



An agency of the Government of Ontario

10 Adelaide Street East  
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J3

Telephone: 416-325-5000  
Fax : 416-325-5071  
www.heritagetrust.on.ca

February 8, 2008

Mayor Dave Barrow & Members of Richmond Hill Town Council  
225 East Beaver Creek Road  
Richmond Hill, Ontario  
L4B 3P4

Your Worship & Councillors of the Town of Richmond Hill.

**Re: David Dunlap Observatory (123 Hillview Drive)**

The Ontario Heritage Trust is an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and has been the province's lead heritage agency since its creation in 1967. Under Part II of the *Ontario Heritage Act* the Trust is mandated to support, encourage and facilitate the conservation, protection and preservation of the heritage of Ontario which includes property of historical, architectural, archaeological, scientific, recreational, aesthetic, natural and scenic interest.

It has come to the Trust's attention that the University of Toronto intends to dispose of the David Dunlap Observatory and Park in Richmond Hill and that the Town is in the process of defining its cultural heritage interest in the property through designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. This is an excellent first step in preserving and protecting the physical fabric, context and character of this remarkable property – a place that is unique in the province of Ontario, if not in all of Canada.

Staff of the Trust have visited the site and reviewed available information. They have advised me that the property possesses an exceptional range of heritage values and heritage significance including architectural, historical, scientific, landscape, natural and recreational.

The David Dunlap Observatory is directly associated with Canada's international accomplishments in the field of astronomy. The property contains a number of architecturally significant structures including the Observatory Building (1935), the Administrative Building (1935) and a residence, Elms Lea (ca. 1864). The David Dunlap Park is a designed landscape that overlays a regenerating agricultural landscape. The mixed meadows, thickets, wetland, natural woodlot and plantations provide habitat to a remarkable density and diversity of flora and fauna. A spring that provides source water for the Don watershed is also located in the southeast corner of the property. The landscape surrounding the observatory buildings is among the last and the largest undeveloped parcels in southern Richmond Hill. By its land use history, location and the proximity to the Don River this 71-hectare property also possesses a high archaeological potential – not only for historical remains dating back to the early settlement of Richmond Hill but also prehistoric occupations that may date back thousands of years.

Mayor Dave Barrow and  
Members of Town Council

- 2 -

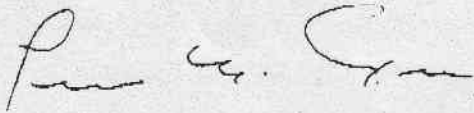
February 8, 2008

The Town has many tools at its disposal: the *Planning Act* and Provincial Policy Statement, the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and Official Plan Policies.

The Trust supports the preservation and protection of the David Dunlap Observatory and Park for the benefit of present and future generations of the people of Ontario.

The Trust has offered technical support and assistance to the Town as you proceed with your process. If you have any further questions or wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to contact Richard Moorhouse, the Trust's Executive Director at (416) 314-4901 or Beth Hanna, Director of Heritage Programs and Operations at (416) 325-5010.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander  
Chairman

Copy: The Honourable Aileen Carroll, Minister of Culture  
The Honourable Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources  
Dr. David Naylor, President, University of Toronto  
Dr. Richard Alway, Chair, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada