

Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District: Resident Satisfaction Survey Results

Heritage Guelph

October 12, 2021

Purpose

To gain better understanding of resident experience and satisfaction with living in the HCD.

The findings will be used by staff to develop communications, resources and inform studies of future HCDs in Guelph.

Method

July 8, 2021: A notice was mailed out to HCD residents requesting their participation in an online survey

- Surveys mailed out: 298
- Collected: 58 = 19.8% response rate

Mailing list included: **180 properties within the District**

- Privately owned: 127
- Rental properties: 53

The online survey was active from Mid-July to August 2nd, 2021.

Method

The survey was comprised of 33 questions on the following topics:

- General Property Information
- General Understanding and Awareness of the District Plan and Guidelines
- Alterations, Repairs and New Construction within the Heritage District
- Neighbourhood Characteristics
- General satisfaction

General Property Information

- 77% of respondents have lived at their current address or owned the property for more than 5 years
- 86% of respondents are property owners and 14% are renters
- 67% of the respondents are made up of residents who are 50 years of age or older and only 4% were 18-24 year olds
- 54% of respondents' household income fell between the \$100,000 to \$200,000 ranges or above

General Understanding and Awareness

- 89% of respondents are aware that their property is located within the HCD
- To increase awareness of the Brooklyn and College Hill HCD, respondents recommended:
 - Information Brochure: 55%
 - Other options: information sessions, additional information during building permit applications, promotional videos, visual cues
- 62% of respondents have not read the Brooklyn and College Hill HCD Plan and Guidelines
- 75% of respondents felt that signs should be used to identify the neighbourhood as an HCD

Alterations, Repairs and New Construction within the HCD

- 74% of respondents have not done any external work on their property in the last five years
- 52% of respondents have plans to renovate or repair their homes in the next 5 years
- 88% of the respondents are aware that external alterations to their property may require a heritage permit approval
- 65% of the respondents were not aware that there are no fees for a heritage permit application

Neighbourhood Characteristics

Features that are important to respondents:

- Presence of mature trees
- proximity to Speed River and parkland, Downtown and University of Guelph
- Diversity of the homes, most of which are proportionate to the lot sizes and do not infringe on adjacent properties

Changes noticed within the HCD since its designation in 2015:

- Older homes are being demolished and replaced with larger “infill” homes = “out of character and proportion”
- Small-scale improvements and renovations are welcome

General Satisfaction

- 41% respondents felt “very satisfied” with living within the District while 12% felt “somewhat dissatisfied” and “dissatisfied”.
- Additional feedback submitted:
 - Maintaining a heritage property is “economically challenging” for current owners
 - More investment could be made in infrastructure and its public spaces
 - Existing communication gap with current property owners on new builds and applications
 - Dimension and scale of new homes are not agreeable to existing modest-sized homes in the area
 - Heritage homes are being priced higher by insurance companies

Next Steps

Findings received in this survey will aid City staff in developing further communication materials and resources for residents and will be used to support future studies of potential heritage conservation districts in Guelph.

Residents will be informed by mail of the survey results and a full summary will be posted to the city website.

Thank you!