
May 5, 2026

275 Hillcrest Road

Application for Permit under the Ontario Heritage Act

Existing Property and Heritage Significance

275 Hillcrest Road is a Grade II designated property located on a prominent corner residential lot within the Village of Rockcliffe Park, one of Ottawa's most established and historically significant neighbourhoods. Hillcrest Road runs approximately four blocks east-west, connecting Manor Avenue to Crescent Road. This section of the street is characterized by a straight, level alignment without sidewalks or curbs, reinforcing the village's informal, park-like setting.

The subject property occupies the northeast corner of Hillcrest Road and Montagu Place and faces the rear of Elmwood School, a recently designated Grade I property. Adjacent properties along Hillcrest Road, including 299 Hillcrest Road to the east and 241 Hillcrest Road (across Montagu Place) to the west, are also designated Grade I properties. This portion of Hillcrest Road reflects incremental development across multiple historical periods, resulting in a varied architectural character.

The existing dwelling is a ranch-style bungalow constructed in 1955. The building is irregular in plan, with deep overhanging eaves and a recessed entrance at the southwest corner. Significant alterations in 1994 and 2014 have substantially modified the original structure, diminishing its architectural integrity. A prominent two-storey garage addition on the front façade has shifted the visual emphasis toward vehicular use, reducing the legibility and prominence of the main entrance.

The building does not conform to current zoning requirements, particularly with respect to setbacks. As a Grade II property, it is considered of lesser significance within the district. This is reflected in its Phase II evaluation, where it received low scores in the categories of Environmental Landmark Status and Architecture, including design quality, designer/builder attribution, and architectural integrity.

Given the extent of past alterations, the loss of original character, the building's limited heritage value, and its non-compliance with zoning provisions, a sensitive and meaningful renovation is not considered feasible. The proposed approach is to remove the existing structure and construct a new residence that better aligns with the heritage character of the district while meeting the needs of a generational family.

The Proposal

The proposal is to construct a new single-family dwelling with a gross floor area of approximately 3,459 ft² and a floor space index (FSI) of 0.34, distributed across the ground and second floors, including interior double-height spaces.

The building is carefully sited to respect both zoning requirements and the established streetscape. The second storey is set back from the ground floor, and a continuous lower roof with generous eaves wraps the building along both street-facing elevations, reducing the perceived massing and height. The garage has been relocated from its current prominent position on Hillcrest Road to the exterior side façade toward the rear of the property. This relocation enhances the primacy of the main entrance and reduces the visual impact of vehicular elements on the streetscape.

The proposed siting, height, and footprint comply with all applicable zoning provisions and are consistent with adjacent properties. The design maintains the existing grade, subtly embedding the structure into the site to reduce overall building height while supporting long-term accessibility and aging-in-place considerations.

The landscape strategy for the property prioritizes the restoration of the villages's park-like character. Soft landscaping predominates, with garden planting, walkways, and driveways integrated to minimize visual impact. Lot coverage is reduced by approximately 370 square feet. Existing trees are largely retained or relocated, supplemented by new planting including trees, hedges, and an ornamental feature tree integral to the design. Existing wood fencing along the front façade will be removed to further reinforce openness and landscape continuity.

The material palette - comprising brick, timber, and cement board cladding - reflects durable, non-synthetic materials consistent with the character of the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District. Window placement is carefully considered to maximize natural light, frame views of the surrounding landscape, and strengthen indoor-outdoor connections, particularly within principal living spaces. Secondary elements, including the driveway and mechanical equipment, are discreetly located toward the rear of the property and screened through landscaping.

Conclusion

The proposed development complies with zoning requirements and responds sensitively to the heritage context of Rockcliffe Park. It replaces a significantly altered and low-integrity structure with a thoughtfully designed contemporary home that enhances the streetscape, reinforces the district's landscape character, and provides a high-quality, long-term residence for a growing family.