

January 25, 2019

Dear Councillor Nann,

Re: Proposed Site of the Firefighter Memorial

The Garden Club of Hamilton has been active in Hamilton for over 60 years. We have contributed significantly to the beautification of the city and the preservation of its historical landscapes, most notably Dundurn Castle and the Royal Botanical Gardens.

It has recently come to our attention that the City of Hamilton plans to disrupt the Dunington-Grubb designed formal gardens with the installation of a firefighter memorial. While we greatly honour the firefighters, and their dedication to saving lives, we believe these historic gardens must remain undisturbed.

These gardens are a significant part of our city's history. They were designed by the husband and wife team of landscape architects who contributed their hard work and talents in beautifying Gage Park and other locations throughout both our city and province. Some of their notable works include gardens and landscaping at the following locations:

- Battlefield Park, Stoney Creek
- Whitehern Historic House, Hamilton
- The Oakes Garden Theatre, Niagara Falls
- The Rainbow Bridge Gardens, Niagara Falls
- University Avenue, Toronto
- University of Toronto
- McLaughlin Estate, Oshawa.
- Sheridan Nurseries, Oakville, once owned by the Dunington-Grubbs.

The contribution of the Dunington-Grubbs is not just limited to Hamilton and Ontario but extends internationally.

It is worth mentioning that Lorrie Alfred Dunington-Grubb was the first woman to practice landscape architecture in Canada, and was recognized for her extensive knowledge in town planning, horticulture, and garden

design. Leaving the formal gardens intact is an acknowledgment of this incredible woman's contribution to life in Hamilton during the early 1900s and a significant milestone for women.

As you know, in 2012-13, Gage Park underwent a large scale revitalization based on a Master Plan, at great expense to the citizens of Hamilton. In September 2013, the Dunington-Grubb memorial was presented to Gage Park by the Friends of Gage Park. This presentation was a confirmation of the importance of the work carried out by this dedicated couple.

When the Master Plan for Gage Park was submitted in 2010, the purpose, as noted by Mayor Eisenberger, was to work towards "re-establishing *the glory of formal gardens* with respect to the historic intentions of the park, and that the new park vision provide greater protection of cultural heritage elements to strengthen the park as a cultural landscape. The Master Plan responds to the historical importance of this park to the City. It is a park of historical significance and presents, horticulture excellence. A formal garden adjacent to Main Street, Gage Park remains a prime example of a public garden reflective of the Canadian City Beautiful Movement."

The Dunington-Grubb formal gardens are an historical site.

As such, in keeping with the Mayor's stated position, they should be honored and celebrated as part of Hamilton's history. Achieving this would enrich our community and assist in preserving our past.

We need to work towards ensuring the preservation of these gardens as a significant historic resource. We must NOT set aside this very important recognition of a part of our city's past as if it is merely yesterday's news.

Although the Garden Club supports recognition of the firefighters, we are firm in our belief that such recognition can be achieved without disturbing the "glory of formal gardens." There are many other suitable places for the memorial.

The 52 members of the Garden Club of Hamilton vigorously oppose the displacing and /or destruction of the formal gardens.

Councillor Nann, we are asking to meet with you in the immediate future to discuss this issue. Our understanding is that the matter is shortly to be addressed by council, so time is of the essence. I can be reached at 905-547-8585 and looking forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Marie Sharp
Dunington-Grubb Committee Chair,
Garden Club of Hamilton