

Glenora Heritage Character Area Rezoning

Recommendation

That the June 29, 2021, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE00583, be received for information.

Executive Summary

Administration is completing a draft Direct Control (DC1) Provision for a portion of the Glenora neighbourhood south of Stony Plain Road. The project area contains the greatest concentration of heritage resources within Edmonton and is identified as one of the best-preserved examples of a Garden City Suburb in Canada. The intent of the DC1 Provision is to encourage the retention of historic homes while ensuring new development remains sensitive to the area's heritage character and built form. This work is funded through a service package from the 2019-2022 budget and base operating budget.

Regulations to preserve the character of the area may conflict with other City objectives. Heritage preservation and the protection of unique neighbourhood character is identified in The City Plan, together with objectives of supporting densification, housing diversity and equitable development across neighbourhoods. Administration will balance these diverse objectives through the draft DC1 Provision.

The report provides an update on work done to date, outlines a general direction of the draft DC1 Provision, and identifies required coordination with other City objectives as expressed in The City Plan.

Report

Background

Recognizing the significance of Glenora's unique heritage character, Urban Planning Committee directed Administration at the September 11, 2018, Urban Planning Committee meeting to prepare a Direct Control (DC1) Provision for a portion of the Glenora neighbourhood, south of Stony Plain Road. A funded service package was approved for the 2019-2022 budget to undertake the work.

Council has responded to sustained advocacy from concerned residents and the Old Glenora Conservation Association through a number of past motions, resulting in direction to Administration to comprehensively understand the concerns and to quantify the breadth of heritage resources in the subject area (see Attachment 1).

At the direction of Council, Administration completed a City-funded Heritage Inventory, which resulted in the addition of 116 properties to the City's Inventory of Heritage Resources, resulting in a total of 137 Inventory properties in 2017 within the subject area. To date only three properties in the area have been designated as Municipal Historic Resources. The area is under development pressure and has seen the demolition of nine properties on the Inventory since 2017. While redevelopment has occurred the area continues to constitute the largest concentration of historic resources in the city.

Garden City Suburb and Character Analysis

As part of this project, an assessment of the development context and character analysis of the subject area in Glenora was completed.

Garden City Suburbs emerged in the early 20th Century. Linked to city centres by new transit and automobile access, Garden City Suburbs favoured wide, manicured green space, streets that followed natural topography, large lots, and primarily single detached housing. The form of development is an important evolution of city design from earlier grid patterns to the more curvilinear development pattern of modern suburbs.

Old Glenora is a significant example of a Garden City Suburb in Canada. Its distinct development pattern includes curvilinear streets integrated with a modified grid pattern, large lots and deep setbacks. These are coupled with a diversity of high-quality architecture and predominance of single detached housing stock. The National Trust of Canada identified Glenora on its 2019 list of Most Endangered Places in Canada due to the loss of heritage properties and pressure from narrow-lot subdivision and their impacts on the area's historic character.

Character analysis undertaken by the City's consultants identified 16 dominant architectural styles throughout the area, rather than a single or more consistent style as sometimes found in heritage neighbourhoods. As well, three distinct sub-areas were identified (as shown in Attachment 2): Old Glenora, 102 Avenue, and Capital Hill. Each sub-area is defined by particular and unique development characteristics.

General Approach to the DC1

The intent of the DC1 is to protect the key characteristics of the Garden City Suburb that are present in Glenora. These are site width, setbacks, single family building form, and the park-like feel. As such, the general approach of the DC1 Provision development regulations will be to focus on the form, massing (generally meaning the shape, size and orientation of buildings) and land use identified through the character analysis. Regulations will address front and side setbacks, site width, the predominance of single detached dwellings, and additional landscaping regulations.

As the character analysis determined a wide range of architectural styles, the approach aims to minimize the regulation of architectural elements.

To support housing diversity while acknowledging the predominant building form in the area, the approach of the DC1 Provision is to explore dwelling types that can be accommodated while maintaining the look of the single detached form from the street. Attachment 3 outlines proposed development regulations compared to existing RF1 requirements, and existing development for each sub area. This approach would allow sensitive infill opportunities through secondary suites, garden suites or duplex dwellings that do not detract from the historic character as seen from the street. Intensification, currently expressed through narrow-lot subdivision or applications for row housing, would be accommodated by more character-sensitive development to preserve the area's Garden City Suburb character.

To encourage the retention of heritage buildings, additional development rights are provided to properties listed on the City's Inventory of Historic Resources. These may include limited additional land uses, reductions to setbacks, and/or increases to site coverage. The intent is to provide greater flexibility for owners to retain existing buildings through character-compatible additions and uses.

The best regulatory tool available to the City for heritage character management at the neighbourhood scale is Direct Control zoning. It has been applied in several other areas, most recently in the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area DC1. Direct Control provisions do not provide protection against demolition. The primary and frequently most appropriate tool for preserving heritage properties is to obtain municipal heritage designation.

Alignment with other City Objectives

While the proposed approach aligns with The City Plan's desired outcomes to preserve heritage resources, it creates tension with the intention to promote compact, mixed-use developments and enabling residential infill in this area.

This is most evident in the return to larger minimum lot widths and the more limited set of permitted uses. Administration believes that the approach to the DC1 Provision appropriately responds to the key characteristics of the Garden City Suburb through redevelopment and encourages the retention of heritage buildings.

The subject area is in close proximity to two planned stops along the Valley Line West LRT. The future stop between 133 Street and 134 Street is less than a block from Alexander Circle, and near the greatest concentration of heritage resources in the subject area. While in general the Transit Oriented Development Guidelines call for increases of density near LRT stops, the Guidelines also recognize the importance of retaining heritage resources. Accordingly, the draft DC1 Provision seeks to retain the historic development pattern for this area. As a trade-off, the draft zoning does not

include the portion of Capital Hill closest to the planned 142 Street LRT stop, allowing this area to be available for potential intensification.

Administration has concluded that the proposed approach strikes a balance between the stringent protection of the traditional built form and architecture of the area, and the intensification of development and a greater increase in diversity of land uses that will likely be allowed through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal.

Engagement

Initial planned, in-person engagement was suspended in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic, with information shared via the project website as an alternative. In December 2020, updated information was shared on the website and an online survey was used to gather input on what the public valued in regard to the character of the area. This information was to inform the initial drafting of a DC1 Provision.

Stakeholder engagement was conducted through a working committee consisting of members of the Old Glenora Conservation Association and neighbourhood residents. Administration met with the project team on six occasions between January 2020 and March 2021 to gather feedback and advise the project team. This committee expressed a clear and consistent desire to see regulations which reflect the historic development pattern, and architectural features including:

- Clear language encouraging the preservation of original housing stock.
- Maintaining dwelling size, lot size, building coverage and setbacks consistent with the historic development pattern.
- Requiring building maintenance to prevent demolition by neglect.
- Preserving boulevard and private trees that contribute to the park-like feeling of the neighbourhood.
- Limiting development to single detached dwellings.

The working committee provided feedback on an early draft version of the DC1 Provision and will continue to be consulted through the remainder of the project.

Next Steps

Administration will continue to refine the draft DC1 Provision with stakeholders and through wider public engagement prior to submitting a Land Development Application in Q4 2021.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is attractive and compact.			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)

Unique character and history of neighbourhoods is preserved	Total number of structures on the Inventory of Historic Resources	939 (May, 2021)	N/A
	Annual number of owner-initiated buildings added to the Inventory of Historic Resources (city-wide)	3 (May 2021) 3 (2020) 3 (2019)	Reverse trend of demolitions exceeding additions to the Inventory of Historic Resources
	Number of buildings in Glenora added to the Inventory of Historic Resources	0 (2017 - May 2021) 116 (2016)	
	Annual number buildings on the Inventory of Historic Resources that were demolished (city-wide and in Glenora)	10 (2020 - 1 in Glenora) 9 (2019 - 3 in Glenora) 21 (2018 - 2 in Glenora) 8 (2017 - 3 in Glenora)	
	Number of total buildings proposed for demolition in 2021 (city-wide and in Glenora)	7 (May 2021 - 0 in Glenora)	

Attachments

1. Summary of Previous Council Direction
2. Map of Area of Application
3. Comparison of Development Regulations by Sub-area

Others Reviewing this Report

- M.Persson, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- K. Fallis-Howell, Acting City Solicitor