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From: benburke_benburke
To: Kursikowski, Stacey
Subject: Proposal to Move Marr-Phillipo House
Date: Tuesday, August 31, 2021 12:03:08 AM

Stacey:

I want to declare my interest up front. I am a relatively new resident of Ancaster, who was attracted in the first place by the charm of the heritage buildings in the Village Core and the treed approaches from the east along Rousseaux and along Old Dundas Street and Wilson Street East to the north.

I retired in February 2020 having worked as a structural engineer for 52 years with extensive experience of heritage buildings in Ireland and Ontario. I am the recipient of a European Heritage Award for the restoration of the English Market in Cork, Ireland in the aftermath of a devastating fire. I was the consulting engineer-of-record for interventions and restorations of several historical buildings for Heritage Ontario, for the Legislative Assembly Office at Queen's Park and for the restoration of heritage buildings, including St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto. I have also been involved in the design of moving a heritage building and fully understand the complexities and risks involved. Providing context for the present and the future through the preservation of our heritage buildings of significance and architectural merit is especially important in today's world of real estate development.

The current proposal to move the Marr-Phillipo House from its current location and retain it as an amenity facility for the proposed condominium building residents at the rear of the development will significantly diminish the character of the streetscape.

The following is a quotation from the City's "Reasons for Designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act" By-law 78-87: *"The use of stone as a construction material relates the building to several other important buildings on Wilson Street. For these reasons the building is of great importance to the Wilson Street streetscape."* While the building has great heritage merit in and of itself, its contribution to the enhancement of the streetscape should not be compromised by moving it to the rear of the site where it would be out of view and totally divorced from Wilson Street East. Doing so, would diminished the Village Core.

Moving a building is a complicated process and any missteps can be disastrous. It requires the following steps:

- Build new foundations and foundation walls at the new location.
- Excavate around the building to expose the top of the foundation wall.
- Create holes at the top of the foundation walls through which specially designed steel beams are threaded that can support the weight of the building.
- Jack up the beams (and therefore the building).
- Place dollies under the beams.
- Roll the dollies carrying the building along a pre-planned route to the new foundation location.
- When properly located above the new foundation walls place jacks under the beams, lift slightly, remove dollies.
- Build up the foundation walls between the beams to the underside of the masonry walls.
- Lower jacks and remove beams.

Infill holes left by the beams.

Moving a stone masonry building is more difficult than moving a timber framed building and there is a greater risk of irreparable damage because it does not have the same degree of structural flexibility. The spacing of the beams is critical in order to maintain the integrity of the stone masonry. Furthermore, the greatest risk arises from unforeseen obstacles and conditions pertaining to the structure in jacking, in transporting along the pre-planned route and lowering the building which can not only cause severe damage but increase costs significantly, and in a worst case scenario result in the demise of the whole building.

Ideally, any building that is to be moved should have a basement or at least an accessible crawl space to allow structural steel beams to be inserted under the exterior walls below the ground floor level. The Marr-Phillipo House presents difficulties in this regard and the excavation to allow the insertion of the steel beams would probably encroach on the public sidewalk. The route for transportation would probably be on the public roads south along Wilson and east on Academy.

Assuming the building can be successfully moved, the timing of the move relative to the construction of the rest of the development comes into play. The questions raised include the sequence of the move relative to the new construction. Would the new foundations be independent of the foundations of the condominium, or would the Marr-Phillipo House be moved onto a suspended part of the new development, like the ground floor slab? The shoring for the construction of the condominium basement could also have an impact on the House either before it is moved or after it is moved due to vibration during shoring operations or through vertical settlement in the event that the shores deflect laterally.

In my opinion there is a substantial risk of irreparable damage to the House involved in moving such a fragile building. It should be the displayed jewel of any development along Wilson Street East. It should be embraced as a treasure incorporated into the design and not as an "embarrassment" hidden at the rear, which it could potentially become if moved.

The objective is not just to preserve the Marr-Phillipo House at the rear of a development as a hidden "record" of those who came before us, but to conserve it as part of a streetscape replete with other marvelous heritage buildings as part of a street-front building in a living vibrant community. In other words, comply with one of the main reasons provided for its heritage designation in the first place, namely, "*The use of stone as a construction material relates the building to several other important buildings on Wilson Street. For these reasons the building is of great importance to the Wilson Street streetscape.*"

Museums display the relics of the past. The heritage buildings of Ancaster Village should not be museum artifacts but must be part of our active every day personal and business lives. We should ask ourselves what it is that makes Ancaster Village so appealing to visitors and residents alike – it is the heritage buildings and the ambience they create. Destroying a heritage building as in the Brandon House or hiding it from view as proposed for the Marr-Phillipo House shows an insensitivity to the history of Ancaster, a disregard for its special character, and a poverty of vision for its future.

Thank you for consideration of my views and please reject the proposal to move the Marr-Phillipo House.

Regards,

Ben Burke