

Heritage District would guide change, not stop it

Last week, there was a letter from Concerned Citizens of Southeast Aurora noting a letter from Graham Wride was long on criticism and short on facts.

To that end, here are the results of a 2009 study done by the University of Waterloo on 32 districts that were designated on or before 1992.

By-in-large the goals set for individual Heritage Conservation Districts have been achieved. Satisfaction with living and owning property in districts is overwhelming. It is not difficult or time consuming to make appropriate alterations to properties in districts, but municipalities should keep better records. Real estate values in Heritage Conservation Districts generally rise more consistently than surrounding areas. Strong real estate performance and resident satisfaction are most pronounced where district guidelines are enforced. There are issues in many districts such as the possibility for expansion and the need for clearer goals which provide the opportunity for improvements.

Here are the results of a similar study done by the University of Waterloo in 2012 on 32 districts that were designated on or before 2002.

By-in-large, the goals set for individual Heritage Conservation Districts have been achieved. Satisfaction with living and owning property in districts is overwhelming. Municipalities should keep better records of applications for alterations. Real estate values in Heritage Conservation Districts generally rise more consistently than surrounding areas. Resident's thoughts about real estate show an understanding of what is happening in their districts, and a majority thought the value increased. Residential districts have higher scores in our evaluation. A large part of the success of a district is due to the management of the area at the City level. The longer districts operate the better they perform. Active citizen groups play a large role in education about a district. Districts over 400 properties have lower scores.

Our district contains 321 lots.

Also, a 2006 Ontario government document on Insurance and Heritage properties indicates that insurance rates do not go up. When homes are destroyed by fire, owners are not obligated to replicate any heritage attributes and, only if the owner wishes to replace these attributes and doesn't have enough insurance, would the homeowner have to pay anything out of pocket.

This would be for homes which are individually designated, not for homes in a Heritage Designated District. Homeowners have to apply for individual designation.

Heritage District Designation doesn't stop change. It guides change to ensure that future development is sympathetic to the heritage attributes that already exist in the neighbourhood.

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Town Park Area Residents