural environment.</p>	<p data-bbox="816 1228 1422 1764">This property scored 30/30 for its contribution to the character of the streetscape; so it plays an important role in preserving the heritage character of the street, therefore particular attention should be paid to preserving this attribute. The excessive mass and height of the proposed house do not protect the character of the streetscape which is characterized by houses that are lower in height and mass and have greater setbacks than the minimum required by zoning.</p>

7.4.2 Guidelines for New Buildings

(3) Construction of new buildings will only be permitted when the new building does not detract from the historic landscape characteristics of the associated streetscape, **the height and mass of the new building are consistent with the Grade I buildings in the associated streetscape**, and the siting and materials of the new building are compatible with the Grade I buildings in the associated streetscape. Where there are no Grade I buildings in the associated streetscape, the height and mass of the new building shall respect the character of the existing buildings and shall not have a negative impact on the associated streetscape or the cultural heritage value of the HCD. These situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the community in accordance with Section 4.1 of this Plan.

Height:

Though zoning bylaws may permit a height of 11m, it is the Grade I heritage homes on the associated streetscape that give direction to the height and mass of the new construction allowed. There are various Grade I homes including: 210, 240, 260, 275, 285 and 290 to be referenced.

The current home's midpoint roof height is 7.361m; the proposed structure at midpoint roof height is 10.2m a difference of 2.57m.



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In comparing the Grade I homes on the associated streetscape, the applicant has **only done a visual measurement** which is not accurate. They have taken the measurements to the top of the roof instead of the midpoint as is necessary for gabled roofs for an appropriate comparison. The inaccurate measurement to the top of most of the sited homes is 9m. So the proposed 10.2m is not compatible with the Grade I homes, it is too high. Given the imperative language of the plan: “only be permitted” and “shall”, **an accurate measurement must be taken** in order to determine the limiting height.

