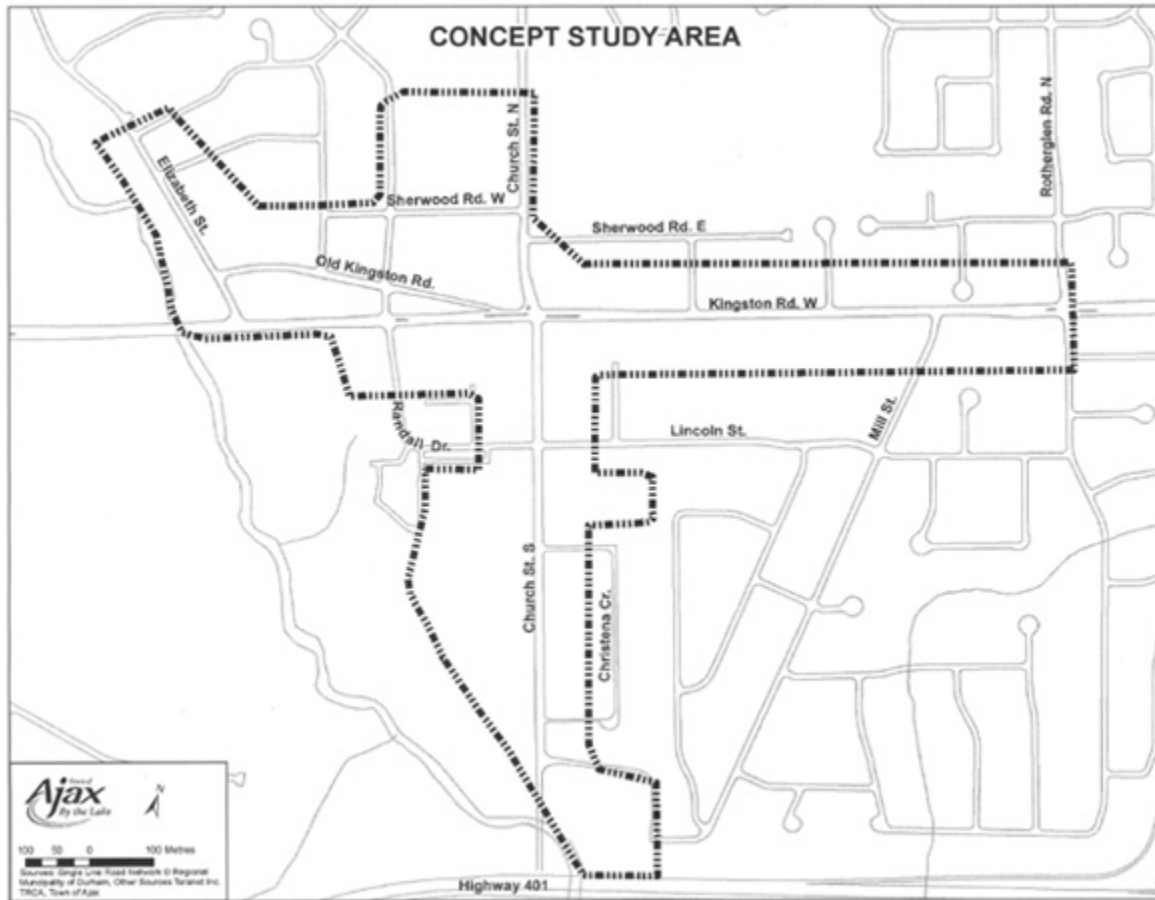


May 17th, 2011 – Survey comments by Marsha Dooley

Pickering Village Heritage Conservation District Study Survey



Do you support the development of a Heritage Conservation District Study for Pickering Village?

Yes

No

Not Sure

If necessary, please explain your answer to the previous question.

I do not feel, nor do I see a need for this blanket designation in Pickering Village. We have a number of heritage homes that have designated themselves heritage. It is clearly evident that developers in the Village to date have made efforts of their own volition to keep the Victorian, Tudor concept alive throughout the community (an obvious example being the Courtyard which was built approximately 1985). Numerous prominently visible homes on Church Street; #68, #73 & #75, all built in the mid 1980's, have a Victorian style and most recently #95 Church Street, built in 2010 in a grand Victorian design, has embraced the ideals of heritage development. However forcing this designation on such a large amount of homes that are not, nor have ever been of the heritage era is far too simplistic and fails to consider the needs and aspirations of homeowners in the area. The unique circumstances and diverse characteristics of Pickering Village are what makes it special and imposing such a restrictive and ultimately expensive zoning designation on the community can only serve to stifle creative growth and useful development of one of Ajax's most valued neighborhoods.

Under our current by-law structure and with the encouragement and co-operation of the planning department with past purchasers and developers the area has grown in both a very aesthetically pleasing, but also functionally practicable manner. The lone exception (and a very noticeable one at that) has been Town of Ajax's own redesign of St. Francis Church

The Town purports a desire to ensure that the front facade of heritage buildings are preserved and honoured in any redesign projects, yet one of Pickering Village's most signature structures has undergone massive renovations, which includes a full-scale re-imagining of the building's very prominent façade in a style that is egregiously at odds with a heritage designation; much more than any other building in the area. The inconsistent message this project sends to homeowners, that the town may violate the principles of a heritage designation while private citizens may not, is very hypocritical and flies in the face of principles of fairness and accountability in government.

The old Masonic Hall, a privately owned structure, is still well maintained in its original vintage design, both inside and out. This is a clear example of the willingness and a desire of property owners in the area to honour their community's heritage without the need for restrictive and costly zoning initiatives imposed by the Town of Ajax.

Dr. George Dagg spent over a million dollars renovating his property at 73 Old Kingston Road to conform to the Town's design in keeping the dignity of the original house structure prominent and intact.

To speak specifically of the financial costs this wholesale re-designation of Pickering Village will cost individual homeowners within the area, the general insurance industry is not government legislated nor mandated. Personal property insurers are free to choose who they will do business with and who they choose to exclude in their underwriting guidelines. As an experienced insurance broker and through careful research enquiries with underwriting managers of larger insurers I have been advised that personal property insurance rates for 'all' home owners under this restrictive domain would become designated as 'Special Risk' underwriting. This means that there will be a smaller Insurer pool from which to generate coverage from and the rates would at least double due to the handicap Insurers would have to deal with in the handling any property losses and repairs.

Beyond the known expense of increased insurance premiums, I am not comfortable with the unknown affect this will have on resale values or the potential for increased costs to property owners for repairs and general maintenance (roof, windows, doors, siding, fencing, landscaping).

What elements and features do you like / not like about Pickering Village?

My qualms with Pickering Village are grounded principally in the administrative and governance complications that are created by the area's geographical designation. The fact that the Village is cut in two by a major highway (hwy#2) complicates matters for the Pickering Village BIA. Being divided by a major highway is a characteristic unique in Ontario to our Pickering Village BIA. Additionally, the fact that Pickering Village is not represented by a lone councillor but instead is represented by multiple councillors furthers the divisiveness of the Village and makes administrative processes unnecessarily complicated.

I love the nostalgic memories of the old Hermitage property and love the memories of raising my family in the community. I Love my neighbors and their stories of living and growing up in the area. I'm proud of the respect my neighbors share for the Village community and their desire to keep their properties esthetically pleasing and inviting for all. I am inspired by the pride local homeowners feel and the efforts they put in to keeping Pickering Village a beautiful community with a unique identity.

What areas and features do you consider a priority for protection / conservation and why?

I believe in protection of our waterways. Keeping potentially harmful industry away from Duffins Creek is a fundamental belief. I believe that Annandale Golf Club should abide by the same no chemical rules as the home owners. This is extremely important for them since their run off goes directly into the waterway.

I believe consideration by council to review individual structure issues as the needs arise. Example McKay house (1854) 244 Kingston Road East (by Canadian Tire) and Post Hill Field House (1856) 132 Kingston Road West (at the top of the hill on Hwy 2 near Chapman) .

What type of heritage guidelines would you like to see implemented in the district? (i.e. height, building size, setbacks, architectural styles, signage, landscaping etc).

We currently have by-laws in place that have restrictions on heights, setback, architectural styles and signage. I would like to see the height by-law in the Village amended from 6 to 4 stories to avoid overpowering current structures on our narrow roads. I don't see the need for the Village to pass set-back The Region of Durham would take a 20-25 foot set-back on any new reconstruction along our major highway # 2.

What type of public consultation and communication (i.e. mail outs, website, surveys, focus groups, steering committee etc.) do you think would assist with the development of a Heritage Conservation District Study (please explain)?

For such a large issue that will have a significant impact on the lives of residents in the area I would suggest that in order for this to go forward I would like to see a substantial response by all property owners in the area. A minimum requirement should be a 50% of affected residents must respond to consider changes. If that minimum response rate is achieved, 60% of those respondents must be in approval for this dynamic change on property rights to go forward.

Any other comments:

I need to be convinced, with specifics, why Pickering Village needs the application of this designation imposed on its residents.