

29 May 2016

Ida Bedioui,  
Legislative Coordinator,  
Planning Committee  
Hamilton City Hall  
71 Main Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario

**Re: Item 8.3: Cultural Heritage and Designation of the former Anglican Church of Saint Thomas's Parsonage at 18 West Avenue South, Hamilton, and the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee Report 16-005**

To Ms Bedioui:

Good afternoon. I hope this finds you well. My name's Joshua Weresch; I'm a Hamilton resident and Canadian citizen writing in regards to Item 8.3 of the Planning Committee's Agenda for the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 31 at 0930. The item under discussion is the cultural heritage and designation of the former Anglican Church of St Thomas's Parsonage at 18 West Avenue South.

I would ask that you include my letter in the public correspondence regarding this issue and to distribute it to all members of the planning committee. Aesthetic, ethical, geographic, social, and historical reasons exist to justify this parsonage's demolition and affordable housing, as administered by Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Inc., be placed in its stead.

Aesthetically, the parsonage at 18 West Avenue South is, undeniably, a beautiful structure and pleasing to the eye. Such 'curb appeal' cannot be denied and its presence in the community would lend a hand to the values of the properties nearest it. However, its function as a parsonage has long since passed into antiquity, though its importance as a building connected to Christian faith and history is to be noted.

There are, frankly, more important things about which one should be concerned than the value of one's property and a vision of its pleasure as what pleasure can be had from a property when people in its sight-line are neither sheltered nor fed?

An ethical aspect of the Christian faith that is more noted than the beauty of its buildings is what has been noted by many historians and politicians, challenged by and wondering about its practices, at its best moments; they have noted, chiefly, how its practitioners love their neighbours and their enemies. I would submit that the usage that is being expounded by Mr Luke John, of Tim Welch Consulting, for Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing, Incorporated, is, in short, more consonant with Christian principles, principles that articulate a care and a concern for the poor, no matter who or where they are, and a definite bias toward their welfare, a bias that is resonant throughout both Christian and Hebrew Scriptures. Beyond the aesthetic and ethical implications and

importance of such a structure's use within a community, there are geographical and historical considerations, as well.

Geographically, other parsonages can be found nearby in Flamborough and Binbrook. As there is no conclusive historical evidence that the given architect is the true one, to leave a structure built for its own sake is not enough to justify its presence, in light of the given considerations. Also, because the site of the former parsonage is so close to the current Native and Women's Health Centre as well as the self-help centre, which houses many resources and social services for all marginalized and oppressed persons, it makes sense, then, to put affordable housing nearest such services.

Historically, the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment recommends that the parsonage be conserved and converted toward other uses as, over time, the parsonage has changed. The Assessment also notes that the parsonage has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or community's institution, stating that the Anglican Church is widely regarded as the 'official' church of the Canadian colonies and a significant social organization in post-Confederation Canada. The difficulty with such a statement and the support of a position that keeps the parsonage aloft is the historical reality of the struggles between Native peoples and English settlers; to cite a message from the Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, given in 1993, the Anglican Church was also responsible for a system that wrested Native children from their families, attempted to erase their language and signs of identity, and abused them sexually, physically, culturally, and emotionally. To house people who were abused by the ancestors of such a structure, to be reminded of such abuses by being forced to live in a parsonage, surrounded by the very emblems of disfigurement, is unconscionable.

Because of these reasons, I would submit that the committee support the position of Mr Luke John and Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing, Incorporated to raze the building and build affordable housing, as administered by Sacajawea, in its stead. I would submit that the committee rule that the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee, Report 16-005, not be received.

Finally, I would, with Mr John and Ms McAulay, ask that the committee oppose the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment.

Thank you for your time and attention in these regards. I look forward to hearing from your committee regarding this matter.

Sincerely,  
Joshua Weresch  
36 East 7th Street, Hamilton, Ontario  
Haudenosaunee land

the poure folk in cotes.  
William Langland