

October 19th, 2021

Devon Morton
Planner, Committee of Adjustment and Cultural Heritage
Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 8P3

**RE: 415 Davis Drive – Committee of the Whole – Opposition of Heritage Designation
Lot 96, Concession 1 East Yonge Street**

Dear Mr. Morton,

ICON Homes is the beneficial owners of the lands municipally known as 415 Davis Drive, and in such capacity, we would like to formally state our opposition to the heritage designation of the existing house located thereon. We are of the opinion that there are alternatives to designating the building under the Heritage Act, which would still permit the potential redevelopment of the parcel in recognition of the existing policy framework. These alternative approaches can be coordinated with staff to ensure proper acknowledgement of the history of the structure.

Planning Background and Site Context

As Council may be aware, the subject property is located within an *Urban Growth Centre* as identified in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The property is directly adjacent to the Davis and Main GO Station Mobility Hub and within a proposed York Region Major Transportation Station Area, which will provide significant transit accessibility for residents. The site also benefits from being situated along the Davis Drive Regional Arterial Corridor and Rapid Transit Corridor. Further, the Town of Newmarket Urban Centres Secondary Plan permits development on the subject property to a maximum height of eight (8) storeys, and a floorspace index of 2.0. Additional policies permit this to be increased to ten (10) storeys through the use of bonusing.

It is our view that this development proposal brings necessary intensification to the Davis Drive corridor area and would create an ideal living scenario for future residents, who would be able to live in direct proximity of natural features and transit.

ICON Homes has been in communication with Town Planning and Heritage staff over the course of the past year. We also attended a formal pre-application consultation meeting on April 28th, 2021 to garner feedback on a development concept. In the intervening period, we have had further conversations with Town Staff, and coordinated with our own Engineering consultants to identify a feasible development parcel and proposal for the property which considers the ecological, heritage, planning, and engineering context of the site.

Heritage Value

We have reviewed the report commissioned by the Town of Newmarket (Archaeological Research Associates Ltd., May 2021), which noted certain architectural features and characteristics in the building's design that establish heritage value. The building was deemed to be an Edwardian style house with Queen Anne style influences due to features such as its cross gable roof and pedimented gables, rusticated cut limestone, red brick cladding and chimneys, protruding bay, and rectangular windows and door openings. The building was classified in the report as being representative of Edwardian style houses with Queen Anne influence, but was not found to hold a "high degree of craftsmanship or artistic value" or to display a "high degree of technical or scientific achievement". The report also states that the house derives its historical significance from its connection to Charles Denne, a wealthy local merchant who built the existing building in the early 20th century; however it did not classify the house as having the potential to "yield information that contributes to the understanding of a community or culture or being demonstrative of the works of an architect, builder, or designer who is significant to Newmarket". The

building was also found to have contextual value due to its location at a prominent crossroad in Newmarket, being Davis Drive and Main Street. ICON Homes acknowledges the building's significance in design and history, however it is our opinion that this building does not meet the threshold for classification as a Heritage building.

As an alternative to Heritage designation, ICON Homes proposes to work with Planning and Heritage Staff to develop a plan which would recognize the building's role in the local community's history, but not inhibit the intensification of the site through development. Should this be Council's preference, we would like to propose that this be done through the installation of a commemorative plaque outlining the building's history along the site's Main Street frontage, as well as reuse of some of the building materials in any future development—such as using the rusticated cut limestone to create an entry feature for the future building. Additional measures can be explored with staff through the redevelopment process.

Natural Features and LSRCA Coordination

415 Davis Drive is bisected by a creek which runs from the centre of the site along Davis Drive through to Charlotte Street to the North. ICON Homes has been in communication with Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority staff throughout the year to attempt to map out any natural features that would be required to be incorporated into or accommodated by future development plans. Through this communication, we have designed a development proposal which both preserves these natural features and allows for a suitable developable parcel area.

In its current state, the site is almost entirely within a floodplain, a condition which obstructs development. Our engineering team has identified a strategy which will allow us to construct the proposed building without causing adverse impacts or spillover onto neighbouring properties. This would be done through "lifting" the proposed building out of the floodplain using grading design techniques such as elevating the development parcel, introducing earth sloping and retaining walls along the West/North sides of the development, and conducting a compensating earth cut on other areas of the site where this is possible. Achieving a suitable developable area will be difficult and will require us to locate the proposed building to the most easterly area of the site. This approach would yield the best chances of allowing the development to proceed.

Due to the extent of engineering work required to create a developable parcel to accommodate the proposed building, as well as the size of the development parcel that could be created, it would be impossible for us to construct a future residential building and maintain the existing building in its current location. Additionally, both the compensating earth cut required to the West of the property, as well as the wetland that extends westerly from the creek would make it unfeasible to relocate the existing building elsewhere on the site.

Conclusion

In summation, due to the limited size of the possible development parcel, preservation of the existing building at 415 Davis Dr would inhibit future development. The civil engineering works required to create an appropriate development area would also impede the relocation of the existing building elsewhere on site. As such, ICON Homes requests that **Council not support** the issuance of a Notice of Intention to Designate under the Ontario Heritage Act, and instead allow staff and ICON Homes to reach a mutually agreeable solution that allows for the future development of the property.

We look forward to continuing our positive relationship with staff on this project. If you have any questions or comments regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Matthew Howard, Development Manager
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