

Direct Control Zoning for the Protection of Historic Character

Recommendation:

That the February 3, 2015, Sustainable Development report CR_1867, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report outlines Administration's work to identify existing and potential historic character areas and the role of Direct Control Provisions in conserving these areas.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 12, 2014, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report on areas that may be suitable for Direct Control zoning to protect historic character.

Report

Background

Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* identifies a heritage district as: "a place comprising a group of buildings, structures, landscapes and/or archaeological sites and their spatial relationships where built forms are often the major defining features and where the collective identity has heritage value for a community, province, territory or the nation". Alberta's *Historical Resources Act* also provides for the identification of an historic area when the heritage significance of an area lies in the area's overall character.

The development eras that define Edmonton's overall character and contribute to its built and cultural heritage include the following:

- pre-First World War (up to 1914)
- the interwar period (1918 – 1939)
- post-Second World War (1945 – 1950)
- the mid-century modern period (approximately 1950 – 1965)
- the post modern period.

Many of Edmonton's neighbourhoods developed in these eras have unique and well-established character that merits consideration. In the majority of situations, potential historic character areas tend to be smaller nodes within neighbourhoods, rather than the entire neighbourhood, due to the span of time in which ongoing development and redevelopment occurred.

There are two basic types of Direct Development Control Provisions (DC1 Zoning), property-specific and area-based, that address the preservation/conservation of historic/character properties and areas. Further details on Direct Control Zoning can be found in Attachment 11. All Direct Development Control Provisions are adopted as Bylaws.

Heritage Character Areas

Administration proactively and progressively inventories select Edmonton neighbourhoods to build the Register and Inventory of Historic Resources. Recent inventories have been undertaken generally on an annual basis with the assistance of a consultant at a cost of approximately \$60,000, and in partnership with the Province, whereby the City and the Province each contribute a 50 percent share. The terms of reference for these and current inventories include the identification of historic character areas along with area specific character defining elements.

Criteria used to identify heritage properties and character areas include the following:

- date of development (typically 50 years or older)
- street patterns (e.g. a grid layout)
- street layouts (e.g. boulevard trees, wide sidewalks, unique streetlights)
- width of lots
- height and size of buildings (e.g. bungalows versus two-storeys)
- architectural treatments (e.g. windows, siding, roof type, doors)
- site access locations (e.g. rear alley access, front drive garages)
- any cultural features (e.g. unique vegetation, local landmarks, public art or significant residents).

Features such as these make up an area's historic character and provide direction to potential area-based Direct Development Control Provision zoning and the type of land uses to be allowed that will enhance the area's character.

Properties assessed through the preparation of a neighbourhood inventory are reviewed with the community in question to ensure alignment with community values and heritage aspirations. Properties are also reviewed by the Historic Resources Review Panel, a subcommittee of the Edmonton Historical Board, as well as the Historical Board itself, from a technical perspective, focusing on a property's eligibility, significance and physical integrity as a historic resource.

Edmonton currently has seven identified heritage character areas established through an area-based Direct Development Control Provision (see Attachments 1 to 8). An example of the area-based Direct Development Control Provision is the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area Community Initiative applied to properties between 107 and 111 Avenues and from the lane west of 124 Street to 127 Street. Among other things, this Direct Development Control Provision regulates the orientation of garage development and guides the use of exterior treatments and finishes of dwellings. The efficacy of this and other area-based Direct Development Control Provisions has been

augmented to some extent by the adoption/application of the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay.

McCauley-Alberta Avenue Heritage Character Areas (2010 – 2011)

The inventory for the McCauley-Alberta Avenue area assessed lands generally south of 116 Avenue and east of 101 Street. In addition to the assessment of individual buildings, the Inventory identified three potential heritage character areas, as shown on Attachment 9. In all cases, the areas exhibited special built form, streetscape and land use character that set them apart. The northerly area along 116 Avenue and 97 Street exhibited an intact collection of original low-scale, working-class homes, with almost no recent infill or redevelopment. The corridor along 96 Street exhibited a number of religious assemblies and associated development, leading to the name “Church Street”. This corridor is now part of an urban design vision and associated Direct Development Control Provision zoning exercise being undertaken by Administration with the community. The area south of 108A Avenue, between 97 Street and 101 Street, exhibited an eclectic collection of older commercial and light industrial structures, including the Chinatown area.

Westmount-Inglewood Heritage Character Areas (2011 – 2012)

The inventory for the Westmount-Inglewood area assessed lands between 118 Avenue and Jasper Avenue, and between Groat Road and 121 Street. In addition to the assessment of individual buildings, the inventory identified three potential heritage character areas, as shown on Attachment 10. The existing Westmount Architectural Heritage Area was reassessed as part of the inventory project. In all cases, the areas exhibited special built form, streetscape and land use character that set them apart. All three areas exhibited largely intact collections of original low-intensity housing, streetscapes and built form.

Rezoning of the newly identified McCauley-Alberta Avenue or Westmount-Inglewood heritage areas is not currently being contemplated, as the community has not requested further action at this time.

Current and Future Heritage Character Area Evaluations

An inventory was completed in November 2014, for the Newton neighbourhood in northeast Edmonton. While nine individual historic resources were identified as part of the study, it was determined that no defined heritage character areas remained in the community. Administration is currently working on the preparation of an inventory for the Calder neighbourhood, expected to be complete in May 2015. The preliminary review of the area has identified a potential heritage character area along 129 Avenue. Administration will also undertake an inventory of the Glenora Neighbourhood beginning in the third quarter of 2015, pending a matching grant from Alberta Culture. This inventory will consider both individual properties and character areas as potential heritage resources.

Additional Potential Heritage Character Areas and Summary Comments

- Based on its historic development eras and the criteria identified above, there are many potential historic character areas throughout Edmonton.

- Administration's approach to identifying these areas in a robust manner is logical, based on risk of potential loss, and responsive to the input of the community and subject experts.
- Potential areas of attention after the inventory of the Glenora Neighbourhood based on this approach may include the Jasper Place and Beverly Heights areas, as well as select post-Second World War communities.
- The process to inventory and evaluate character areas is key to the process of not only identifying a potential heritage character area, but also applying the appropriate area based Direct Development Control Provision to conserve and manage that character.
- A cursory, or high level identification of potential heritage character areas without a focused assessment does not necessarily identify good potential for the application of a reasonably robust and worthwhile area based Direct Development Control Provision.

Policy

The Way We Grow, Edmonton's Municipal Development Plan:

- Section 5.2.1: Enhance established neighbourhoods by ensuring the design of new development, infrastructure and community facilities makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood.
- Section 5.8.1: Encourage a sense of local identity and create connections to the city's cultural and historical roots through the conservation and preservation of significant structures, buildings, districts, landscape and archaeological resources.

Historic Resource Management Plan:

- Policy 4 – Historic Areas: The City will recognize, protect, enhance and promote the character of its historic areas.

Budget/Financial Implications

The identification of additional heritage character areas in Edmonton will require additional operating budget for Sustainable Development, for the hiring of heritage consultants or additional staff to undertake detailed neighbourhood assessments.

Attachments

1. Existing Direct Development Control Provision Heritage Character Areas
2. Westmount Architectural Heritage Area DC1 Boundaries
3. Strathcona Historical Commercial Area DC1 Boundaries
4. Historical West Ritchie Area DC1 Boundaries
5. Garneau Special Character Residential Area DC1 Boundaries
6. Viewpoint Special Character Area DC1 Boundaries
7. Oliver Special Character Area DC1 Boundaries
8. The Brickyard at Riverdale DC1 Boundaries
9. McCauley/Alberta Avenue Identified Potential Heritage Character Areas
10. Westmount/Inglewood Identified Heritage Character Areas
11. Direct Control Zoning Options to Preserve Heritage/Character Properties
12. Edmonton's Heritage Program