

Kensington Market HCD Study - SAC #3

Date: November 22, 2016

Time: 6-9pm

Location: St. Stephen in the Fields Church, 103 Bellevue Avenue

Purpose:

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with the SAC what the key values and attributes Kensington Market. The study team provided the SAC with lists of values and attributes associated with:

1. Historical or Associative Value;
2. Design or Physical Value; and
3. Contextual Value.

The SAC and the study team reviewed the study teams work and the members of the SAC were invited to comment and to add their input (**shown in red**). Following the values and attributes discussion, the SAC had a round table discussion, which is summarized in Section 4.

1.0 Historical or Associative Value

The Study Area is directly associated with the following:

- The theme of immigration
- Commercial activity particularly related to food
- Organizations and institutions many of which are grassroots and not-for-profit
- Events and festivals

| Values | Attributes |
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| Immigration – <i>The Study Area is directly associated with successive waves of immigrants beginning with Irish immigrants followed by Jews, Hungarian, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean, Latin American, Southeast Asian, African and Jamaican</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse community of ethnic and economic groups • Physical evidence of various immigrant groups can be observed in the building stock layered with additions/alterations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Storefront additions ○ Garage enclosures ○ Brightly painted buildings ○ Utilitarian materiality |

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| <p>Commercial Activity – <i>The Study Area is directly associated with commercial activity that began with the weekly Jewish market that emerged about 1918 along Kensington and Baldwin and continues today.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residences converted into mixed use buildings often with additions • Large and diverse number of businesses including food, trades, services and dry goods • Open air display of goods on lawns, doorsteps and curbs created a chaotic and unique atmosphere • Strong sensory experience with smells and sounds |
| <p>Organizations and Institutions – <i>The Study Area is directly associated with many grass-roots and not-for-profit organizations and institutions that provide social services, work on behalf of and advocate for the community members and provide space for community activities</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kensington Market Businessman’s Association • Kensington Area Resident’s Association • Beth Israel Anshei Minsk (Minsker) Synagogue • Rodfei Sholem Anshei Kiev (Kiever) Synagogue • Saint Stephen-in-the-Fields Anglican Church • St. Stephens Community House • Toronto Western Hospital • Oasis Alternative Secondary School |
| <p>Events and Festivals – <i>The Study Area is historically and currently associated with events and festivals that take place throughout the year. Examples of current Events and Festivals include Kensington Karnival/Winter Solstice/Festival of Lights and Fish Fridays.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community organized • Participatory • Outdoor • Occupy public spaces |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anarchy/Chaos • Unstructured activity is amazing • Not about the buildings’ design themselves • Re Immigration – add Scottish to groups • Re: Commercial activity – non-corporate • Evolving, dynamic place • How the buildings interact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited true public space i.e. parks, makes the streets act as open space • Variety of unit types and sizes means diverse peoples • Diversity on the street • Small-scale, diverse spaces • Last bastion of free-enterprise • Floorplates • Re Immigrant additions/alterations – permissive zoning for projections |

Other

- Restrict size on repair/replacement buildings
- Too focused on market and not residential

2.0 Design or Physical Value

The Study Area is directly associated with the following:

- A unique collection of diverse Victorian Vernacular residential buildings
- Representative collections of Ontario Cottages, Bay-n-Gable and Renaissance Revival buildings
- Unique collection of residential buildings with commercial façade additions
- Unique street and block layout that makes it distinct from the broader urban fabric

| Values | Attributes |
|--|--|
| The Study Area contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unique collection of Victorian Vernacular residential buildings • A unique collection of residential buildings with commercial façade additions • Representative collections of Ontario Cottages, Bay-n-Gable, and Renaissance Revival building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow lot frontages • Variety of architectural styles • Numerous examples of the Bay-n-Gable form • Varying degrees of decorative bargeboard • Picturesque rooflines • Numerous examples of the Ontario Cottage form • Numerous examples of the Renaissance Revival form along Spadina • Storefront addition structures • Garage enclosure structures |
| The Study Area contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique street and block layout that distinguishes itself from the broader urban fabric | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An equal number of horizontal and vertical blocks, each having different dimensions which creates a concentration of T-intersections and corners • The high percentage of self-contained streets • Varying street widths ranging from 40' to 132' • Collection of laneways – primarily unsystematic • Laneway housing |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine-grain intricacy and adjacency (front and back, two-sided), double-sided relationship |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental • Re narrow lot frontages lends to visibility of merchants • Lots of semi and row townhouses – close neighbours • Flexible use in existing structures |
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Other

- Maximum building size
- Activation of laneways at new periphery developments (double main façade)?
- Perception of “lax” or lack of controls
- Protection of floorplate size, height and some protection so rows of Victorian houses are not torn down. Amassing of land is the biggest threat

3.0 Contextual Value

The Study Area possesses a distinct character due to:

- Overlapping built form conditions
- Mixed use area of residential, commercial and institutional activities
- A commercial market set within a residential neighbourhood that supports the area’s history as a social enclave and alternative marketplace

| Values | Attributes |
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| The Study Area is characterized as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of overlapping built form conditions contained in a relatively small geographic area • An interconnected, mixed use area of residential, commercial, institutional (including places of worship) activates • A place reworked by successive generations, and its use as a social enclave and alternative market space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic and evolved design of structures • Chaotic commercial activity • Vehicular and pedestrian traffic permitted • One way streets • Resourceful use of space |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re overlapping conditions – sometimes and also distinctly separate • Uniquely self-contained | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited true public space i.e. parks makes the streets the open space • Mix of ownership and tenancy and |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re interconnection – “patchy i.e. CR and R” • Socio-economic diversity • Anarchy • Variety of uses and systems supporting a complex community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generational (family history of ownership and maintenance) • Immediacy, varied experiences at street in narrow storefronts • Affordable housing • Self-determination/governance • Encourage raw food vendors and artisans |
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Other

- Restrict large developments on perimeter

4.0 Table Discussion (the following input is from the SAC)

Historical or Associative

- Historically very strong support of Kensington by the perimeter buildings
- Poverty is the organizing first principle of Kensington – without million-dollar budgets it didn’t change (Bellevue is different)
- Successive generations
- Tangible family history connections (e.g. Historical Society)

Design or Physical

- There is not yet an accurate description of adjacencies *inside* the block. There is so much modulation in the block that hasn’t been captured.
- Can’t make a decision yet on the fine grain adjacencies
- Lot depth
- Design and physical values focus is not adequate to this task
- Low-scale and open display of goods
- It’s not the preciousness of the architecture
- A massing of land is the biggest threat
- Identify the floor plate sizes as an attribute
- Small geographic neighbourhood supports relationship between market and residential
- Immediacy / proximity / abundance / availability
- Uniquely self-contained
- Sometimes overlapping, sometimes distinct

- Beauty of narrow frontages – can see what business offer very quickly and see the owner through the window
- Must comment on properties being attached – this is important in community value
- Spadina is in flux and Kensington character is being infused – fear that the bigger stores will cross-pollinate into Kensington
- Everything by foot

Contextual

- Evolving and dynamic place
- Constant change but not by change
- Independent and entrepreneurial
- Don't forget about residential by overemphasizing the market
- You will forget about the non-anarchy parts
- Non-structured activities, allure of the place, people it has attracted
- Mood in market is seared by escalating property values
- Latitude at small scale to go back and forth adapting use – would be a good thing
- Interconnected
- Mixed-use
- Social enclave
- Socio-economic diversity
- Self-determination and governance in the social and cultural sense
- Localized authority over development decisions
- Proactively managing
- Not subordinating residential – commercial residential and residential
- Non-corporate, commercial
- Ownership and tenancy
- Anarchy is a missing value, and if this is most important, then style just doesn't matter