



MEMO

To: Meg Sundercock, Site Development Planner

From: Laura E. Dent, Heritage Planner

Date: February 10, 2020 (w/summary Apr 5, 2021)

Re: SPA19-115 – Comments: Heritage Impact Assessment for 101 Meadowlily Road South

1. Overview

101 Meadowlily Road South (subject property) is a 5.2ha property located on the west side of Meadowlily Road South, across the road from Park Farm and Meadowlily Woods ESA – and backing Highbury Woods. The subject property is adjacent to 120 Meadowlily Rd S – a Regency cottage built in 1848 known as Park Farm – which is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Park Farm is a municipally owned property and contained within the Meadowlily Woods ESA – also designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Thor Dingman prepared a heritage impact assessment (HIA – December 13, 2019) – on behalf of 2690015 Ontario Inc.– as part of a site plan application for a residential development, plan of condominium. The primary purpose of the HIA is to assess the impacts of the proposed land development on the cultural heritage value and attributes of adjacent significant heritage properties and surrounding context (i.e. Park Farm and Meadowlily Woods ESA), and to make recommendations to mitigate any adverse impacts that may arise.

2. Assessment of Impact – Comments + Summary

Development Services heritage planning staff has reviewed the heritage impact assessment (HIA) and appreciates the completeness and thoroughness with which the HIA has been prepared, as well as the analysis undertaken that directly addresses impacts and mitigative measures. Staff particularly notes and supports the following assessment summary points:

- There will be no potential impact of the proposed development on the heritage designated building itself (Park Farm) at 120 Meadowlily Rd S.
- The rural setting and panoramic view of Park Farm, however could be impacted by the proposed development configuration which introduces a “stark and sudden contrast between the historic rural setting of Park Farm and the proposed urban settlement across at 101 Meadowlily Road Rd S.” (HIA, p47)
- Further potential negative impacts have been identified relating to the existing mature rural setting and roadscape viewshed which are also potentially impacted

by the proposed development, creating a new urban street edge condition with a minimal setback. This new street edge is without precedent along Meadowlily Road.

- *Impacts to the surrounding context of Park Farm as a historic landscape are primarily experienced when moving through the viewshed along Meadowlily Road South. The proposed medium density townhouses and detached housing frontages, set closely to the road, introduces a stark and sudden transition between urban settlement and Park Farm across the road. This has a potential negative impact on authenticity of Park Farm as part of a historic rural landscape. With the edges of the development left unbuffered, the isolation of Park Farm is emphasized and this further disconnects it from the context of a historic landscape. (HIA, p59)*
- Buffering of the development edge will help to mitigate impacts by softening the visual contrast between old and new, and between rural and urban. Further, a suggested native tree buffer will contribute to maintaining the rural context of Park Farm and the true nature of its historic landscape. (HIA, p59)

3. Conclusions + Recommendations

Heritage staff encourages the applicant to consider many of the mitigative measures that have been suggested in the HIA to create a development that is more compatible within a rural setting [Fig 1]. Primary approaches suggest buffering of the development edge to mitigate impacts by softening the visual contrast between old new, and between rural and urban. A combination of landscape buffering and berming along Meadowlily Rd may also be appropriate. More specific measures relate to the following (HIA, pp47-55):

Buffering – Methods should be employed to reduce the visual impact of the proposed development from the cottage. Buffering methods may include boulevard landscape planting of trees and shrubs using native species on the west side of Meadowlily Rd.

Setbacks – Provide adequate townhouse setbacks and road widening to allow for effective buffering on the west side of Meadowlily Rd.

Gates – The proposed subdivision gates should be of a sympathetic design, material and scale to the rural setting of Park Farm and Meadowlily Rd. Large walls and massive gate posts are not appropriate. Refer to the scale of the existing gate posts to Park Farm. Do not copy the existing gate design but, re-interpret in a complimentary, rather than a strongly contrasting style.

Lighting – Provide lighting design that controls and prevents lighting bleed and glare onto Park Farm.

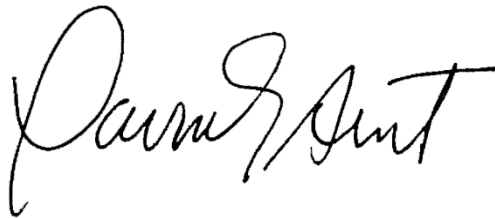
Attenuation – Methods to attenuate sound from the proposed development through landscape planting and buffering should be developed. However, attenuation wall barriers should not be employed.

Fencing and Walling - Large precast concrete walls that are typical of contemporary residential subdivision entry ways are not appropriate for this location.

Finally Development Services heritage planning staff encourages consideration of building design refinements including articulated massing and rooflines and different eave heights to de-emphasize the dense urban character of the repeated 4-unit townhouse block. (HIA, p59) [See attached].

Please advise if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Laura E. Dent
Development Services
Heritage Planner
M.Arch, PhD, MCIP, RPP

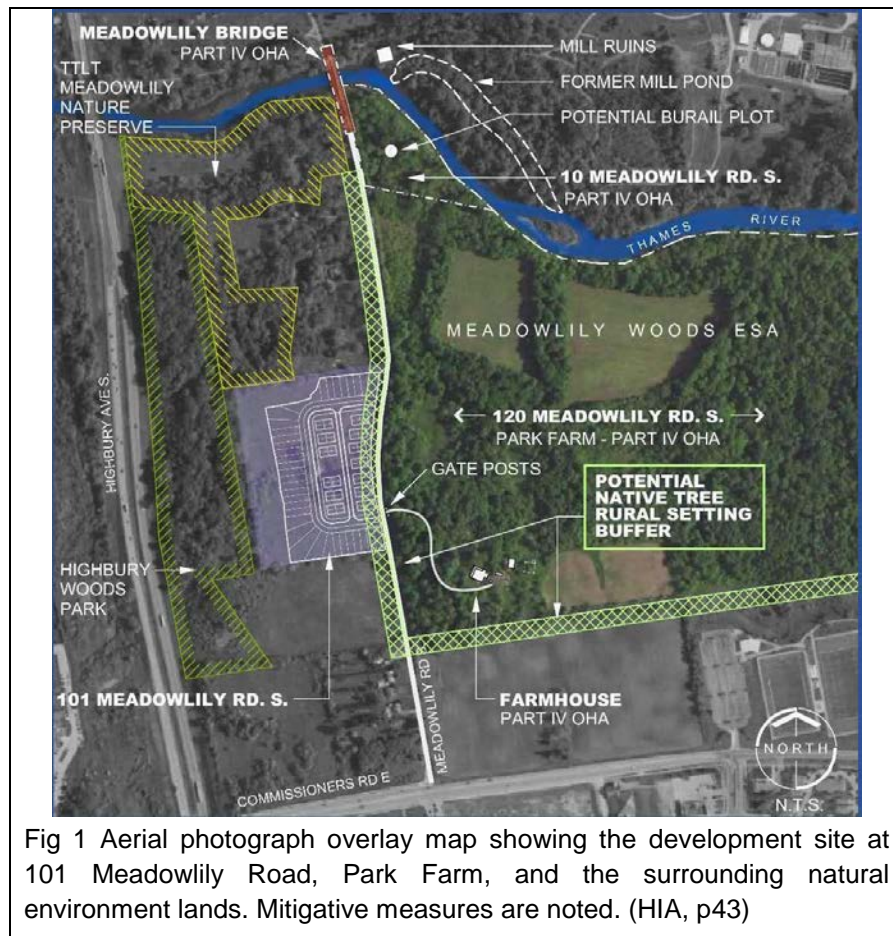


Fig 1 Aerial photograph overlay map showing the development site at 101 Meadowlily Road, Park Farm, and the surrounding natural environment lands. Mitigative measures are noted. (HIA, p43)

9.0 SUMMARY

The proposed plan of subdivision at 101 Meadowlily Road South is approximately 5.2ha/12.9ha in area and consists of a cluster of 37 single detached dwellings, as well as a cluster of 13, 4-unit townhouse buildings. Seven of the 4-unit townhouses will have street frontages along Meadowlily Road South. A total of 14 townhouse units will front onto Meadowlily Road South.

The purpose of this Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) report is to assess the potential negative impact of the proposed subdivision development on the designated heritage property at 120 Meadowlily Road, also known as Park Farm, and on Meadowlily Bridge at 10 Meadowlily Road. Park Farm is located directly across Meadowlily Road, east of the development. Meadowlily Bridge is located 300m north of the development property and adjoins the Park Farm property. Therefore, Meadowlily Bridge has been included in the scope of the HIA.

Meadowlily Road South starts at Commissioners Road East, then extends northward for approximately 1.0km, terminating in a dead end at Meadowlily Footbridge and the Thames River. The neighbourhood character along the west side of the road is rural residential with fewer than a dozen detached dwellings. Along the east side, Meadowlily Road borders a farm field for 0.2km, and then for 0.8km, it continues along the woodland edge of Park Farm to Meadowlily Bridge and the Thames River. The Park Farm laneway is the only driveway entrance along the east side of the road.

Since the construction of the nearby Highbury Avenue expressway in 1966, the proposed development at 101 Meadowlily will represent the single most visible change in the area in over fifty years. In 1983 the estate of Harrison G. Fraser deeded his summer residence at Park Farm to the City of London for public recreational use. Since that time the adjacent area has evolved into a collection of adjoining recreational lands containing natural and cultural landscapes and cultural heritage resources. These link together to form a significantly large tract of land that surrounds the development property. The Park Farm and Meadowlily Bridge properties are integral to the Meadowlily Woods Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and to the Thames Valley Corridor.

Park Farm is approximately 40ha in area and was established as a mixed farm over 150 years ago by William Bell. The setting of the farm is inscribed on land containing very picturesque rolling hills and the downward sloping banks of the Thames River. A number of meadows and fields dot the farmstead and are delineated by several deep creeks and ravines. The meadows, river banks and enclosing land are bordered by a canopy of mature sugar maple and hardwood forests.

The designated 1848 Regency cottage is beautifully placed atop a knoll with views facing down slope, and across meadows to the northwest. The context of the cottage within the Park Farm property, and along Meadowlily Road, contribute to the verisimilitude of a historic landscape. The selection of the picturesque building site, together with the noble proportions and orientation of the cottage, make Park Farm one of the finest examples of a Regency villa in London. These features attracted Maxwell D. Fraser, a noted London barrister, to purchase the farm from the Bell family in 1907 for use as a summer residence.

With an eye for the aesthetic of the mixed farm, Fraser preserved the harmonious combination of meadows, grazing pastures, cultivation fields and forests in the operation of Park Farm. This was accomplished with the assistance of a tenant farmer living on site in a purpose-built house. The cottage was used as the Fraser families' recreational residence. Harrison Fraser, Maxwell Fraser's son, continued the vision of operating a mixed farm up until his death in 1983, after which his estate deeded the property to the City and citizens of London. Farming operations are slowly coming to an end and the land is primarily used for recreation and walking with a developed network of hiking trails and bridges. The house is rented to a residential tenant.

The development property, along with other lands on Meadowlily Road, delineate an authentic, rural character and buffers the west boundary of Park Farm. This land also provides sound attenuation from the more distant Highbury Expressway.

The proposed development includes a medium density, condominium townhouse core, surrounded by detached dwelling lots on three sides. Two street entrances will connect the interior crescent shaped street with Meadowlily Road South. Thirteen townhouse units with driveways will front directly onto Meadowlily Road. The proposed development creates a new urban street edge condition with minimal setback. This new street edge is without precedent along Meadowlily Road.

The HIA has identified two areas of potential impact from the proposed subdivision; 1. impacts that effect the heritage attributes of the cottage's rural setting inscribed within the property; 2. impacts that effect the context surrounding Park Farm within a historic landscape. As the designation by-law states, the context of the house is crucial for maintaining a sense of the original setting, and the original farm site contributes to the verisimilitude of a historic landscape.

Impacts within the inscribed property are to the views through the rural setting and farmstead woodlands as viewed from the cottage. When in full foliage, the mature hardwood forest provides a high degree of buffering from the adjacent development by obstructing visual, illumination, acoustical and traffic movement impacts. During the winter season this buffering is greatly reduced. Building design refinements sympathetic to the rural setting, together with additional buffering on the west side of Meadowlily Road, would help mitigate these impacts. It is noteworthy that the development at 101 Meadowlily provides a 30m forest mantle area from the existing boundary of Highbury Woods Park, lying just west of the subdivision. This will contribute positively to sound attenuation of traffic noise from the Highbury Expressway. The development itself may provide additional sound attenuation from the Expressway.

Impacts to the surrounding context of Park Farm as a historic landscape are primarily experienced when moving through the viewshed along Meadowlily Road South. The proposed medium density townhouses and detached housing frontages, set closely to the road, introduces a stark and sudden transition between urban settlement and Park Farm across the road. This has a potential negative impact on authenticity of Park Farm as part of a historic rural landscape. With the edges of the development left unbuffered, the isolation of Park Farm is emphasised and this further disconnects it from the context of a historic landscape. Buffering of the development edge will mitigate the impact by softening the visual contrast between old new, between rural and urban. Building design refinements including articulated massing and rooflines and different eave heights are recommended to de-emphasise the dense urban character of the repeated 4-unit townhouse block.

Proposed landscape elements such as subdivision gate posts, walling and fencing and infrastructure should be designed to be sympathetic with the rural context in scale, colour and material. Large utilitarian equipment and structures required for storm water management, pumping stations and electrical transformers should be concealed or designed for minimal visual impact from Meadowlily Road.

The configuration and the available depth of the buffer on the west side Meadowlily Road is not fully known at this time. It is expected that this will be developed as the subdivision plan approval process advances, and as detailed design are resolved, reviewed and approved.

The HIA also assessed the impact of the development on Meadowlily Bridge. The bridge is a designated heritage property. The bridge is approximately 300m from the development site. No potential impacts to the designated property from the proposed development have been identified.

End of Report