Pilon, Janet

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Subject: For Addition to Council Meeting Agenda - Oct. 13, 2021

From: Andrea Connor
Sent: Monday, October 11, 2021 7:47 PM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca
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I am writing to you today with regard to the Planning Committee's approval of the heritage application to allow the removal of the Marr-Phillipo House (398 Wilson St. E.) from the Wilson Street streetscape in Ancaster.

Let me begin by stating that I am in favour of the development of this property (properties). In fact, it is essential for the growth and vibrancy of Ancaster, and the Village Core in particular. However, this development does not have to come at the cost of the built heritage in the Village. This is not a zero sum game. There are examples all over Ontario of developers incorporating heritage structures into their new construction builds in order to strike the balance between providing for the growing communities of the future and honouring our past.

We can even look within the Ancaster Village Core itself to see examples of this very thing; the addition of a modern brewery to the historic 1838 Panabaker house at 375 Wilson St. E. (right across the street from the Marr-Phillipo House), now known as Brewers Blackbird Kitchen & Brewery; the extensive renovations and additions to the 1812 barracks at 425 Wilson St. E., now a beautiful boutique hotel operating as the Barracks Inn; the conversion of the 1820 Moore Building at 415 Wilson St. E. into an Oil & Lube shop by Glendale Motors.

The re-purposing and incorporation of heritage buildings into new developments can be done. It is being done. Certainly this developer, with a reputation for building impressive homes and remodelling heritage buildings, is capable of doing the same with the Marr-Phillipo House.

Of particular concern, and the main purpose for writing to you, is the process by which the Planning Committee came to their decision to approve the heritage permit to remove this designated building from the streetscape.

The Planning Committee was provided with a report from City of Hamilton staff recommending the application be denied. The Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee, consisting of 11 heritage specialists, submitted their recommendation to the Planning Committee to deny the application. The Planning Committee heard from "in-person" delegates and were provided with written submissions from concerned residents, all requesting the application be denied.

However, instead of heeding the expert advice from the professionals, or listening to the impassioned presentations of the constituents, or even acknowledging the concerns voiced by fellow committee members, Councillor Ferguson forged ahead with his objective of getting this application approved. The only expert opinion Councillor Ferguson chose to pay attention to, and on which he based his entire decision that the Marr-Phillipo House must be moved, was a 1 page, 3 paragraph report which provided no evidence that there is contamination under the building, and offered no discussion of alternative remediation methods if there actually is found to be contaminated soil beneath the building. The only party this report serves is the developer. The final vote was 4-3 in favour of the application – certainly not an overwhelming win.

An important, highly contentious, issue such as removing a heritage building from its streetscape at great peril to the structure itself, against the advice of an overwhelming majority of stake holders, based on inadequate and incomplete environmental reports is nothing short of irresponsible, and most definitely egregious.

The final word will fall to all of you at your upcoming Council meeting. Please do the right thing and deny the application to remove the Marr-Phillipo House from its heritage location on Wilson Street to allow for a re-submission complete with a comprehensive environmental assesment.

So much rests on this decision.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Andrea Connor